

They have formed a group called MUUNGANO, which now has 90 members producing roots in the area. They have doubled their productivity and are now producing five tons of roots. These are then used for their own consumption, sale as roots and for processing. They have improved the health and income of their own families and neighbours but also many others in the area. When they are ready to sell they connect with traders by text messages or by calling.

Back in early 2012 although the Chatundu family had a big surplus they were still unable to earn the extra money they needed to pay school fees and supplement their subsistence farming. However, by September, 2013 the Chatundus have been able to plant two extra acres of OFSP and have paid school fees for their daughter.

"This document has been produced with the assistance of the World Bank administered Multi Donor Trust Fund to ASARECA financed by the European Union, the UK Department for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency and the United States Agency for International Development. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of ASARECA and her implementing partners and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the contributors to the Trust Fund."



Rajabu Chatundu – conducting village resource mapping with other members of thematic group. (credit I. Ndyetabura).

## Learning Cases for promoting market development

### for orange-fleshed sweetpotato in East and Central Africa

Together we are stronger – contemporary Ujamaa in North Western Tanzania

Tanzanian farmer  
Rajabu Chatundu, 36,  
lives in a remote part  
of Kasindaga where  
he leads a tough and  
demanding life.

"I stay about 60 km from the nearest district town of Muleba and 130 Km from Bukoba Municipal town – the regional head quarters" says Chatundu. A subsistence farmer, he lives an often hand-to-mouth existence, reliant on the weather and luck. As is common with most of his neighbours, his family suffers from malnutrition, an affliction that particularly affects his eight children at a time of life when good health and nutrition is extremely important.

Chatundu's family is one of many in Tanzania who do not receive adequate nutrition. The level of malnutrition in the country was estimated to range at 20 - 25% in 2005. The situation has been getting worse – up to 40% in 2010 although it varies from one location to another.

Until February 2012 Chatundu was growing a variety of crops on five acres of land with the help of his two wives Plaxeda Chatundu and Paulina Chatundu. For many years his farming business has been affected by lack of access to profitable markets. On top of marketing problems he also faces other challenges such as erratic weather, disease outbreaks, low yielding crop varieties, and poor soil fertility. As a coping strategy, he has experimented with cassava, maize, onions and white-fleshed sweetpotatoes. Notwithstanding his best efforts, Mr. Chatundu has never realized a good enough profit to sustain his family. "For many years I have been growing a variety of annual crops but I have always been paid cut-throat prices" said Chatundu.



This Learning Case is a "work in progress" developed under the project "Scaling up Technologies in Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato Using the Agricultural Innovation System (AIS) to Address Food and Nutrition Security in Eastern and Central Africa". The project duration was from February 2012 to October 2013 with funding provided through the ASARECA Multi Donor Trust Fund. This regional project operated in target districts in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The overall project was led by the Lake Zone Agricultural Research and Development Institute (LZARDI), Tanzania with technical backstopping from the International Potato Center (CIP), sub-Saharan Africa Regional Office.

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@ October 2013.  
Visit the Sweetpotato Knowledge Portal:  
[www.sweetpotatoknowledge.org](http://www.sweetpotatoknowledge.org)

Mrs Chautundu off on her bicycle taking the roots to the collection point. (credit I. Ndyetabura)



**Capturing Our Learning:** An interactive "write-shop" (facilitated by Well Told Story) was held to capture participants stories. Participatory role-plays explored what happened in different countries along the value chain. Divided into 3 acts the role plays portrayed the problem being faced; the solution; and the new reality. A mock radio phone-in show was used to tease out technical issues. Commentators and facilitators identified significant "ah-haa" moments, probing actors and directors for more information, allowing commentators to explore how things happened differently across countries. Recording the information was a crucial part of the process! Participants took notes, spokespeople for each play recorded the action and "ah-haa" moments were recorded on flipcharts. By the end of 2 days, we had stories with heroes and data which danced. Countries had also deepened their understanding about their own value chain activities, and had shared valuable experiences.

Despite already growing white-fleshed sweetpotato, Mr. Chatundu had not heard about the life-giving properties and other advantages of orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) until he came into contact with our project. OFSP grow and taste similar to WFSP, but have a number of additional benefits. OFSP are rich in Vitamin A, and cooking takes less time and needs less water than with other varieties. The Vitamin A and other nutrients in OFSP counter malnutrition, blindness and contribute to overall good health.

In 2012 our consortium of Maruku Agricultural Research Institute, Kolping Society of Tanzania, Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) and the district extension officers of Muleba district met Mr. Chatundu and his family at their home. The consortium had joined together to use the Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA) to promote OFSP. The PMCA encourages the commercialisation of OFSP through building trust and cohesion among value chain actors. The trust among actors increases collaboration to take advantage of the available market opportunities. A gender lens was included in the process to make women producers, traders and processors more visible, actively involving them and identifying the specific constraints they face in carrying out their productive activities. It was found

that women can be a real driver of economic change if given the necessary visibility and support.

Building on the fact that they were already accustomed to sweetpotato in the Kasindaga area, we encouraged the Chatundu family to grow OFSP by telling them about their benefits:

- Early maturing
- Rich in Vitamins A,B, C and a good source of energy
- Use less fuel and water during cooking
- Have good processing characteristics
- OFSP based enterprises are generally profitable and empower women

Just telling the Chatundu family about the benefits of OFSP was not enough however. On our advice, Mr. Chatundu, with the support of his wives, grew half an acre of OFSP in 2012 but was unable to sell the surplus. Long distances to market and a distrust of new products worked against him, as did the fact that sweetpotatoes are traditionally thought of as a “woman’s crop”, grown for home consumption rather than sale.

Our PMCA core group members Maruku Agricultural Research Institute, Kolping Society and SIDO worked together with Mr. Chatundu to solve his and his neighbours’ problems. We organised a Rapid Market Assessment in the area, which unearthed the fact that there was much distrust in the value chain. We realised that we needed to bring together traders, transporters, processors and growers to promote and market the new crop. Using the PMCA process, we set up thematic groups around producers and traders that brought together all the key members of the value chain.

Traders at retail level, who are mainly female, didn’t trust other value chain actors, most of whom appear to be men; we found however, that women were much more involved at farm level than their husbands were willing to admit! We also discovered that transporters needed more money to bring the crop to market than other actors were willing to pay. In the course of five thematic group meetings we connected farmers to traders, creating cohesion and trust; we trained members on how to process and conserve OFSP and we took key chain actors on a study tour so that all actors became aware of each others’ challenges and opportunities. Most important of all, by analysing the value

chain together we helped the various actors to empathise with each other and see the obstacles from each other’s angles.

“It was great, because previously farmers were viewing us traders as cheaters a situation which tempts farmers to demand high price disregarding the high transaction costs we incur” said Zurfan Sylivery, a sweetpotato trader from Kashai market in Bukoba municipal town.

“By working together, the group became more nimble,” says Cypridion Mushongi Senior Agricultural Research Officer at Maruku Agricultural Research Institute. “We thought that the long distances involved to attend meetings would be a big obstacle but in fact, we found that chain actors were so keen to come to town that it was in fact an incentive for them”.

In the course of the meetings, one of the traders Zurfan Sylivery identified that transport costs were a big issue for small-scale farmers like the Chatundus. She came up with the revolutionary idea of sharing these high transport costs between OFSP growers and market traders, an idea that has transformed the market in their region.

Sorting roots from Chatundu’s harvest. (credit I. Ndyetabura)



Sacks of roots at the collection point waiting to be collected and taken to the market. (credit I. Ndyetabura)

