



**Sustainable  
Agrifoods  
Systems  
Strategies**

# **Sustainable Agrifood Systems Strategies project**

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# Introduction



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# The debate

- The **Sustainable Agrifood Systems Strategies (SASS) project** aims to contribute to the ongoing debates and initiatives on increasing the sustainability of food systems, by examining the role of neglected and under-utilised species or indigenous vegetables.
- A food system gathers all the elements and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food and the outputs of these activities.
- A sustainable food system is a food system that meets the needs of society (people), economy (profit) and environment (planet).

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# Goals

- SASS mapped and analyzed the local food systems in the Arusha and areas in Tanzania, and the Lake Naivasha area in Kenya. Together with local stakeholders, strategies on how to change current practices, policies and partnerships will be explored so that these local food systems will become more sustainable.
- Research in different disciplines is conducted in synergy while maintaining a common conceptual framework that will allow giving comprehensive recommendations on sustainable food systems.

## Partners in Italy and the Netherlands

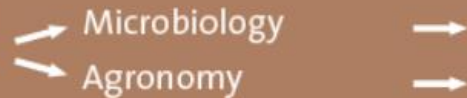
### ECDPM

European Center for  
Development Policy  
Management



### UNICATT

Università Cattolica  
del Sacro Cuore



### UNIPV

Università degli  
Studi di Pavia



### UNIMIB

Università degli  
Studi di  
Milano-Bicocca



### UNISG

Università degli  
Studi di Scienze  
Gastronomiche

## Partners in Kenya and Tanzania

- Naivasha Basin Sustainability Initiative
- Oikos
- Local universities
- Local governments and stakeholders

## International partners

- Bioversity
- FAO
- Slow Food and others

The partnership

# Traditional food in the Kenyan and Tanzanian food systems



Michele F. Fontefrancesco,  
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# The global trends in rural development

Intensification of production

Introduction of new cultivation strategies (i.e. mechanization, introduction of high-yield breeds and species)

Production integration in the global market

Abandonment of traditional practices and varieties

Depletion of bio-cultural diversity

# The global revival of traditional food

Post-1980s phenomenon, starting in the West.

A more recent trend in developing countries

A response to:

- fast urbanization and rural abandonment
- a new political and economic agenda concerning small farming and development of rural areas
- growing weariness for mass produced, industrial food



# Traditional food as a resource

For bio-cultural heritage  
preservation

For sustainable farming

For rural development (agro-  
tourism, niche food markets)



# Fieldwork

- Project: SASS
- Duration: 2017-2021
- Fieldwork: 2018-2020
- Locations: Nakuru (KE), Arusha and Iringa (TZ)

# The context

Strong cultural diversity

Demographic boom

Strong urbanization

Limited emigration

Growing domestic economy

# Research Questions

What is the food system structure?

Who are the actors of the food systems?

What is the role of traditional food in the foodscape?

What are the meanings associated with traditional food?

# Methodology



Multi-sited  
Ethnography;



Life stories of  
market actors;



Food Scouting;



Photography;



Filming.

# Food market and traditional products

- Fragmented structure of the supply chain
- Limited infrastructure
- The market as an ethnic 'neutral zone'
- Informal networks
- Short supply chains and the restaurant sector







# The drivers of a growing demand

- Ethnicity
- Health
- Freshness
- Taste

# To know more

- Corvo & Fontefrancesco (edited by), 2018, Sotto il cielo della Rift Valley. Sviluppo rurale e cibo tradizionale nella contea di Nakuru, Tortona, Vicolo del Pavone
- Fontefrancesco & Zocchi, 2020. "Indigenous crops and cultural dynamics in the markets of Nakuru County, Kenya". International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science 22, 100269
- Zocchi, & Fontefrancesco, 2020. "Traditional Products and New Developments in the Restaurant Sector in East Africa. The Case Study of Nakuru County, Kenya". Frontier Sustainability Food System, 4:599138.



# Mapping and and exploring the living food heritage: The Ark of Taste project in Kenya and Tanzania



Dauro M. Zocchi, [d.zocchi@unisg.it](mailto:d.zocchi@unisg.it)

# The Ark of Taste project

✓ Catalogue of forgotten and endangered quality food products that belong to the cultures, history and traditions of the entire planet.



✓ Created in 1996 to:

Point out the existence of these products

Draw attention to the risk of their extinction

Invite everyone to take action to help protect them



Slow Food®

5475  
products

150  
countries

# The research: Analysis of food heritage in Kenya and Tanzania

## Objectives:

Analysis of local gastronomic landscapes and cultures

Scouting and documentation of local and traditional food

Study of trade and consumption patterns

## Expected outcomes:

Baseline data regarding the local food heritage

Exploring possibilities and barriers (Safeguard and promotion)

# Methodology

## **I. Food mapping and inventorying**

### **Aims**

- Contextualization of the food and cultural environment
- Preliminary map of products, places, and actors

### **Activities**

- Desk research: Scientific and grey literature
- Preliminary exploration: Non-structured interviews; Online-scouting

## **II. Food scouting**

### **Aims**

- Documenting local food resources and associated values
- Exploring economic, social and ecological risk factors

### **Activities**

- Ethnography: Interviews, Focus group discussions, Participant observation
- Market & restaurant survey

# Documenting and reporting a product: A participatory and multidisciplinary approach



## Key Informants

- ✓ Producers, cooks, market vendors, elders
- ✓ Local scholars and researchers
- ✓ Food experts (e.g., activists, journalists, etc.)



