



MALAWI GOVERNMENT



# CEDECOM

## DIOCESE OF CHIKWAWA



***“Rooting out Hunger in Malawi with Nutritious Orange-fleshed Sweet potato.”***

**CIP FINAL REPORT (OCTOBER 2011-SEPTEMBER 2012)**

**(CIP PROJECT NUMBER 11004)**

---

*P.O. Box 162, Chikwawa*

*Phone: (265) 01 420 284*

*Cell: (265) 0888 504 406*

*E-mail: [ckcadecom@malawi.net](mailto:ckcadecom@malawi.net)*

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

***Rooting out Hunger in Malawi with Nutritious Orange-fleshed Sweet Potato*** is a 4.5-year programme being implemented by Chikwawa CADECOM, Chikhwawa District Ministry of Agriculture Office, Bvumbwe Agriculture Research and International Sweet Potato Centre at Bvumbwe Research Station. The programme is now at the end of the third year of its implementation.

The program goal at national level is *“To improve vitamin A and energy intake for at least 70,000 rural households with women and young children using orange-fleshed sweet potato-based approaches, ensure that at least 20% of households growing OFSP earn at least \$100 USD per year from OFSP sales, and increase average sweet potato yields 50%”*. Its main objectives are *“To evaluate which OFSP varieties perform and taste best to local producers and consumers in Chikhwawa district”* and *“To identify and establish 12 Decentralized Vine Producers and test the use of vouchers as a distribution mechanism”*

The programme is being implemented at Mitole, Mbewe and Livunzu Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) in Chikhwawa District. In the selected EPAs, communities rely on summer cropping (main rain fed cropping season from November to April each year) and the crops grown include sorghum, millet, and cotton, rice, maize and vegetable. During winter, from the months of April to November every year, Maize, vegetables and sweet potatoes are also produced through irrigation and residual moisture.

The programme impact areas are:

| District | EPA          | Parish                              | Beneficiaries |              |
|----------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|          |              |                                     | 2010/2011     | 2011/2012    |
| Chikwawa | Livunzu      | Makhuwira                           | 941           | 2,110        |
|          | Mitole       | Kasisi, Mlilima, Katunga and Maseya | 628           | 2,298        |
|          | Mbewe        | Lundu, Ndakwera                     | 557           | 1,800        |
|          | <b>Total</b> |                                     | <b>2126</b>   | <b>6,208</b> |

## **2.0 PROJECT CONTEXT**

Chikhwawa district experienced some dry spells in the 2011/2012 season. The dry spell was unfortunately experienced during the month of February when most of the crops were at critical period of crop development. This resulted into low production of most crops such as maize, sorghum, millet, sweet potato. Farmers that were growing Zondeni sweet potatoes during winter cropping were able to get some produce compared to those that only relied on summer cropping.

Zondeni sweet potatoes produce proved itself as an important food security crop for the farmers affected by the dry sells.

Find below the rainfall situation tabulated from October to March 2012:-

| Rainfall Station | October |    | November |    | December |    | January |    | February |    | March |    | To date |    | Same Time Last Season (2010/2011) |    |
|------------------|---------|----|----------|----|----------|----|---------|----|----------|----|-------|----|---------|----|-----------------------------------|----|
|                  | mm      | rd | mm       | rd | mm       | rd | mm      | rd | Mm       | rd | mm    | rd | mm      | rd | mm                                | rd |
| Mbewe            | 51.0    | 2  | 113.5    | 4  | 59.5     | 4  | 165.8   | 9  | 33.0     | 2  | 127.0 | 5  | 549.8   | 26 | 563.1                             | 25 |
| Mitole           | 15.4    | 5  | 26.7     | 6  | 83.5     | 7  | 289.9   | 14 | 20.0     | 6  | 91.7  | 6  | 527.2   | 44 | 549.1                             | 42 |
| Livunzu          | 0       | 0  | 78.2     | 2  | 119.0    | 4  | 547.0   | 9  | 187.4    | 6  | 392.4 | 4  | 1324.0  | 25 | 1165.1                            | 28 |
| Average Rainfall | 22.1    | 2  | 72.8     | 4  | 87.3     | 5  | 334.2   | 11 | 80.1     | 5  | 203.7 | 5  | 800.3   | 32 | 759.1                             | 32 |

### **3.0 PROJECT GOAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Project Goal**

- To improve vitamin A and energy intake for 6,200 vulnerable households in 3 EPAs of Chikhwawa district with emphasis on pregnant women and young children using orange-fleshed sweet potato.

