



Food Security Impact Assessment in Tanzania

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Summary

- Sustainable agricultural development is central in the fight against undernourishment in Tanzania
- Impact assessment is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development and food security
- Due to its priority in national development, food security indicators need to be integrated in all types of impact assessment
- Capacity development for governmental and non-governmental agencies on how to carry out impact assessment has to be supported
- Trans-SEC (trans-sec.org) uses Impact Assessment to stabilize food security at the level of four communities in Tanzania.

Food security

Food security is one of the most pressing challenges in developing regions, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern- and Eastern Asia. Fluctuating market situations, the global economic crisis, climate change, as well as related diseases are among the core threats increasing the insecurity of regional food supply. 842 million people – 12 percent of the global population – suffer from chronic hunger. The majority of hungry people, 827 million, live in developing regions. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest level of undernourishment (FAO, 2013).

Food security situation Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania ranked 152nd out of 187 in the 2011 UN Human Development Index and 54th out of 79 on the 2012 Global Hunger Index (IFPRI, 2012). Food security remains a major challenge for the country. Poverty and malnutrition are features of Tanzania's human development picture. Tanzania's current food security situation is characterized by seasonal and regional food shortages. Despite significant economic and agricultural growth in Tanzania over the past decade, along with improvements in health, education and other infrastructure, the rates of household poverty, and food shortage have not substantially decreased. The access to food and the ability to acquire food is still a major challenge. In several councils of Tanzania we find unacceptable malnutrition status of under-five years old (Tanzania, 2012). The majority of poor and food insecure households live in rural areas. Agriculture is central in the battle against hunger. The poor



performance of the agricultural sector is a main challenge. There is an urgent and continuous need for suitable and sustainable food systems enhancement.

The Government of Tanzania and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar have identified achieving food security as a key policy objective at all levels of the national planning hierarchy. The assessment of impacts of any development intervention on the local food security situation is therefore essential, in order to avoid the impairment but to support the improvement of the current situation (WFP, 2013).

Impact assessment for food security

Impact assessment is the process of identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action (IAIA, 2009). There are several types of impact assessment, e.g. Social-, Environmental- or Health Impact Assessment. Several guidelines by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) aim at the assessment of the food security situation in a specific locality for evidence-based decision support on where to allocate resources, to whom, to how many people, when, and on what (FAO, 2012). Those types of food security assessment draw a picture on the current situation, but do neither assess responses nor the assumed impacts of an intervention. Nevertheless, there are several methodological approaches that may be adapted and applied at interventions aiming at food security, but there is no standard food security impact assessment.

Food security impact assessment in Tanzania

The need of impact assessment for sustainable development is nothing new to the Tanzanian government. The national

environmental policies, several strategies as well as other specific sectorial policies like those toward land, mining, energy, water, agriculture, population and fisheries recognize Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as a method for sound natural resource management, to avoid exploitation which would cause irreparable harm and social costs. EIA is therefore an element of the issue of any developmental permit or license in Tanzania.

Also the utilization of Strategic Environmental Assessment for the sustainability check within development policies, plans, programs, strategies and huge development projects is integrated in Tanzanian legislation.

In the field of bioenergy, having multiple impacts on the food security situation, impact assessment has become a prerequisite. Bioenergy production, such as sugarcane and Jatropha, is a lucrative business for foreign investors in Tanzania. About 640.000 ha of land have been allocated for biofuel production (Sulle & Nelson, 2009). Bioenergy production affects a large portion of the population. It may have positive effects due to income potentials, but it may also harm the livelihood and the food security situation of the rural population due to the loss of land. According to the "Guidelines for sustainable liquid biofuels development" interested investors have to respect Environmental- and Social Impact Assessment procedures to receive a legal permit.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) by the FAO is a set of tools and procedures to classify the nature and severity of food insecurity for decision support. It provides a common way to classify the nature and severity of food insecurity. The IPC contributes to answering questions on where to allocate resources, to whom and to how many people, when, and on what. Additional information is needed to conduct response analysis. IPC is a useful tool to gather



information on the food security situation, but it is not an instrument to assess impacts of activities regarding food security.

Challenges & policy recommendations

Impact assessment, whether Environmental-, Strategic- or Social Impact Assessment are majorly applied to aid funded development projects. It is not mainstream for the project planning phase for development initiatives on different scales. Until today there is a lack of experience for its implementation. Capacity development in impact assessment approaches, procedural methods and techniques are urgently needed in Tanzania.

Impact assessment helps to minimize the negative impacts on humankind and the environment. It is therefore a prerequisite for sustainable development. Especially when there are threats on food security it has to be made sure that any development initiative does not impair the situation. Since food security is a major challenge for Tanzania, the impacts of development initiatives on the food security situation should always be assessed. This has to be integrated as a legal procedure. Furthermore, food security indicators need to be elaborated and integrated in impact assessment procedures, whether it is Environmental, Strategic- or Social Impact Assessment.

Conclusion

Food security is a major challenge for Tanzania, particularly for the population in rural areas. For the improvement of the local food situation, sustainable agricultural development is one major element. In order to not impair but to improve the current situation, impact assessment should be an integral step in project planning of development initiatives in Tanzania. Food security criteria and indicators are an

obligatory part of this impact assessment. The Trans-SEC project (trans-sec.org) contributes to stabilize food security through applying impact assessment.

Literature

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