Factsheet final findings Global Challenges Programme Call 2

WFE: Women Food Entrepreneurs

Summary

Women Food Entrepreneurs (WFEs) in Kenya and Burkina Faso city slums play an important role in the food and nutrition security of vulnerable urban slum populations. Yet, their business activities, and market barriers and constraints remain invisible to businesses and policymakers. The eight WFE groups in Ouagadougou and Kisumu operate under precarious conditions of insecure access to land and water resources, in the midst of rapid urban expansion and development. Food producer, processing and marketing group participation increases their voice and empowerment, business opportunities and results, especially when groups gain official status and after having lived through leadership and sustainability challenges. Moreover, small-scale, self-invented and co-created innovations in the primary, secondary and tertiary business process leverage business results. These form a stepping-stone towards upscaling and professionalization of innovative practices and ideas across bigger groups of stakeholders. This project has made a knowledge inventory of these innovations, which are currently being documented in a book on 'Mini-Farming by Women Food Entrepreneurs in African Cities'. Furthermore, through investing in a 'Connectors Pilot Project' in Kisumu, this project has established longer-term relationships between WFE groups and linkages to the business, science and policy sectors. The Connectors initiative serves as a role model for inclusive business models to benefit WFE groups in the longer term as well.

Final Research Findings

Coming to the project end, the project has developed in-depth understanding of how an inclusive business model can be operationalized in a widespread poverty context. Creating equality of opportunity is not enough for WFE to grow out of survival entrepreneurship; there also needs to be opportunity to realize returns on their business effectively. WFE face multiple social, economic and political 'hidden' costs; e.g. mobility and transportation, land and water insecurity, testing and certification, information access, time constraints, (unknown) soil fertility problems, incompatible agricultural management practices, food waste, lack of hygiene, physical insecurity, and regulatory capture by formal business actors. In addition, it is fair to conclude that all stakeholders involved have developed a new understanding about a range of sustainable soil amendments that can be locally sourced, either from organic manure that some WFEs self-produce already, or potentially even from local mines in the form of rock dust, which is currently considered a waste product. The project is now in the process of analyzing tests with these soil amendments, separately and in different combinations. Soil characterization from a soil survey and rock dust analysis results have been shared with the WFE groups and local government and business stakeholders. Preliminary results of incubation studies with Kenyan and Burkinan rock dusts and soil show that microorganisms in the soil respond preferentially to locally sourced rock dusts. This might indicate that microorganisms are adapted to weather minerals that are present in the original parent material of the soil, which causes them to respond more favourably to rock dusts also containing these minerals; this is sometimes called the 'home field advantage'.

Best project practices

Inclusive business models can pay off when WFEs gain a greater control over primary (production and inputs) and/or secondary business processes (finance, handling and packaging, transport, marketing, management and collaboration) themselves, and manage to invest in bridging capital to engage in capacity building, business knowledge exchange on a bigger scale, and influencing policy and institutional programming. The research has led to an uptake by the Kisumu County Governor to make a political plea for creating spaces for 'mini-

farming' in the city.

- Working with *pre-existing WFE groups* => through inventory of barriers and constraints, opportunities and innovative practices shift power of knowledge imbalances in urban food chain and policy;
- Co-creation by project and WFEs of *evidence-based capacity building and communication tools* of entrepreneurship courses;
- *Cross-fertilization* through site visits to show-case the work of WFEs and best practices by WFEs – esp. processors and sellers;
- Making *contribution of WFEs* to urban food security and their self-invented innovations visible and valued => filling-in the blind spot on urban policy agenda's & agribusiness sector;
- Affiliation with *local research institutions to share and validate test results* (labs. etc.) of collected food wastes being turned into natural compost
- Implementing a '*Connectors Pilot Project'* including WFEs to invest in bridging capital and durability of collaborations and knowledge exchange beyond the project.

