

## Insects for Food and Health in South-eastern Africa – enhancing nutrition and rural livelihoods

Insects are increasingly attracting more attention as the concern for the environment, demand and over-consumption of animal source foods is rising particularly in emerging economies. For many populations of non-Western origins insect foods are an important delicacy, source of important nutrients and connector of ethnic origins and identity. However, modernity and western cultures infiltrating in many of the emerging economies raises challenges when it comes to consumption and acceptance.

There remain gaps in our understanding of the insect value chain. Indigenous knowledge about the use of many of these insects lie with the older generation, mostly women that are engaged in the cultivation, gathering, collection, processing, marketing and conservation. With evidence showing that higher incomes and movements to urban areas result in less consumption and knowledge about insects, it is necessary for policy makers to include the teaching of these foods in ordinary school curricula.

Many agricultural science syllabuses do not include insects as foods; neither do food science and nutritional sciences. Therefore, a key priority would be to strengthen the institutional capacity for research and teaching on the sustainable use, post-harvest technology and value addition of insect species as foods that are important for the health and livelihoods of local populations.

Collaborating partners and institutes:

- Botswana Institute of Technology Research Institute (BITRI), Botswana
- National Food Technology Research (NFTRC), Botswana
- Bekind Consult, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Federation of Congolese Enterprise (FEC)/Women Desk of the Federation of Congolese Enterprise, Democratic Republic of Congo
- University of Malawi, Malawi
- Stockholm Resilience Centre, Sweden
- Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe
- University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

The overall aim of this project is to increase awareness of the gaps in utilization of insects for food and health and to compile an instruction handbook about the use of insects with the older generation, mostly women that are engaged in the cultivation, gathering, collection, processing, marketing and conservation.

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