## Products

- ✓ Domesticated plant varieties and animal breeds, wild species, and processed products
- ✓ Small-scale productions

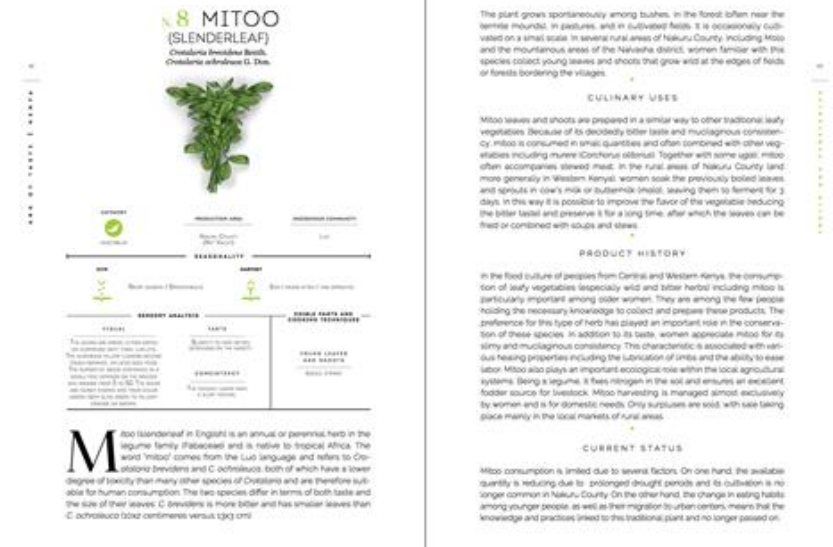


## Key locations

- ✓ Productions sites
- ✓ Food markets
- ✓ Restaurants & shops

# The Ark of Taste Atlas of Kenya

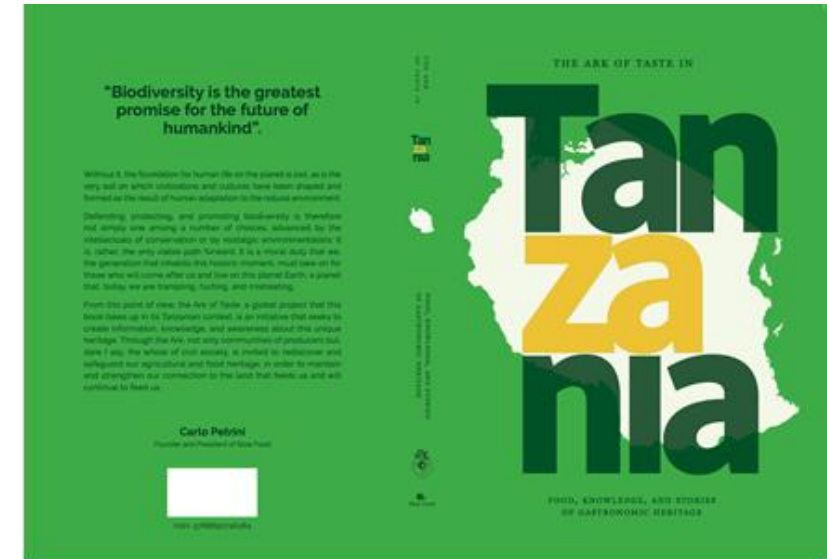
- Partnership with Slow Food Kenya
- 75 local and traditional foods
- Indigenous food culture and food justice issues
- Focus on formal and informal market dynamics





# The Ark of Taste Atlas of Tanzania

- Partnership with Slow Food Tanzania, Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), European Centre for Development Policy Management, University of Pavia
- 50 local and traditional foods
- Focus on wild and cultivated leafy vegetables
- Role of traditional foods in local markets and restaurants



# To know more

- Zocchi, D.M., & Fontefrancesco, M.F. (Eds.) (2021). The Ark of Taste in Tanzania: Food, Knowledge, and Stories of Gastronomic Heritage. Pollenzo: Università degli Studi di Scienze Gastronomiche.
- Fontefrancesco, M.F., & Zocchi, D.M. (2019). Narrazioni e prodotti nella patrimonializzazione della gastronomia locale: una nota metodologica. *Narrare i Gruppi*, 14(2), 273-285.
- Barstow, C., & Zocchi, D.M. (A cura di) (2018). The Ark of Taste in Kenya: Food, Knowledge, and Stories of Gastronomic Heritage. Bra: Slow Food Editore.





# Thank you

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