Messages to

A) Actors from private sector:

- WFEs are largely survival-entrepreneurs, but many seek to transform into growth-oriented entrepreneurs. Some would also like to opt out and engage in a different activity or sector.
- WFEs hold sensory and indigenous knowledge on soil management and food production and processing techniques that is largely undocumented. Hybrid food processing techniques could resolve the problem of fresh foods going to waste.
- The collection of food wastes in market places can be translated into an inclusive business model. The food waste is turned into natural compost by the WFEs, packaged and sold after and testing and certification by the local laboratory and research institutes.
- Strengthening WFEs in the food value chain and giving space to mini-farming contributes to greening the city, healthier diets and better incomes.
- Women in the local and regional markets could benefit from better-visited spots in local markets and lower market fees. Their small-scale initiative to turn market food waste into organic compost provides a business opportunity that can be upscaled.
- WFEs lack an inclusive business environment in which they can link-up with local institutions and businesses to market their produce and share their knowledge with.

B) Civil society and practitioners organizations:

- WFEs residing in informal urban settlements often engage in group processing and/or marketing to negotiate better access to land and markets, and manage risks.
- Groups of mixed composition (women and men) with women in leadership roles, facilitate awareness-raising of gender barriers and constraints and identification of joint opportunities and development of collective strategies beneficial at individual, household and group level.
- Exchange between WFEs enhances shared knowledge of soil management and food production, processing and marketing techniques that are innovative and sustainable.

C) Policy makers:

- WFEs experience gender specific barriers and constraints that hamper their business development. WFE's inclusive business development requires awareness, gender-aware policy measures and instruments.
- WFEs often produce food on marginalized and contested land plots – this hampers their business development and implies livelihood risks.
- Policies aiming for increasing quantity and quality of local food commodities produced, added value and income of WFEs contribute to food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations.
- Formality of WFE groups facilitates their access to market opportunities and finance
- Secure and formalized access to land, by individual WFEs and groups, contributes to food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in the city and enable an orientation towards growth instead of survival-entrepreneurship.

Knowledge products

- Policy Brief #1 (Jan 2018); Policy Brief #2 (April 2018); Policy Brief #3 (June 2018)
- WFE Project Newsletter #1 (May 2018)
- Scientific article Inclusive Business (March 2017)
- Book Chapter on Survival Entrepreneurship and Wellbeing (2019)
- Scientific Article Women's Agricultural Practices (2019): https://www.soil-journal.net/5/303/2019/soil-5-303-2019.pdf
- Scientific Article Role of Historical Land Use for Inclusive Business (in print, 2019)
- Special Issue COSUST on 'Inclusive Business' (in print, 2019)
- Stakeholder report Burkina Faso (Feb 2017)
- Stakeholder Report Burkina Faso (July 2019)
- Project surveys (2016 & 2017): ▪ Food and nutrition baseline survey report - Kisumu
  - ▪ Geochemical survey rocks and quarries around Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
  - ▪ Geological survey rocks and quarries around Kisumu, Kenya
- Podcast "Hope in Kisumu" (2017), Seasonal Calendar #1 (2018), Project brochure (2018), Seasonal Calendar #2 (2019)
- Three PhD theses (to be completed in 2020)
- Six Master theses

Knowledge networks

EADI - INCLUDE - The Broker - AgriProFocus - NAFTC

Co-creation

In the process of knowledge sharing and laying the foundations of co-creation, local government and private sector stakeholders have become more attuned to WFEs diversified priorities and needs to access land and water resources, market space, enhance food commodity added-value, food security and income opportunities. On their sides, WFE groups have become more aware of the commonality of the obstacles and constraints that are shared across different groups in producing, processing and marketing food commodities in the urban and peri-urban slums. This has induced them to seek strength in the collective by identifying and establishing new linkages, with other WFE groups, private business and local government stakeholders. Finally, it is fair to conclude that all stakeholders involved have developed new understanding about a range of sustainable soil amendments that can be locally sourced, either from organic manure that some WFEs self-produce already, or from local mines in the form of rock dust (that is now a waste product). The project is now in the process of testing these soil amendments, separately and in different combinations. Soil characterization and rock dust analysis results have been shared with the WFE groups and local government and business stakeholders.

Consortium Partners

- Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research (NL)
- Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics, University of Amsterdam (NL)
- Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (Kenya)
- Victoria Institute for Research on Environment and Development (Kenya)
- Études Actions Conseils (Burkina Faso)
- Institute of Soil Science and Site Ecology, Technische Universität Dresden (Germany)
- Royal Tropical Institute (NL)
- Institute de Recherche en Sciences de la Santé (Burkina Faso)
- Agro Food and Technology Centre Africa (NL)
- BodemBergsma (NL)

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Project website

- F&BKP Research Project page