Women Food Entrepreneurs in Kenya and Burkina Faso

Building inclusive business models for food security in the city slums of Kisumu and Ouagadougou

The project aims to support women food entrepreneurs through a better understanding of the interactions between soil, food, nutrition, entrepreneurship and community. The project’s team, consisting of social and natural scientists, entrepreneurs and government actors, of Kenyan, Dutch and Burkinabé origin, looks to working with local communities and entrepreneurs to address challenges faced by women as food growers, processors and marketers.

The project kicked off in November 2015 and three PhD students were appointed; Likoko Eunice, a social scientist from Kenya, Tamara Jonkman, a natural scientist from the Netherlands and Janvier Kini, a social scientist from Burkina Faso. The field research started in January 2016 with a visit to several farming and marketing groups, such as those in Nyalanda and Obunga in Kisumu. Introductions were made and preliminary soil samples were taken from the farms. Since then, several Dutch students have visited the groups to do their master thesis work, and through this contribute to the project.

The soil samples taken have not yet been fully analyzed, but the first results tell of soil rich in nutrients like potassium (K) and phosphorus (P), which are important for plant growth. Research will continue in order to determine what has made the soil fertile and how fertility may be maintained. At the same time, the social scientists, led by Likoko Eunice, work to identify key informants and the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, in order to find opportunities for improvement. Results will be shared with all participants.