#### **3.2 Specific Objectives**

- *To improve vitamin A intake for rural vulnerable groups in Malawi through effective establishment of DVMs and media based creation*
- *Increase effective demand by changing the perception of sweet potato and develop fresh root marketing chain for OFSP in the Blantyre market and reduce fluctuations in overall sweet potato supply to the fresh market.*
- *Increase the production and quality of sweet potato in intensifying farming systems to ensure surplus production for sale and decrease the length of hunger.*

### **4.0 STRATEGIES / PERFORMANCE & IMPLEMENTATION**

***SO 1: SO 1: To improve vitamin A intake for rural vulnerable groups in Malawi through effective establishment of DVMs and media based creation.***

#### **4.1 Zondeni Sweet Potato Multiplication Programme**

##### **4.1.1 Multiplication for (2011/2012)**

CADECOM in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development promoted Zondeni Sweet Potato multiplication through decentralized vine multipliers that were

identified at each one of the EPAs. The multiplication process was done through various irrigation methods such as the use of water pumps and treadle pumps. A total of 12 decentralized multipliers took part in the programme as follows:

| EPA          | Male      | Female   | Total     | Area (Hectares) |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Mitole       | 6         | 0        | 6         | 0.9             |
| Livunzu      | 2         | 1        | 3         | 0.1             |
| Mbewe        | 3         | 0        | 3         | 0.2             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>1.2</b>      |

Some farmers failed to implement the programme due to drying of the rivers (Mitole EPA) and wash a ways close to the time of vine sales (Livunzu EPA). Those that multiplied the seed/vines assisted their fell farmers to buy their vines for summer cropping.

The three farmers in Mbewe EPA were successful in this programme although with some 65% performance rate due to the dry spell.



*Zondeni multiplication plots at Oris Tembo Farm at Salumeji Village in Mitole EPA (Chikwawa)*



*Zondeni Sweet potato multiplication plot at Fendeja Duzi Farm at Mtondeza Village (Mitole EPA in Chikhwawa)*

#### **4.1.2 Multiplication for 2012/13 Season**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, EPAs registered the following farmers as decentralized Zondeni Sweet Potato multipliers in readiness for the 2012/13 season. These were selected based on the availability of treadle pumps and wetlands for irrigation programme. Find below the list of selected multipliers.

| <b>EPA</b>   | <b>Village</b> | <b>Sections</b> | <b>No. of farmers</b> |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Mitole       | 4              | 4               | 4                     |
| Livunzu      | 4              | 4               | 4                     |
| Mbewe        | 3              | 2               | 4                     |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11</b>      | <b>10</b>       | <b>12</b>             |

Training in vine multiplication for the newly identified farmers will be conducted as soon as the money is made available in due course.

The vines to be produced will be issued to the following estimated number of beneficiaries within the season:-

| <b>District</b> | <b>EPA</b> | <b>No. of Beneficiaries for 2012/2013</b> |
|-----------------|------------|---|
| Chikhwawa       | Mitole     | 2,500                                     |
|                 | Mbewe      | 2,500                                     |
|                 | Livunzu    | 2,500                                     |
| <b>Total</b>    |            | <b>7,500</b>                              |

## **4.2 Registration and Distribution of Zondeni Sweet Potato Vouchers**

### **4.2.1 Beneficiary Registration**

CADECOM in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security sensitized the communities on the multiplication and production of Zondeni Sweet Potato vines. Registration of beneficiaries was done and the following were the beneficiaries for the season.

| <b>EPA</b>   | <b>Parish</b> | <b>Number Registered</b> |
|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Livunzu      | Mkhate        | 2,102                    |
| Mitole       | Chikwawa      | 2,298                    |
| Mbewe        | St. Mathews   | 1,808                    |
| <b>Total</b> |               | <b>6,208</b>             |

A total of **6,208 vouchers of Zondeni Sweet Potato** were received from CIP office and distributed to respective EPAs. Each EPA distributed the vouchers to the bonafide beneficiary to enable them receive the vines for the production of sweet potatoes in their respective section.

