

University of Hohenheim



Institute for Social Sciences of the Agricultural Sector

Department of Rural Communication and Extension

Master Thesis related to the module

“Rural Communication and Extension”

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**Learning for Food and Nutrition Security
School: gardens as a Pedagogic tool in
secondary and Primary schools of the
North West Province of Cameroon**

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Summary

School gardens were used mainly to generate income for schools, supplement school meals and teach children the basics in Agriculture.

The Ministry of Education is the main institution responsible for school gardens and had school gardens as a mandatory requirement for all schools with enough land. This Ministry provided support mainly in the form of awards for school gardens, although some non-government schools felt left out of the award package. The Ministry of Agriculture equally played a minimal role by providing extension services for school gardening on demand.

Gardening is seen as an extra curricula activity or manual labour activity. It was used on few occasions by those teachers labeled as farm master / mistress to illustrate their subject areas. Though in the FSLC syllabus, it did not appear in its own right but as part of the arts and craft subject that addressed Practical work or arts in the exams. For other classes it was attached to the General paper, nature study or environmental education subject.

Nutrition Education though largely information based had a practical element especially in boarding schools where quality in Education was an important consideration. But only 2 schools sometimes used produce from the school garden for the practical class. Gardens were equally used for in an extra curricula way for environmental education by the environmental clubs for beautification of the schools grounds (flower gardens).

School meals in boarding schools were supplemented with garden produce though no school attained food sufficiency from garden produce. These supplements made the school meals nutritionally rich but the students did not perceive the meals as nutritionally rich from garden produce.

Perceptions of school garden were negative with teachers viewing them as increasing their workload. Students had negative perception as they were used as punishment grounds and some felt they were not directly benefiting from garden produce.

The constraints faced ranged from lack of commitment to promote gardening activities from the ministries, no in service training for teachers, no investment in garden infrastructure like providing water for irrigation, negative perceptions etc.

The suggestions for the improvement of the functioning of school gardens include focusing more the educational purpose and benefits of school gardens, Raising awareness on the potential of school gardens to all who are concern with school gardening.

The success of school gardening as a pedagogic tool depends on a strong support from school authorities, educational planners, policy makers, teachers and students who are key role players in school gardening. School gardens have a huge potential in contributing to Food and nutrition security, but their

current use in the North West Province falls short of exploiting this potential. Their use is dissected by many problems and a lack of commitment by key role players. More has to be done if school gardens have to be exploited to realize their full potential in the North West Province of Cameroon.