

Announcement of MSc thesis research fieldwork funding on the topic of
Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in the Pineapple Value Chain in Uganda

to contribute towards

[Social Sciences: Knowledge, Collaborative Learning and Action \(Sub-Project 7\)](#)

in the frame of the project

[Reduction of Post Harvest Losses and Value Addition in East African Food Value Chains \(RELOAD\)](#)

funded through the

[Research for the Global Food Supply \(GlobE\) initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#)

Project aims and approach:

The RELOAD project aims at developing and testing improvements for the reduction of post-harvest losses and the creation of added value using transdisciplinary research methods based on a cooperation of scientists, practitioners and other societal actors. Through the integration of cross-cutting social science methods (SP7), a project goal is to implement learning possibilities with different actors along the supply chain, including producers, transporters and manufacturers, to enlarge their scope of action and to improve their position along the value chain.

Transdisciplinary approaches for action research inform how to engage with the people who comprise the human activity systems that create these food chains such that they can increase their benefits through reducing losses and adding value. Qualitative research methods based on facilitation of group activities and interviews will inform analysis. Quantitative methods can be used when the people involved are interested in the results such as through a co-inquiry, in order to ensure that the process of research remains relevant and fine-tuned to the people directly involved. When the people whose actions make up the system are engaged in learning, there is more possibility, that they might be able to change their actions, either individually, or through collective action.



Photo 1: Tröger, 2015, pineapple on the weekly market in Masaka, Uganda

Focus area:

Pineapples are a major source of income for many people in Uganda because diverse actors, including smallholder farmers, brokers and different types of traders - are engaged in supplying pineapples to local, regional and global markets. Yet, many different types of losses arise, e.g. losses in fruit quality and hence price reductions due to damages that occur during transport. These strongly affect the profitability of pineapple production and trade as well as the distribution of benefits along the chain.

Within the frame of the PhD thesis from Katharine Tröger, we are currently working with organic and non-organic pineapple producers and traders in two different regions in Uganda. Furthermore, along with the MSc student Katharina Bitzan, we have established multi-stakeholder processes in order to identify problems, possible solutions and opportunities in two regions of Uganda in 2015.

The announced MSc thesis builds on these activities to focus on:

Integration of multi-stakeholder processes for collaborative learning to support improved livelihood benefits from pineapples; to reduce losses and add value.

The thesis deals with the potential of multi-stakeholder processes to enhance information flow between small-scale producers, collectors, brokers, transporters and retailers comprising pineapple supply chains. It is assumed that through the enhanced information flow, coordination within the chain can be improved and thereby losses for chain members reduced.

The theoretical lenses applied can draw upon one or more of the following fields of Social Ecology; Agricultural Science; Education and Extension; Food Science; Systems Science with focus on Food Systems, and Human Geography.

During the field work, the thesis will comprise some of the following tasks:

- Work with organic producers to assess losses and identify organizational and marketing innovations
- Work with MSP groups, including organic and non-organic, to further work on joint problem-definition integrated with the 2015 situation analysis
- Facilitate MSP action plan development and application for Action Funds
- Support co-experimentation to enact action plans
- Initiate participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) of actions taken

Preferred 2015-2016 time frames

- Positions are open until filled. **In your application, please specify exactly when you would be available for three months of fieldwork.**

Study location

The study will primarily be carried out in either Masaka or Ntungamo in Uganda.

Prerequisites

- Strong interest in active collaboration with people involved in small-scale pineapple supply chains and application of social science methodologies associated with a transdisciplinary action research approach.
- Familiarity with tropical smallholder farming systems/supply chains.
- Fluency in English for fieldwork activities and for writing of MSc thesis in English.
- Permission from MSc program for first supervisor to come from DITSL.

Funding

Costs of fieldwork and travel are covered by the BMBF project - RELOAD. This includes travel from Germany to the fieldsite, in-country transportation, supplies such as facilitation materials, field translation services and transcription. This does not include housing and food.

Supervision from DITSL

Prof. Dr. Brigitte Kaufmann and Dr. Margareta Amy Lelea. This MSc thesis will contribute towards the PhD research of Katherine Tröger, University of Kassel.

Application Process

Please send your application (CV, transcript of records, motivation letter) to m.a.lelea@ditsl.org or ask for further information.