

Round Table Dialogue on Living Labs in East Africa

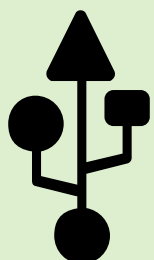
Lessons from 2nd session - Cross Country

Bringing together innovation cases

A Living Lab can be defined as “a space for collection of innovation cases linked to regenerative agriculture, addressing barriers to innovation and change, aiming to transform the food system.” Living Lab activities include dialogues, field visits, and ‘real’ experiments.



Building on what already is



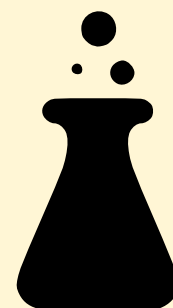
Living Labs should build on what is already in the system for example indigenous technical knowledge or the supply chain itself and co-create new technologies. This because, co-creation is only possible from what already is, what people already know and it allows people not to feel like strangers in a new technology.

This also supports people in being able to solve their own problems, thus creating sustainable achievements. Moreover, considering Living Labs to be anchored to existing structures helps in tackling the main problem.

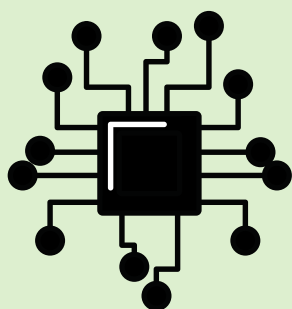
Testing and innovation: how to feed all, sustainably?

The million-dollar question nowadays is how are we going to produce food for growing populations sustainably? Facing both current and future challenges? To answer this question, we should test it: that is to be done in the Living Labs. Living Labs also allow for different innovations to take place.

Therefore, the focus in a Living Lab should also be on increasing productivity. Related to this, soils must be given specific attention. For example, in many places in Kenya, soils are almost dead. Soil management needs a fresh focus in the context of Regenerative and Inclusive Food Systems.



Capacity building, anchoring in other institutions, and commercialization



To make Living Labs last over time, we need a paradigm shift in the continuity strategy. For example, in order to think beyond the project life, it is better to put systems in place that can give a structure for keeping the Living Lab alive.

Additionally, continuous training of people and influencing curriculum of educational / training institutions, possibly establishing independent institutions and support from the public environment (e.g. government) is key in giving the opportunity to self-sustentation. Lastly, anchoring with an existing institution can also set basis for more sustainability.

Commercialization of products and ideas developed in Living Labs ensures long-term sustainability. This is about making innovations enter into the market and get consumer acceptance.