### **4.2.2 Zondeni Vine Distribution and Voucher recovery**

The sweet potato vine distribution to CIP beneficiaries started from December 2011 to January 2012 when the District was receiving good planting rains. This programme was, however, critically affected during the month of February by the dry spell that occurred within the month and other subsequent months. Registered beneficiaries using coupons failed to collect vines from the nearest vine multipliers avoiding the risk of losing the vines in the process of production.

Although an arrangement was made to facilitate transportation of vines to some farmers that were some distance away from the decentralized vine multipliers such as Livunzu and Mbewe EPAs, this too, proved futile for some farmers as they were not able to collect the vines using their coupons for the same fear of losing their vines to the dry spells and intense heat. Other farmers, however, still got the vines and made great effort to irrigate their vines using treadle pumps, some of which were supported by CIP.

The process of coupon distribution was made to the beneficiaries in their respective sections in the EPAs. Verification and counting of the used vouchers was done through payments to multipliers. The challenge, as indicated above, was that some farmers that did not want to use their vouchers as they feared the risk of losing the vines to the dry spells. Find below the details of vine distribution programme:-



| EPA          | Parish      | Vouchers issued to farmers | Vouchers presented for payment/<br>Number of farmer concerned |              |              | Balance of vouchers not presented |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
|              |             |                            | Men   | Women        | Total        |                                   |
| Mitole       | Chikwawa    | 2,298                      | 955   | 499          | 1454         | 844                               |
| Livunzu      | Nkhate      | 2,102                      | 1119  | 526          | 1645         | 457                               |
| Mbewe        | St. Mathews | 1,808                      | 1096  | 517          | 1613         | 195                               |
| <b>Total</b> |             | <b>6,208</b>               | <b>3,170</b>  | <b>1,542</b> | <b>4,712</b> | <b>1,496</b>                      |

#### **Comments**

- ✓ Some of the farmers did not collect the vines from the multipliers since there was dry spell in February.
- ✓ Some lost the seed vouchers.
- ✓ In some cases some of the farmers felt that it was too late to collect seed from the multipliers.

Some of the vine multipliers also suffered the same impact on the dry spells that they could not be able to supply the vines to the beneficiaries. For the farmers around such affected decentralized vine multipliers were requested to submit the seed vouchers to their respective EPAs so that the vines could be bought from other sources outside their respective EPAs. Thus the arrangement that was made to transport vines to some of the centers. Consideration was made by CIP after the situation was presented that the affected farmers be given a chance for winter cropping of Zondeni production using the vouchers that were presented or missing.

The crop status before the dry spells in February was as follows: Planting of vines took place from mid-December 2011 to late January, 2012 when the RDP had good rains. The germination percent for the already planted vines at the beginning were pegged at:

| Parish                     | EPA         | % germination |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Mkhate                     | Livunzu     | 90            |
| Mitole                     | Chikwawa    | 95            |
| Mbewe                      | St. Mathews | 68            |
| <b>Average Germination</b> |             | <b>84</b>     |

After dry spells that affected the vines in February, some farmers planted in the wet lands along rivers or did some irrigation to grow the crop.

#### **4.2.3 Sweet Potato Winter Cropping**

The farmers that did not collect vines for summer cropping were given consideration for summer cropping. CADECOM in collaboration with the District Agriculture Office are promoting sweet potato winter cropping through intercropping with maize, pure stand, drip irrigation, conservation agriculture and rapid seed multiplication.

A total of 1496 farmers did not collect vines for summer cropping. Out of these 1,270 farmers were considered for winter cropping based on the availability of wetlands, others will wait for the next rainy season. For winter cropping, planting already started in all the EPAs. Find below the details per EPA:-

| EPA          | Number of Farmers | Number Collected Seed | Number not yet collected |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Mitole       | 661               | 626                   | 35                       |
| Mbewe        | 101               | 101                   | 0                        |
| Livunzu      | 500               | 428                   | 72                       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,270</b>      | <b>1,163</b>          | <b>107</b>               |

The programme was not completed because the seed was not enough to round to all the beneficiaries due the fact that some multipliers lost the seed due to hippopotamus browsing and goats. The EPA staff is still looking for some seed so that those remaining can use the seed for vine multiplication in a form of tertially multipliers.



