

Indigenous Food Systems Exchange, Trade and Marketing: Opportunities and Challenges

A Case of the Elmolo People of Lake
Turkana, Kenya

Introduction

- The Indigenous food systems of the Elmolo people also known (Gurapuu)the people of the Lake Water)
- Is about fishing hunting and gathering
- The food system of the Elmolo people is deeply rooted in their culture, Indigenous traditional knowledge the lake and other natural resources (Climate conditions in their environment)
- Exchange of food products was for other foods and items was practiced more before colonization and also prior to independence but is less practiced as cash trade is more practiced



Indigenous food system

- The system involves fishing, hunting and gathering (different species of fish, hunting of crocodiles hippos, bird catching ,gathering of roots and wild plants and meat and milk from goats and sheep.
- Fish is usually boiled, roasted, smoked, grilled and sun dried



Protect and sustain our food system

- Commercial fishing has grown over the years in comparison to subsistence fishing.

Markets are controlled and dominated by middle men/women from other regions

- Prior to colonization exchange of food products was the only trade – barter trade. Cash markets are more appealing to most and is widely practical.



Challenges

Challenges

Managing Lake Turkana fisheries;

- Lack of recognition and documentation of IP food systems
- Lack of information on markets and trade
- Poor infrastructure
- Post harvest losses due to excessively high temperature lack of cold storage features and poor fish handling structures
- Roughness of the lake
- Resource use conflict. The richest fishing grounds are in the north where Ethiopia fishers fight with Kenyan fishers, of Kenya.
- Lack of business linkages between lake Turkana fishers and fish traders at national regionally and internationally
- Long distance between capture sites and market centers.



Opportunities

- Training in entrepreneurship
- Establishing linkages with traders in national, regional and international markets
- Visits for exposure
- Accessing markets
- More research in Indigenous knowledge and food systems