



Position

Food/Nutrition Security and
Livelihoods Asst. Projects Officer

Institution

Dan Church Aid (DCA), Kenya

Country

Kenya

Education

MSc, Food Science and
Technology, Jomo Kenyatta
University of Agriculture and
Technology, Kenya

Mentor

Dr. Chrysantus Tanga, Senior
Research Scientist, International
Centre of Insect Physiology and
Ecology (ICIPE), Kenya

Research Area

Food security and nutrition and
technology.

Edwin Kamau Wanjiku

2021 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Edwin Kamau Wanjiku works as an assistant food security and livelihoods officer in the Kakuma refugee camp in Turkana county, Northwestern Kenya. He implements agricultural and livelihood programs that promote vegetable production, poultry farming, insect farming, and the formation of savings and loans associations among community members. They also provide in-kind support and cash grants to support fish traders build their businesses. "These programs help people," he asserts.

Edwin finished his BSc in 2013 and then completed his MSc in food science and technology in 2018 at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. "I want to enhance my studies, but I want to work at the same time," he says.

The organization he works for is Denmark-based Dan Church Aid (DCA). He says his motivation is seeing his country's good climate and robust agricultural sector, yet food shortages are causing people to die of hunger. "It is so frustrating, and my hope is to empower people," he asserts.

Now married with one son, Kamau says, "I usually work in Turkana for eight weeks, and then I'm home for one week, and this can be challenging."

He also notes that it can be challenging to try to work and do research simultaneously. "Trying to integrate the two as a common unit is sometimes hard, and also after you have written a scientific paper and want to publish, it is often hard to find funding."

He and his coworkers are now busy promoting insect farming. "We have worked on crickets, and now we are working on black soldier flies," he says. "We are promoting farming of these insects, which can be added to cattle feed, pig feed, and chicken feed to add protein."

They work in the rural area of northwest Kenya. "We start by recruiting beneficiaries from the refugee camp," he explains.

"We first train our beneficiaries using theoretical and practical demonstrations and then issue them with farming tools and inputs so that they can start farming. We are always available to assist them during the farming process in any way we can." Although they are happy to get the help, "the concept of using insects is weird to some of them," he admits. "But we are showing them how to use them and how it will benefit them."

Edwin heard about the One Planet Fellowship from a close friend who knew what he was doing, so he went ahead and applied.

“The outline of the program helps to build research skills and mentoring skills, and I am very happy to have been selected,” he remarks.

Edwin’s goal is to eventually be in a position to be a decision-maker in food security. “I have gained many skills to climb the career ladder so I can make decisions that benefit my community,” he concludes.

Edwin is working to promote food and nutrition security in northern Kenya by producing high-quality insect protein at the household level.

Edwin Kamau Wanjiku is one of the growing number of candidates selected to participate in the One Planet Fellowship. The One Planet Fellowship is a career development initiative that is building a robust pipeline of highly connected, inter-generational scientists equipped to use a gender lens to help Africa’s smallholder farmers cope with climate change. The One Planet Fellowship is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the BNP Paribas Foundation, the European Union and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC). African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) and Agropolis Fondation are jointly implementing the Fellowship.

Do you have any further questions? Send an email to : oneplanet.award@cgiar.org

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