

Report of the Stakeholder Meeting between local partners and the Women Food Entrepreneurs (WFE) project team

On the morning of Thursday 02 February 2017, in Ouagadougou, in the conference room of the Cardinal Paul ZOUGRANA, a workshop was held on the concept of “**Inclusive Business Models**” supporting women entrepreneurs in the food sector in slums (peri-urban) areas of sub-Saharan cities (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and Kisumu, Kenya).

Agenda: “Presentation of the project and experience sharing of the food entrepreneurship stakeholders in the city of Ouagadougou”

In the introduction, the Director of the Institute of Health Sciences Research (IRSS), Prof Sylvin Ouedraogo, gave a speech, welcoming the Project Coordinator and her team to Burkina Faso. He expressed the importance of the agenda, namely the thorny problem of the emancipation of women. He also mentioned that the Institute under his charge also works in this field through a project financed by the NGO Diakonia on improving the income of traditional women. He also hoped that this meeting would be the beginning of a sincere and lasting collaboration between the Institute and the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.



Following the Director, the Project Coordinator, Dr Nicky Pouw, took the floor and thanked all the IRSSA authorities for the attention given to the project and stressed that since their arrival to this day everything was going well. Also that this collaboration, as mentioned by the Director, will continue between these two institutions.

At the end the Director wished an excellent working day to all the people present and withdrew from the room accompanied by his staff composed of the Deputy Director of Programs and the Head of Department of MEPHATRA / PH.

Content of the discussions: Workshop

After the project members were presented to the attendees, the Coordinator gave a brief presentation of the project itself and the project objectives were listed:

- Identify the constraints and business opportunities in the food sector in urban (peri-urban) environments, particularly for women;
- Improve soil management;
- Realize processing techniques and marketing strategies;
- Strengthen the food value chain.

Then she detailed the different research approaches used within the project, that is:

- Interdisciplinary approach, involving researchers from different disciplines;
- Transdisciplinary approach, involving players from other sectors of activity;
- Applied approach based on scientific or relevant evidence.

She also mentioned that during their visit to Burkina Faso, sites were visited including the Pissy granite quarry, AMIFOB in Tampouy, the Tanghin site and the seasonal garden at Kossodo. In the Pissy quarry minerals have been found to improve the fertilization of the soil.

As a result of the various visits the project team had to identify three important problems related to:

- The transformation process of female entrepreneurs;
- The contribution of practitioners in the development of the value chain;
- The influence of soil modifications and the choice of crops in relation to the soil.

Then the Coordinator gave the floor to her colleague, who wanted everyone to introduce themselves so that we could know what each of the people present was doing.

There was a 30-minute coffee break, after which the discussion session began.



Testimonies were made by a number of participants. Difficulties were noted by some of them (and related to the production activity), namely:

- Difficulties in accessing credit at the level that requires guarantees that women do not have (notably for female processors; for producers, the precariousness of their production conditions means that they cannot even think of obtaining credit);
- The problem of pollution caused by plastic bags in the Tanghin reservoirs;
- Rapid drying of the reservoirs from February (and the availability of production water during the season);
- Landslide problems (the silting up of the reservoirs);
- Problems combining several family and commercial activities;
- Limits of space and assets to develop commercial activities;

- Difficulties in collaborating with sustainable business partners and achieving market and value-chain access.

As for the financing of activities, a number of alternatives have been mentioned by women, in particular the support of the NGO Afrique Verte, which groups them into an association that uses them as collateral for obtaining credit at the Caisse Populaire bank. Today, through this NGO, members of the network of women processing cereals can each benefit from 10 million francs as a loan granted by the network of Caisses Populaires of Burkina Faso. They also benefit from training in production planning, marketing, management of their company and quality management of processed products.

In addition, the representative from the Ministry of Agriculture mentioned the existence of a Kuwaiti fund (2,500 million) managed by a local bank (CORIS Bank) which finances this type of activity.

The ministry will soon set up a fund to develop business plans. The representative also stressed that the authorities took the problems seriously as expected:

- ✓ Supporting promoters in their small and medium-sized enterprises;
- ✓ Contributing to strengthening the capacities of agricultural and agri-food players in processing technology, food standards;
- ✓ Promoting the consumption of domestic agricultural products;
- ✓ Accompanying the Ministry of Trade and Crafts;
- ✓ And many other commitments made in this direction.

In the exchanges, many women said they are not informed of the existence of this fund, contrary to Mr. Traoré, representative of Mrs. Traoré of Tout Tout, who says she is aware of the existence of the fund but that the conditions mean access is difficult.

The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture resumed by saying that the granting of funds is left to the discretion of the bank and that the funds are allocated according to the bank's criteria.

Mr Souleymane, for his part, recounted the difficulties in the exploitation of granites at the level of Pissy's quarry. The technical and financial means are really lacking. The first results, presented by the project research team, showed that Pissy granites contain biotite, which is a very important mineral element in soil fertilization. So the success of the project will allow them to reorient their work and increase incomes.

Guests from the Sourou, meanwhile, said they have inherited their parents' farmland where they harvested green beans. They have established a partnership with a private company for export to Europe. Subsequently they were confronted by a financial dispute with the partner because the movement of goods to Europe was not always fast, creating a conservation problem and enormous financial losses. This led them to abandon this process for the production of onions and stop the partnership to work independently. However, difficulties are also encountered in this sector – with the conservation of produce. A good conservation technique is needed to be able to better conserve and sell the entire crop. They also mentioned the problem of roads to move goods to urban markets.

At the end of all these exchanges, the Coordinator thanked the participants and noted that there is a lot of local experience and knowledge. And that it was really important to exchange and understand the constraints and successes of some women in order to identify the real problems facing women and together to provide the appropriate solutions. From what comes out of this meeting it is clear that:

- The value chain is not well structured to welcome women entrepreneurs;
- There is a great lack of financial resources and Kenya has a lot of experience in this area. Thus, Burkina Faso could be inspired by the Kenyan model in obtaining credits from microfinance to undertake (more collaboration with partners in Kenya is then to be considered);
- Innovative technology for off-season crops could be provided;
- It should be remembered that, with the studies carried out on the biotite from the Pissy quarry, an increase in productivity can be achieved.

The meeting ended and gave way to a lunch break.

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