NUTRiGREEN Project – Promoting Green Nutrition for the Sahel Region
Project Fact Sheet

Project summary The NUTRiGREEN project studies the value chains of traditional African plants, to determine the incremental, systemic, and transformative adaptations required to boost their impact in the local and regional agri-food system. Together with farmers, consumers and other value chain stakeholders, we research their current status and future potentials from farm to folk. Climate-resilient and agroecological practices are at the centre of the project design. Moreover, NUTRiGREEN actively promotes locally selected traditional plants, for example spiderplant, cowpea or hibiscus, in the two project regions - Zitenga in Burkina Faso, and Thies in Senegal - and supports local agripreneurs creating new products, jointly develops new recipes with culinary experts, and initiates school gardens at local schools. Following a "Living Lab" research concept, NUTRiGREEN employs a co-research approach where academics and farmers merge their knowledge systems to innovate and create impact. The project actively supports and engages young academics.

Direct project partners:

Burkina Faso:
1. *L'Institut de recherche en sciences de la santé (IRSS)*
2. *Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo Ouagadougou (UJKZ)*

Germany:
Centre for Rural Development (SLE) at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Senegal:
Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD)

Sweden:
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)
PROJECT LEAD

Extended project partners:

ASW (BF & SN) · Africrops! · CEAS Burkina · Help (BF) · Agrecol Afrique (SN)

Project funders:

Sweden · Burkina Faso · Germany · Senegal · European Union

Background

Burkina Faso and Senegal, both part of the Sahel region, are subjected to a triple burden of high population growth, increased vulnerability to climate change and prevalent food insecurity. Hence, it is now more important than ever to a) assist their efforts to transform how and what foods are being produced and consumed, b) adapt agricultural systems to climate change impacts, c) minimise the negative environmental impact of food production, d) increase consumption of healthy and nutritious foods, and e) improve the economic wellbeing of all actors in the food system.

Traditional plants in West Africa have important nutritional and pharmacological properties. In addition, many traditional plants can better adapt to climate change due to their tolerance to both abiotic and biotic stresses. They also have a great agronomic advantage, as most of them grow fast, provide a year-round supply of nutritious food, and have high potential for regular income generation.

Duration of the project

June 2021 – May 2024

Objectives and methodological approaches

FOOD SYSTEM LEVEL

1. **Objective:** To research and understand the economic potential and bottlenecks in the traditional plant value chains and to recommend tangible solutions
   Method: Economic analysis of the value chains (VC) of traditional plants to establish their national & regional potential – conducted as part of two PhD theses

PRODUCTION STAGE

2. **Objective**: To improve the sustainable year-round production of traditional plants, and to protect local soils by applying agroecological production methods
   Method: Providing agroecological training, and implementing these new practices in two cycles of climate field schools with local co-researcher farmers

3. **Objective**: To link project results to the Great Green Wall Initiative, and establish the potential of traditional plants to become economically viable non-timber products (NTPs)
   Method: Open dialogue with Great Green Wall Initiative project and possible small-scale trials

PROCESSING STAGE

4. **Objective:** To create and promote new healthy products containing traditional plants
   Method: Host entrepreneurs' training to co-develop new products and marketing strategies

CONSUMPTION STAGE

5. **Objective**: To sensitise local population about the health benefits of consuming traditional plants and promote knowledge on how to prepare them
   Methods: i) Run social media campaign, ii) TV cooking program with nationally known culinary experts, iii) recipe competition, and iv) living labs

6. **Objective**: To educate and enthuse the young generation about healthy nutrition
   Method: Set up school gardens with traditional plants

ACADEMIC & POLICY OBJECTIVES

7. **Objective**: To support young academics in Burkina Faso and Senegal
   Methods: i) Supervise and fund two PhDs, ii) engage Master students to conduct household survey and consumer basket scan, iii) engage Master student to monitor meteorological learning, and iv) engage Master student to oversee and document climate field school

8. **Objective:** To introduce, implement and evaluate a co-researching approach with farmers, consumers and students
   Methods: i) Implement living lab concept, ii) provide co-research training and evaluate activities with the farmers, iii) conduct a participatory consumer basket scan, and iv) train farmers in photovoice technique to document collective learning

9. **Objective:** Further awareness, acceptance and promotion of traditional plants at the policy-level
   Methods: Generate simple production manuals, publish policy briefs and engage the relevant ministries at events – especially during the final NUTRiGREEN conference

Project activities

Phase	Dates	Activities	Location	Partner responsible
Initiation Phase (June - September 2021)	15. & 16. 06.2021	FOSC-ERA Net Kick-Off with introduction of all projects	Online	SLU & IRSS
	05.07.2021	UN Science Days	Online	IRSS & SLU
	Sept 2021	Kick-Off event in Burkina Faso – Meeting of project partners Signing of Consortium Agreement – Selection of crops – Training on co-creation of knowledge & transformative action learning and HHS planning and conduction	Ouagadougou	IRSS & SLE
Year 1 2021-2022	Oct 2021	Baseline Household Survey, direct observation & transect walks	Zitenga /Thies	UJKZ, UCAD & SLE
	Oct 21	Start of agrometeorological learning and weather data collection	Zitenga /Thies	NGO & SLE
	May 2022	Agripreneur Training	Zitenga /Thies	SLU
	May/June 2022	Set up living labs Set up school kitchen gardens	Zitenga /Thies	CEAS, Help & SLU
Year 2 2022/23	May 2022	Agroecology training Video training for photovoice	Zitenga /Thies	Groundswell International , Agrecol Afrique
	May - Sept 2022	Climate Field Schools – Year 1		SOS & SLE
	Max/June 2022	Consumer Basket Scan	Zitenga /Thies	UJKZ, UCAD & SLU
	May - Sept 2023	Climate Field Schools – Year 2	Zitenga /Thies	SLE
Year 3 2023- May 2024	Sept 2023	TV culinary expert	Ouagadougou / Dakar	SLU
	Sept -Dec 2023	Recipe contest with NGOs and Social Media Campaign	Burkina Faso / Senegal	IRSS & SLU, CEAS, Help
	Oct 2023	Endline Household Survey, direct observation & transect walks	Zitenga /Thies	UJKZ, UCAD & SLE
	Dec 2023	NUTRiGREEN Conference	Dakar	UCAD & SLU
	31 May 2024	Project end		SLE