

Bosco agrees: "We shall get more market from different people. They are selling points for OFSP roots, vines and other OFSP processed products; they help to link buyers and sellers for the different products and they also serve as high visibility points for OFSP as they are painted orange and promote the health-giving attributes of OFSP".

At the contact point in Kitgum Lucy Odong is now responsible for processing the dried chips that supply Mr. Mutyaba's factory. Mr. Mutyaba's life is much easier since his supply of raw material is now more assured. "The contact points help me to get raw material at a reduced price and at a reduced transport cost," says Mutyaba.

Currently, Julius Mutyaba produces 1200 OFSP based doughnuts per day and supplies them to four districts of Acholi Sub- region in Lamwo, Pader, Kitgum and Agago. He uses the "boda-boda" motorcyclists to supply his doughnuts to Pader, Agago and Lamwo. However, for Kitgum he mostly uses bicycles and rarely engages "boda-bodas". Mutyaba used to produce only 900 wheat based doughnuts per day so this is a big growth in turnover.

Other processors (more than 90% female) also benefited by getting the raw materials without much difficulty, while traders (mostly women) have used the contact point for customers to access their main business products, which include OFSP roots and other processed products. Today traders who need these products can just go to the contact point and make orders with a set time for delivery. The farmers, 70% of whom are women, have also benefited because when their roots and vines are ready they know that taking the products to the contact point can get them to markets very fast. Therefore they produce knowing their products have a ready market. "Contact points are great because they have transformed the lives of people in Kitgum" says Dorcus Alum from BRAC.

The PMCA process highlighted the problem and facilitated its solution. "We find the PMCA process works really well, even when people are against each other because it builds cohesion and trust" said Paul Rachkara PMCA facilitator from Virtuous Spring Ltd. "Although it is more than eight years since communities returned after the civil war there is still some mistrust. Without the PMCA, we would never have been able to introduce the successful contact point process".

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Displaying OFSP processed products. (credit J. Jagwe)



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.



Training in business planning. (credit J. Jagwe)

Learning Cases for promoting market development for orange-fleshed sweetpotato in East and Central Africa

Simple answers for complex problems:
Contact Points as a Tool for Enhancing Market Linkages in the OFSP value chain

"There was a problem among the PMCA thematic group stakeholders who were self-centred and not willing to allow other stakeholders to benefit. Julius Mutyaba, a large processor did not have any one to provide him with dry OFSP chips because no one was willing to slice and dry them".

During a PMCA facilitators meeting Lydia Kutegeka and Paul Rachkara came up with an idea to set up contact points. And this proved to be a better solution to the problem.

At first, we had no idea about contact points but it just came up as we were looking for a solution to the above mentioned problem, remarked Kutegeka.

In 2012, members of the Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato thematic group in Acholi sub-region of northern Uganda were having great difficulties making a profit because of breakdown in trust among each other. This learning case examines how using the Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA), a consortium of stakeholders facilitated rebuilding of trust and produced a novel but simple answer to the problems being faced by market chain actors in the region. This process was facilitated by BRAC - an international NGO working with Gulu University; Virtuous Springs Limited (VSL) - an agribusiness support company; and the International Potato Center (CIP) with funding support from ASARECA. They are part of a project, which aims to scale up orange-fleshed sweetpotato technologies using the agricultural innovation system.

Within this project BRAC and Gulu University used a methodology called the Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA); that works in three phases. After the phase 1 final event male and female value chain actors divided themselves into two thematic groups based on their specific interests. The first group included the vine and root producers and the



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second group was the value addition group for processors. Each group held at least six meetings during which actors along the market chain took part. This allowed farmers to view the chain through the eyes of traders and processors and vice versa.

In the course of the thematic group meetings, BRAC discovered that there were many disagreements between actors in the different PMCA thematic groups. Farmers in the vine and root thematic group wanted to be the only beneficiaries of any support provided to the vine and root group and did not consider support for other actors such as traders and processors - in the other thematic group - as worthwhile.

"Even without traders we can still have a market for our product" Reverend Benjamin Obote said in one meeting. In response the facilitator replied "It is important to involve traders even if they don't produce vines and roots because they purchase your product".

The traders made a decision to stop attending the group meetings. There was a particular argument going on between farmers and processors regarding the sale and supply of dry chips. During the argument, one farmer Angwech Hellen said "we are not willing to sell our dried

chips to these processors as they are not going to provide us with enough money".

This particularly affected 29 years old Julius Mutyaba. Not yet married, he lives in Kitgum town, located about 500 km north of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda; where he operates a bakery. His production costs are high because he has to use expensive imported wheat flour for his baked products.

Mr. Mutyaba had first been exposed to OFSP in 2012 and tried to partially substitute wheat flour with OFSP flour in his bakery products. After managing to get the proportions in his recipes right, he was then faced with the challenge of getting a consistent and adequate supply of OFSP dried chips for making flour. Julius shared this problem in one of the regular PMCA meetings that we hold to develop trust and lubricate the links of the OFSP value chain. "I am willing to continue to use OFSP as an ingredient in my baking, but if I do this can you guarantee a regular supply of OFSP dried chips?" Julius asked a group of farmers, traders, researchers, and processors who were participating in a PMCA meeting held in Kitgum in March 2013.

The farmers gave him an assurance that they were capable of supplying him with fresh OFSP roots but not the dried

chips, which he preferred. So Julius faced a second challenge of converting the fresh roots into dried chips. He did not consider this his core business and it would also be costly in terms of his time and resources. Farmers said that they would only agree to supply dried chips if the cost for processing them could be included in the price of the dried product.

However, the root producers were mistrusting of everyone and were sure that they would be cheated by the small-scale processors who were members of the other thematic group. The second joint meeting between the groups ended with little resolved, a matter of great concern to the facilitators.

The PMCA core team of facilitators brainstormed around how to resolve this problem. BRAC's Lydia Kutegeka came up with the idea of setting up contact points where information on all OFSP products would be available and they could also be bought and sold.

"A contact point will bring more cohesion to the market chain and help build trust; it would be a place that anyone involved in the value chain could visit in each of the districts of Kitgum and Pader" she said. And with the agreement of Paul Rachkara another facilitator, decided to discuss the

idea of establishing a contact point with the thematic group members.

Lydia introduced the idea into the next meeting of the two thematic groups and at first the response was not very positive. The vine and root group argued that, "selling in only one place would really cause conflict among the members". The traders thought that contact points would not work because sharing of benefits would be difficult while taking responsibility would not be easy. However, after much discussion, they agreed that they would give it a try and the members agreed to choose a contact person for selling of OFSP products in each district (one in Kitgum and one in Pader). Group member Mr. Julius Mutyaba said, "I have enough space at my factory; you can utilize it" so it was decided to try the use of contact points.

In Kitgum Mr. Mutyaba provided space for the contact point and in Pader Otim Bosco, married with one child and a farmer in the PMCA value addition group, provided space for another. These places were given by members free of charge as a contribution to the PMCA process.

Now contact points serve as knowledge and information hubs for the whole OFSP value chain. "This is better for all of us," Mutyaba says.

Delivery of OFSP quality vines - the first step in chain. (credit J. Jagwe)



Sampling OFSP Processed products. (credit J. Jagwe)

