The Chinese Juncao mushroom technology has significantly enabled Rwandan farmers to alleviate poverty and improve household nutrition, Permanent Secretary in the Rwandan Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources Olivier Kamana has said.

The State Minister said on the sidelines of an African regional workshop on applications of Juncao technology, in Kigali, Rwanda, on Tuesday.

“Juncao technology has considerably improved our farmers’ lives. It brings mushrooms that are edible in our households, helping us alleviate poverty and improve household nutrition,” Kamana said.

He added that several small and medium-sized enterprises are involved in the cultivation of mushrooms using Juncao technology which has boosted household income.

“Poor families that are engaged in the cultivation of mushrooms using Juncao technology are able to generate income from mushroom sales, which has enabled them to pay school fees for their children and access household medical care, Kamana noted.

“The technology is environmentally friendly, it helps protect our environment and it can be practiced on a small plot of land or even indoors. It is not complicated and this makes it highly beneficial to our communities,” Kamana added.

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The Chinese technology was introduced in Rwanda in 2006; with over 35,000 receiving training. Only 15,000 farmers benefit from cultivating the fungi.

Mushroom farming with Juncao technology was carried out in Rwanda in 2006, through a bilateral cooperation of the Chinese government and Rwanda.

The Juncao technology, which in Chinese means breeding fungi with herbaceous plants.

Jane Uwimana, one of the mushroom farmers using the technology, says that she plans to expand her project in the cell where she lives.

“At the moment, I’m gathering single mothers in my cell because they’ve children and in most cases they’re affected by poverty, they’d don’t have money to buy mushrooms, meat or fish which contain proteins” She points out.

“Mushroom contain proteins, therefore in my project, I plan to train some mothers, after we shall solicit for equipment before we start cultivating the fungi. Finding marketing will not be hard since we can’t satisfy the available market: She Uwimana.

Apart from feeding their babies, Uwimana believed that project will help the single mothers to fight poverty, have some income to meet other basic household needs

Nathan Ndabihawenimana a mushroom farmer in Gatsata, Gasabo district says, “Asmall piece of land can be used to grow almost 400 grams in four months. I kilogram of mushroom on the market cost Rwf around 2,000 US$ 2.” Ndabihawenimana reveals.

Rwanda Agriculture body, Dr. Florence Uwamaroho underlined that they don’t wish farmers to stay behind; we’re urging them to come for training and seeds so that they can grow the fungi in order to fight poverty.