

## Annex 14

### **I. Promoting Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotatoes for household food and nutrition security**

For 3 years, the districts of Dedza, Phalombe, Mulanje - under the guidance of Concern Universal - and Chikhwawa - under the management of Catholic Development Commission-CADECOM- and the Millennium Villages Project in Zomba have been advocating and implementing a programme centred on Orange Fleshed Sweetpotatoes to improve food and nutrition security in Malawi.

In Mwandama, in Zomba District, the Millennium Villages Project with financial assistance from the Irish Aid and technical oversight by the International Potato Centre, began a programme called the “Rooting out Hunger with nutritious orange-fleshed sweetpotato in Malawi”.

The orange fleshed sweet potato seed is multiplied through a system called Decentralized Vine Multiplication. This system provides clean planting material that is distributed to farmers that are participating in the voucher system. The programme provides orange fleshed sweetpotato planting material at the beginning of rainy season. As a result an abundant harvest has been realised.

There has been sensitisation of the community on orange fleshed sweetpotato through the training of lead farmers who are currently multiplying the seed. Orange fleshed sweetpotato has a great source of valuable nutrients such as Vitamin A, fibre, vitamin B, zinc and iron.

Preparation of the orange fleshed sweetpotato at household level traditionally was just roasting, boiling and eating the potatoes raw.

Trainings are being done with groups of women on how to make nutritious meals with orange fleshed sweetpotatoes. This activity targets the woman the primary beneficiary of this training, because usually women are the ones who look after the family and are responsible for meal preparation. Providing trainings on orangefleshed sweetpotato receipes is an on-going activity which has seen many women change their cooking habits and begin incorporating orange fleshed sweet potatoes into their daily meals.

Today, in the Millennium Development Village in Zomba, women in the community are preparing various dishes and drinks made from the orange fleshed sweetpotatoes. These dishes have been created and adapted to bring variety to the preparation of the orange fleshed sweet potato. The recipes are nutritious and tasty. These dishes are designed for every member of the family, young and old, male or female. However, the principal target groups are infants, young children, pregnant women, lactating mothers and chronically ill people.

This new radio series sets out to outline the many dishes that orange fleshed sweetpotatoes can contribute to. Essentially, any dish with orange fleshed sweet potato enhances the intake of Vitamin A and other micro nutrients and prevent the complications of Vitamin A Deficiency such as limited growth, weakened immunity, xerophthalmia which leads to night blindness, and increase mortality.

As World Food Day approaches, partners that work toward scaling up the intake of orange fleshed sweet potatoes in Malawi, look forward in anticipation to the day when

orange fleshed sweet potato shall be considered the staple food and Vitamin A deficiency has been reduced in Malawi.

If more information on Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato is required, please contact Dr. Putri E Abidin (CIP-Malawi) and Dr. Felistus Chipungu (DARS) for further information.

## **II. Getting Vitamin A rich orange fleshed sweet potato into the diets of the most vulnerable groups in our community**

### **Who are the vulnerable groups in the community?**

Women of child bearing age, Pregnant and Lactating Mothers, Children under 5 and special emphasis on those under two, Chronically ill patients and the elderly

### **How do vulnerable groups access Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato planting materials?**

The International Potato Center (CIP) and Department of Agricultural Research Services of Malawi have a partnership that produce clean orange fleshed sweet potato planting material. This material can also be accessed through the Millennium Development Project in Zomba, the Catholic Development Commission in Chikhwawa, and Concern Universal in Dedza, Phalombe and Mulanje. The process of disbursing planting materials through various stakeholders is called Decentralized Seed Multiplication. Decentralised Seed Multiplication distribution is mostly through a voucher system. In the dry/winter season, orange fleshed sweetpotato can be grown on irrigated fields.

Irish Aid is currently funded the Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato Programme in Malawi.

### **The benefit of growing orange fleshed sweet potatoes.**

1. Orange Fleshed sweetpotatoes have more nutrients than most staple foods, including ordinary white sweetpotato. Orange fleshed sweetpotato is high in Vitamin A.
2. Orange fleshed sweetpotato is an important food crop in terms of food diversification. It can be produced in the winter months, is drought resistant and has a high energy source.
3. Crop diversification.

### **Why emphasis on vitamin A**

Orange-fleshed sweet potato roots and leaves contain a diverse array of vitamins and minerals with potential nutritional benefits.

Vitamin A is an essential micronutrient for human health. Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) is widespread among young children in the developing world; globally, 127 million children under six years of age are estimated to be affected (West, 2002). Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and India have the highest estimated prevalence rates of sub-clinical vitamin A deficiency. Vitamin A deficiency can limit growth, weaken immunity, cause xerophthalmia leading to blindness, and increase mortality.

OFSP is bio available and efficacious in improving vitamin A status in children. Orange-fleshed sweet potato as a staple food has an advantage over most vegetables in that it can supply significant amounts of vitamin A and energy simultaneously -- thus helping to address both Vitamin A deficiency and under nutrition. Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato is an example of a bio fortified crop in which the micronutrient status of staple foods is enhanced through plant breeding to the point where impact on micronutrient status can be achieved.

Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato leaves are also consumed in many countries. The leaves also contain significant amounts of beta-carotene, but bioavailability is certain to be much lower than for the Orangefleshed sweetpototo roots.

**Maximizing consumption through variety in dishes**

All dishes made from raw, grated, flour etc

1. Doughnuts
2. Fritters
3. Drop scones
4. Buns and bread
5. Casseroles – small fish. Peas, green beans, pignon peas, green vegetables
6. in ground nut sauce – grilled or not
7. porridge
8. Fries
9. Crisps
10. Juice