

SP13: Transferring research results into policies and practise (Output 5)

Project Partner:

Dr. Susanne Neubert, Centre for Rural Development (SLE)

Prof. Ester Murugi Kahangi, Dr. Turoop Losenge – Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

I. Objectives

Output 1 delivers a dissemination strategy and concept¹ on how the research results of GlobE can be transferred into practise, i.e. be implemented by policy makers, academics and practitioners. Due to the fact that research results tend to be self-centred and their utilization and implementation usually lag behind their potential, Output 1 intends to narrow this gap, thus making GlobE research results more effective.

a. Overall aim of intervention

Output 1 captures two focal points:

1. A practical point with which the first step of the dissemination concept is already in practise. In concrete terms, this step mainly focuses on the implementation of an internal communication system among the researchers of GlobE, starting at the beginning of the project and maintaining it throughout the five year research process. Only with the systematic installation of communication channels at the beginning of the research process, can GlobE results be shaped in such a way that they will be (effectively) transferred into practise at a later stage.
2. A scientific point which delivers a sound dissemination concept of how to increase the potential of the uptake of research results in general, but also specifically the results of GlobE. It aims at increasing the likelihood that results are put into practise by policy makers or practitioners according to scientific experience and knowledge.

b. Relevance of intervention to the objectives of the output

Interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder research projects like GlobE, which focus on resolving a complex problem such as food insecurity, can only call themselves successful when they create concrete results pointing towards (de facto) implementation, i.e. when they elaborate strategies for transforming these results into policies or practise along the value chains. For making their implementation more likely and successful, scientific research results must fulfil the following conditions:

- they must be problem oriented, i.e. the research results must address a relevant part of the explored research problem,
- they must meet / resolve a certain need or problem of the targeted user groups,
- they must be applicable, context oriented and gender sensitive, i.e. fit into the economic, cultural and social context of the envisaged target group, as well as being financially affordable and/or profitable. In order to assure this, the target groups should be involved into the innovation process as early as possible,
- they must be communicated, translated and understood by the recipients, i.e. the policy makers and/ or practitioners or by suitable knowledge brokers,²
- policy makers, practitioners or knowledge brokers must be open to the message and must have the power, competence, will and/ or incentives for transferring them into policies or practise on multiple levels and along the value chain,
- they must be tested under field conditions before being up-scaled or put into practise.

¹ Dissemination can be defined as the circulation and/or re-presentation of research findings, orally or in written form, and including guidelines and guidance. (Nutley, Percy-Smith, Solesbury, 2003, p. 35).

² A Knowledge broker is an intermediary (an organization or a person), that aims to develop relationships and networks with, among, and between producers and users of knowledge by providing linkages, knowledge sources, and in some cases knowledge itself, (e.g. technical know-how, market insights, research evidence) to organizations in its network.

These conditions show that GlobE research results must first meet a variety of needs before they can be put into policies or practised and turn likely to meet their goal. Therefore, in order to reduce the probability of failure in this process, it is necessary to take on the user perspective, starting from the very beginning not only in theory, but also in action.

II. State of Knowledge

In the existing literature one crucial reason identified as to why dissemination processes often go wrong is communication failure. Hence, the improvement of communication channels through which researchers, policy makers and practitioners interact is often decisive for whether the overall aim is achieved or not. For instance, Perkin/Court (2005, p.39) state that *“To understand research-policy linkages we need to understand how information flows, how it is received, digested and acted upon in different contexts.”* Effective communication is a quite complex condition according to an interactive model, where the *“sender needs to communicate the message, then find ways of checking with the recipient how the message was interpreted and, based on this feedback, re-communicate the message”* (Perkin/Court 2005, p.39).

The routes research takes are shaped by the forms of dissemination to and within an organisation (Nutley/Walter/Davies 2007: p.62). Literature shows that the personal communication, face-to-face or through networks, is the most important route for transmitting research into policy and practice, as well as social learning through peers (Nutley/Walter/Davies 2007, pp.65, 88). Since researchers mostly face constraints in active dissemination, knowledge brokers are needed. Following van Kammen, de Savigny and Sewankambo, knowledge brokers could also put the focus of their activities on organising the interactive process between the producers of knowledge and its users (2006, 1). This is also referred to as *“interactive brokerage”* which is characterised as a multidirectional communication process in partnerships.

In the case of GlobE, in which researchers and stakeholders of diverse backgrounds are involved, two main directions of communication can be distinguished:

1. The internal communication among researchers coming from different disciplines, universities and countries, and
2. The external communication between researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

First, a theoretical analysis of the communication channels and flows within the GlobE project, and the concrete features of the results of the different disciplines will be undertaken. Communication between producers and users of research results usually happens at different interfaces, and in the case of GlobE these interfaces are particularly numerous. This is due to a variety of potential users at different levels in the different domains, but also due to the fact that the proposed research agenda includes several disciplines, elements of the value chain and knowledge cultures. Consequently a variety of different kinds of knowledge brokers are necessary, probably according to the multi-administrative and practical levels.

Effective communication is not only about disseminating knowledge but also about influencing the recipients' decisions, i.e. entry points to policy and practice are defined through the pathway used and through other factors like institutional structures and external influences or personal attitudes. In this regard it can be assumed that the effectiveness and sustainability of the utilization/uptake of research results improves with their context orientation and the quality of institutional structures in place.

