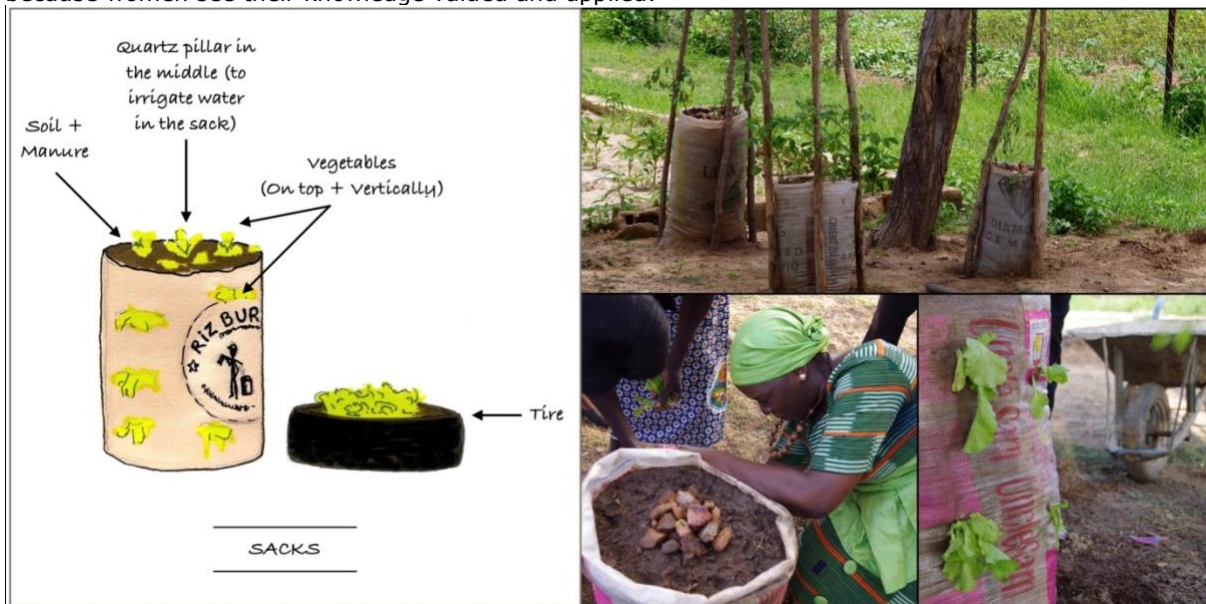


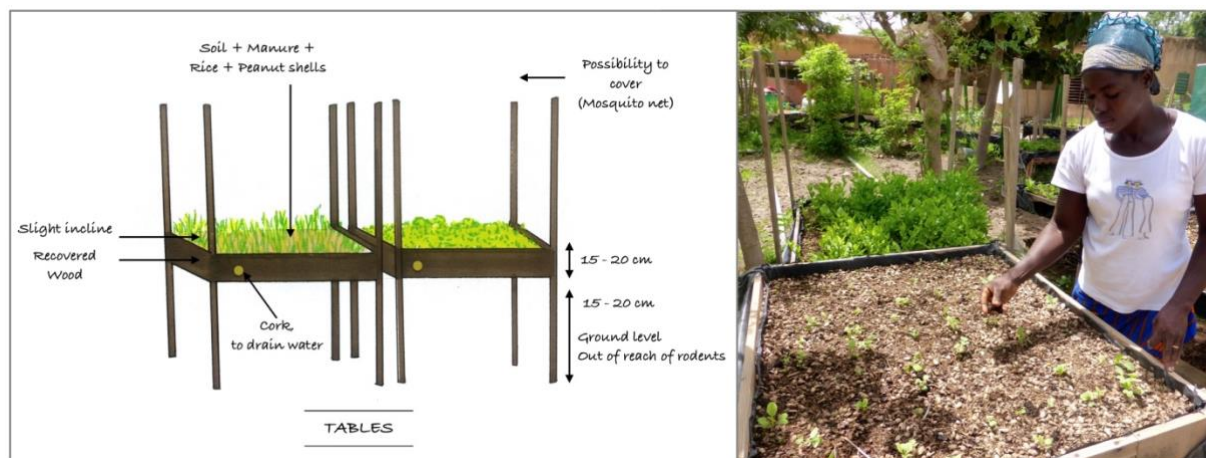
Three stories of Change: NOW-WOTRO funded Women Food Entrepreneurs Project in Burkina Faso and Kenya – by Nicky Pouw

