# Pathways to improved food and nutrition security of the poor: the promise of African indigenous foods and technologies

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**Abstract**

This article presents the findings of a synthesis study of 7 multi-stakeholder research projects that were funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development) Food & Business Research programme. The projects focused on the role that indigenous foods and technologies can play in contributing to improved food and nutrition security for the poor as well as to food systems diversification. The projects were all set in Sub Saharan Africa, focusing on the production, processing and marketing challenges and opportunities of various traditional crops and foods (e.g. AIVs, moringa, spider plant, fermented foods, infant foods based on local resources). The article analyses the new knowledge, insights and innovations that these projects generated, showing that the promotion of indigenous foods can deliver positive and sustainable impacts in the social, economic and environmental domains (thus contributing to the people, profit and planet dimensions of the SDG Agenda). Barriers to, as well as drivers for maximising the impact of indigenous foods on food and nutrition security are identified, revealing that – depending on the country context – these include technical, logistical, as well as policy and economic issues and interests. The unique set-up of the projects, which were all run by a consortium of academic, private sector and NGO partners, proved an important factor in promoting research uptake by relevant local and national stakeholders.

**Keywords:** indigenous vegetables, traditional foods, food security, Kenya, Benin, Uganda, Zambia