Tradition & Innovation

Endogenous knowledge in developing rural food demand shifts

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Tradition & Innovation.

1. Architecture around food consumption
2. Unveiling context specific enablers
3. Endogenous knowledge and shifting food demand
4. Synergies & Lessons
Architecture around food consumption.

Food consumption is rarely a choice

➔ A culmination of a series of actions, non-conscious (habits) and conscious.

➔ Choice assumes conscious thought and presence of alternatives.
Journey to avocado toast.
Journey to avocado toast.
Journey to avocado toast.

No Avocado!

Shopping List

Nimo
Journey to avocado toast.

Nimo

No Avocado!

Shopping List

Go to Market
Journey to avocado toast.

Nimo

No Avocado!

Shopping List

Go to Market

Specific Vendor

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Journey to avocado toast.

1. Go to Market
2. Fill out shopping list
3. Specific Vendor
4. No Avocado!

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Journey to avocado toast.

1. Go to Market
2. Fill out shopping list
3. Specific Vendor
4. Shopping List
5. No Avocado!
6. Voila, toast!
Unveiling context specific enablers.

Let’s make avocado toast

- **Availability**
  - Global south relies on rain-fed food production.
  - Seasons impact food diversity in markets and homes.
  - Demand drives investment in production.

- **Affordability**
  - Purchasing decisions affected by disposable income and market prices.
  - Affordability of food products key to household consumption choices.

- **Socio-cultural norms**
  - Knowledge systems*
  - Aspirations and attitudes
  - Practices

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*Knowledge systems include practices, expectations, and traditions that influence consumer behavior.
In Kenya consumers often consider yellow maize to be inferior, more suitable for relief food and animal feed (Rubey, L. et al. 1997). This is historically informed by the 1982 droughts where white maize was scarce and reserved to a few.

"When there is no maize for us," a gardener named John said, referring to the white corn that provides a dietary staple, "the people say the big men have taken it and put it aside or sold it to outsiders." By "big men" he meant those in government and private business who form Kenya's wealthy elite.

Source: 1984, New York Times article
Endogenous knowledge and shifting food demand.

Endogenous knowledge is a product of indigenous/traditional knowledge interfacing with external knowledge.

These systems cannot exist in the same ecosystem unchanged, they shift, learn and make space for each other. What then emerges is a result of these two systems borrowing and evolving off each other.
Synergies & Lessons.

CoAmana focuses on strengthening Sub-Saharan Africa's market linkages. They provide commercially-viable digital technologies developed to bridge economic gaps.

Amana Market connects Nigeria's farmers and businesses digitally. Lessons from failure informed how CoAmana engages with traditional markets. Specifically the importance of Market kings/leaders role in coordinating activities.

Deployed intervention: Integrating market leaders' functions into Amana Market. Digitization empowers market kings and improves service efficiency.
Synergistic knowledge systems.

Baobab flowering used traditionally as a planting signal. Scientific link found to humidity level.

Speranza et al. 2010 reported that the flowering of a tree could be due to the increase in humidity that is detectable or accessible only by the tree. For the indigenous communities, it is an indicator of future weather.

Potential application: Relatability of climate information services.
Tying it all together.

We have discussed how food consumption works differently than we think.

We have also looked at examples of how existing and external knowledge systems interact and influence each other.

What does this mean for changing food behavior?

- The danger of a single narrative, understanding that a synergistic consideration of what exists and what is new is necessary for success.
- Context matters when we speak about shifting food behavior.
Thank you.