



ATSAF - CGIAR++ Junior Scientists Program Final Report

Name of student: Elena Tschiedel

University: Technical University of Munich

Supervisor at University: Prof. Dr. Anja Faße

International Agricultural Research Center: International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF)

Country: Kenya

Supervisor at IARC: Dr. Kai Mausch

Start and end date of stay at IARC: -

Start and end date of remotely supervised project: 01 Nov 2021 – 04 Apr 2022

Title: Behavioral barriers to improved dairy farming -assessment of entry points for change

Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)





I was offered the opportunity to contribute to the newly approved BMZ Project 'Shrubs for Change' (S4C), which seeks to scale up the use of shrubs in the dairy sector. Fodder Shrubs for dairy farmers have been developed and promoted since the 1980s. However, uptake has been low, and researchers have been puzzled by the lack of interest in this beneficial technology. Only recently, the emergence of behavioral approaches in the agricultural development field has finally highlighted the fact that significant behavioral obstacles must be overcome. These insights are now being used to scale fodder shrubs in Western Kenya under the S4C Project. In this project, a combination of financial and social nudges are implemented alongside more traditional pedagogical and accessibility interventions that will support the development of the dairy sector in western Kenya. To support this project, World Agroforestry (ICRAF) and TUM have decided to conduct a joint research project that aims to lay the foundation and fine-tune the interventions rolled out under S4C and improve the understanding of current practices and entry points for change. In close teamwork with an international team, we have created a questionnaire designed to help improve the understanding of entry points from the farmer perspective and establish a baseline for the project to assess progress during later stages.

In the following, I would like to summarize my experiences and the impact of the internship as a Junior Scientist at the World Agroforestry in Kenya. My internship experience was one of the most invaluable experiences of my professional life. Through this unique opportunity, I learned a multitude of professional skills and have developed personally.

Adapting to the global situation with Corona has been a challenge that I experienced firsthand. I had plans to travel and stay in Kenya. However, it was not possible as expected. Instead, I needed to reorient and adopt a working-from-home lifestyle while helping my colleagues collaborate on-site. Working remotely has its benefits but knowing that you could be in such an enriching environment was quite tricky at times. Overall, this experience enabled me to practice flexibility and reminded me of the importance of adapting quickly in unpredictable situations. Looking forward, it's clear that adapting swiftly to any new situation is crucial to success in today's ever-changing landscape. I experienced that even more than just visiting a country and its landscape and architecture, getting in touch with people from the country really is the most important part of the experience. This flexibility was also required in the work itself. Once the questionnaire had been completed and the data collection was underway, creativity was called for. The previously established plan for farms to be approached and surveyed was no longer enforceable. The addresses were outdated, and many farmers could no longer be found. My colleagues kept me up to date over the phone as they changed



their tactics and, without a concrete plan, selected the villages to find suitable farmers for the data collection. Fortunately, the population's willingness to participate in surveys was very high, and the data collection was completed within a few weeks.

Working with different people is always an interesting and beneficial experience. During my internship, I encountered individuals with vastly different backgrounds, skillsets, and perspectives on the tasks. This truly opened my eyes to the value of having a diverse group of people in any situation. Through collaborating with others, I gained valuable insights that positively contributed to our collective work efforts and enhanced my understanding of the objectives. Being exposed to such a wide range of thoughts and talents also enabled me to gain more confidence because we were able to come up with innovative solutions for problems collectively. Ultimately, this dynamic working environment truly enriched my entire educational experience for me. While studying at university, I worked on many different projects, like preparing questionnaires with my peers, allowing me to gain some theoretical knowledge. Yet, when I began my internship, I realized that my professional experience drastically differed from what I had worked on before. My coworkers already had considerable professional experience in the field, and so it was a motivational experience to see them create and tackle complex questionnaires while being eager to pass on their knowledge.

Participating in an internship enriched me professionally and from a cultural perspective. My internship allowed me to embrace the culture and appreciate its diversity. By interacting with my colleagues and immersing myself in their culture, I was able to gain a greater understanding and appreciation for how culture shapes the daily life of others. Additionally, I found it fascinating to understand how culture intertwined itself with language and lifestyle. Even though I was not physically present during this experience, being exposed to these cultural intricacies furthered my knowledge about culture, which is invaluable for working in an ever-globalizing world. I have a special memory of a meeting that had to be postponed by my colleague due to the lack of a babysitter. Since I didn't have any follow-up appointments, I could organize the day flexibly and join her in the meeting at a later time. At this point, however, the other participants were no longer available. After we worked through the official points, we talked for hours about her children and family. She took me through her home and gave deep insights into her life through statements that were very day-to-day. This exchange would never have happened without the joint work, and I am very grateful for it.



Over the past few months, I have been enveloped in a steep learning curve, and everything I have experienced has taught me valuable lessons. From these lessons, I have improved both my mental and interpersonal capacities, witnessing a drastic transformation in my thoughts and attitudes, allowing me to feel empowered by the challenges that come with life. As a result of this growth, my self-confidence has increased significantly, making me fearless when taking on any future tasks. Through this experience, I am sure that I can tackle whatever comes next in life.