To summarize, the following three elements are addressed in general, when one considers the improvement of the interaction between researchers and policy-makers:

1. Elaborating dissemination strategies. Research results have to be packaged, so that they are understood by and applicable for decision-makers, knowledge brokers and eventually users.
2. Establishing institutional linkages between researchers, decision-makers and users as a key to improve the communication and utilization of research results.
3. Adapting to the context, target groups (for cultural and gender sensitivity) and the enabling environment as well as taking into account the incentive structures for researchers, policy makers, practitioners and the target groups themselves to work on the transformation process. This dimension is to some extent beyond the direct influence of the researchers but can be assured when the research undertaken is turned – where possible - into a participatory process.

III. Detailed description of work plan

The work plan comprises:

1. The practical facilitation of the internal communication among the GlobE researchers
2. The scientific and empirical work on the topic which leads to a sound dissemination plan.

Subproject 13.1:

Support of internal GlobE communication: Development of an internal communication plan and its implementation

SLE Study I (2013/2014) (SLE Overseas Consultancy Study of the Centre for Rural Development)

- Analysis of the state of knowledge for best communication strategies within and outside of the researchers' community
- Analysis of existing communication interfaces and pathways of GlobE and strategies in Eastern Africa, focused on the expected innovations (1 SLE group + leader)
- Realization of a gender sensitive internal communication plan and practical communication support among researchers and outlook
- Meetings with researchers and organization of mutual visits of researchers, organization of small workshops / newsletter, integration of external users into meetings

Subproject 13.2:

Assessment of the context orientation of GlobE research results (SLE Study II, 2014/2015)

- Analysis of whether or not information on research results are understandable and applicable
- Analysis of the cultural and gender sensitivity of interim GlobE research results – development of a participatory action plan for a better up-take of research results

General Information on SLE Studies

SLE studies are six- to seven months consultancy studies (including three months of overseas field research and consulting) and form an essential feature of the one-year supplementary training programme of the Centre for Rural Development; SLE at the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture (Landwirtschaftlich-Gärtnerische Fakultät) of the Humboldt University. In the overseas assignments, interdisciplinary teams of five participants carry out consultancy work for organisations or programmes in the field of development cooperation under the supervision of an experienced team leader (consultant). SLE Overseas Consultancy Studies always focus on the practical applicability of their findings and they are financed partly by SLE (Humboldt) and partly by the contracting organisation (which, in this case, would be GlobE).

Subproject 13.3:

Development of a comprehensive dissemination strategy for GlobE

- 1 PhD Theses: How to disseminate research results in horticultural value chains successfully in Eastern Africa? (2014-2017)
- 2 Master Theses (2014): Studies in Tanzania and Ethiopia
- 3 Master Theses (2016/17): Tests of dissemination approaches for selected project results of GlobE in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia

b. Planned milestones of the intervention

| Activity | Milestone | Timeframe | Responsible partner |
|--|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| SP 13.1: "Support of internal GlobE communication: Development of an internal communication plan and its implementation" | | | |
| U1: To analyze and identify best communication strategies and interfaces and devise a gender sensitive internal communication plan for action (SLE overseas consultancy I) | Communication interfaces are roughly identified and communication plan for action is developed as well as actions for information exchange have been started | 01/2013 - 12/2013 | SLE |
| U2: To improve dissemination within GlobE HORTINLEA according to the findings of SLE group I | Dissemination orientation of all projects is discussed and improved with the stakeholders in Germany according to the findings of SLE group | 01/2014 – 12/2014 | SLE |
| U3: To put in place an effective internal communication platform for GlobE HORTINLEA | Communication and networking among projects and researchers is working (Newsletter is published regularly, meetings take place, mutual research information meetings are held etc.) | 01/2013-12/2017 | SLE |
| SP 13.2: "Assessment of the context orientation of GlobE research results" | | | |
| U4: To analyze the applicability and the cultural and gender sensitivity of interim GlobE HORTINLEA research results | A framework to enhance the applicability, comprehensibility cultural and gender sensitivity of interim GlobE HORTINLEA research results has been elaborated | 01/2014 – 12/2014 | SLE |
| U5: To improve dissemination within GlobE HORTINLEA according to findings of SLE group II | Dissemination orientation of all projects is discussed and improved with the stakeholders in Germany according to findings of SLE group II | 01/2015 – 12/2015 | SLE |

| SP 13.3: "Development of a comprehensive dissemination strategy for GlobE" | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|-----------|
| U6: To conduct research on successful dissemination of research results in horticultural value chains | PhD student has completed the dissertation | 01/2014 – 12/2017 | SLE, KARI |
| U7: To implement the dissemination approach in Ethiopia and Tanzania | Masters' theses are in the implementation phase in Ethiopia and Tanzania | 04/2014 - 09/2014 | SLE, KARI |
| U8: To test elaborate dissemination approaches | Selected dissemination approaches of HORTINLEA research results have been tested within 3 Master theses | 01/2016 – 04/2017 | SLE, KARI |

IV. Utilization of results and cooperation with other subprojects/ cooperation with third parties

The dissemination plan is intended to be utilized by partner organizations as the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and similar institutions in Ethiopia and Tanzania, by Development Agencies (as the GIZ), NGOs, farmers' organizations and the targeted policy makers and practitioners on national, district and local levels.