Story 1 – Bottom-up innovations: learning from cross-site visits

In the fourth year of the project, the four WFE groups in Ouagadougou and the two groups in Kisumu, paid exchange visits to each other gardens. The project coordinated and facilitated these cross-site visits. During the visits, women learned about sustainable food production techniques, for example water preservation and irrigation, vertical gardening in sacks, and elevated tables to grow vegetables and control (scarce) water levels. These were examples of bottom-up innovations, self-constructed by the WFE groups to address daily challenges in the urban and peri-urban slum gardens, such as lack of space, protection of food quality, and water shortage. The WFE groups also gave each other explanations on how to self-construct these innovations. This form of knowledge exchange, builds on the idea that ‘seeing is believing’, and sets in motion knowledge sharing across community groups and the mutual validation and upscaling of these affordable, applicable and accessible innovations across food gardens. It also has an empowering effect, because women see their knowledge valued and applied.



Burkina Faso: vertical gardening using sacks 1



Burkina Faso: Elevated vegetable tables 2

Story 2 – Zuhura Abdallah: 'Champion' food market woman

Zuhura Abdallah is a female trader based at the Kibuye market in Kisumu city in Kenya. She has been selling vegetables and dried grains in the market for over 20 years. Zuhura is also a leader of the Kibuye market traders group. For Zuhura, knowledge brokering continues to be an opportunity to connect with other people with different ideas and opportunities, and to learn from each other. Her market based group initiative to turn market food waste into compost is an example of an inclusive and sustainable business model. In this project, Zuhura has innovatively led her group to connect with different researchers, government initiatives and consumers to develop a high quality government certified compost product. Zuhura has stood out as an innovative leader who uses her knowledge, networks, charisma and positionality in the market place to bring together consumers, traders, researchers and policy actors. She creatively uses her knowledge from scientists and experience in compost manure production to encourage more farmers to embrace the use of organic fertilizer. Her initiative continues to trigger a ripple effect that encourages continuous interactive learning, and promotes a robust food value chain with increased yields and profits for the farmer and the market traders. Our project team celebrated Zuhura Abdallah on her nomination as finalist for the Agrofood Broker of the Year Award. As a research team, we are proud to be associated with her: <https://knowledge4food.net/congratulations-to-zuhura-abdallah/>



Zuhura Abdallah



Kibuye Market group

Story 3 – Network Meetings & Market Fairs creating a Policy Moment

During the research it was found that many WFE groups lack a business and institutional network. As a result, they tend to service small markets by means of short value chains – i.e. direct sales of food commodities from producer to customers. During one of our networking workshops in Kisumu, which was combined with a market fair, the WFE groups had the opportunity to interact directly with the county governor Prof. Anyang Nyong'o. The success story of this project was hailed by the governor who took to address the key policy issues raised by project leader Dr. Nicky Pouw. First he took to acknowledge his admiration of urban farming giving an example of his one-time trip to Singapore where he was amazed at the scale and magnitude of city farming in balconies of city flats making him a champion for urban farming. He also promised, in line with the policy messages, that the ongoing Kisumu geo-physical and geo-spatial mapping and planning will take into account the identification and establishment of green spaces for food production and processing. He also proposed a hybrid system where the green spaces exist within the city and also in the suburbs, through satellite gardens. The Governor however, had reservations on the policy to promote animal husbandry in the city citing large number of cattle that is freely roaming the streets and causing havoc. The Women Food Entrepreneurs team agreed with removing freely moving animals from the city. The steps addressed by the governor opens the way for the various stakeholders in Kisumu, especially the women food entrepreneurs, to be directly involved in the urban planning process, urban development programs. It is important to learn from their experiences and innovative methods to sustain 'mini-farming' in small spaces. Hopefully in the future, there is more opportunity to explore new partnerships of women food entrepreneur groups

with the county government of Kisumu, Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) and the business community (including banks) among others:
<https://gleanermagazine.wordpress.com/2019/02/20/governor-nyongo-goes-green-by-embracing-green-spaces-for-urban-agriculture-in-kisumu-city/>



Kisumu networking workshop & market fair



Kisumu Governor Prof Anyang Nyong'o, Prof JB Okeyo-Owuor (VIREC) and Dr Nicky Pouw (UvA)