*Winter cropping of Zondeni sweet potatoes at Mulomba Section in Mitole EPA*

**SO 2: Increase the production and quality of sweet potato in intensifying farming systems to ensure surplus production for sale and decrease the length of hunger.**

#### **4.3 Farmer Training on Sweet Potato Production**

In order to build the capacity of farmers in sweet potato production, CADECOM organized farmer training sessions on Zondeni sweet potato production. These were conducted at EPA level and were attended by selected farmers as follows:-



| EPA          | Planned Sessions | Conducted Sessions | Participation |           |           |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
|              |                  |                    | Men           | Women     | Total     |
| Mitole       | 1                | 1                  | 21            | 9         | 30        |
| Mbewe        | 1                | 1                  | 14            | 16        | 30        |
| Livunzu      | 1                | 1                  | 15            | 9         | 24        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>3</b>         | <b>3</b>           | <b>50</b>     | <b>34</b> | <b>84</b> |

### **Course Content**

The course covered the following topic:

- Types of sweet potato varieties, important of sweet potato, site selection for sweet potato production, land preparation, manure application, selection of sweet potato varieties for production, recommended sweet potato varieties in Malawi, selection of good sweet potato vines, preparation of sweet potato vines, planting of sweet potato vines, field management of sweet potato vines, pest and disease control.
- Harvesting of sweet potatoes, sweet potato vine multiplication, vine population per nursery, sweet potato vine harvesting, management of harvested sweet potato vines and demonstration on sweet potato vine planting.

#### **4.4 Staff training on Drip Irrigation**

- ❖ The CIP Office at Bvumbwe Research Station conducted staff training on bucket drip kit assembling which was attended by 3 staff from CADECOM Office and 6 staff from District Agriculture Office.
- ❖ A total 34 drip kits were issued to Mitole, 33 to Mbewe and 33 to Livunzu EPAs.
- ❖ A total of 70 clubs with 310 men and 367 women are taking part in the programme.



***Drip kit plots at Lameki Village (Left) and Mthumba Section (Right) in Mitole Section***

**SO 3:- Increase effective demand by changing the perception of sweet potato and develop fresh root marketing chain for OFSP in the Blantyre market and reduce fluctuations in overall sweet potato supply to the fresh market.**

#### **4.5 Farmer Training on Zondeni Sweet Potato Processing**

CADECOM in collaboration with Ministry Agriculture and Food Security organized and conducted farmer training on sweet potato processing. The course took place at Livunzu, Mbewe and Mitole EPAS. The key resource persons were drawn from the Ministry Agriculture and Food Security

The course was attended by both staff and farmers in the three impact areas and the course covered the following:

##### **a) Course Content**

- ✓ Importance of Good Nutrition
- ✓ Consequences of malnutrition
- ✓ Nutrition Status
- ✓ The six food groups
- ✓ Functions of Vitamin A in the body
- ✓ Manifestations of Vitamin A deficiency
- ✓ Processing of OFSP
- ✓ Storage of OFSP
- ✓ Utilization of orange fleshed sweet potato.
- ✓ Local orange fleshed sweet potato recipes

By the end of the course, participants were able to know different methods of sweet potato processing utilization and storage.

##### **b) Farmer attendance**

| Parish       | EPA     | Number of Sessions Planned | Number of Sessions Conducted | Men       | Women     | Total     |
|--------------|---------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Mkhate       | Livunzu | 1                          | 1                            | 8         | 7         | 15        |
| Chikwawa     | Mitole  | 1                          | 1                            | 5         | 9         | 14        |
| St. Mathews  | Mbewe   | 1                          | 1                            | 6         | 9         | 15        |
| <b>Total</b> |         | <b>3</b>                   | <b>3</b>                     | <b>19</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>44</b> |

##### **c) Staff Attendance**

In addition to the farmers, a total of **3 Agriculture Extension Development Coordinators (AEDCs)** and **6 Agriculture Extension and Development Officers (AEDOs)** attended the training.

The training created a lot of interest amongst farmers and staff. The participants promised to put into practice what they were trained in.



*Sweet potato juice and sweetpotato cake prepared during one of the training sessions at Livunzu EPA*

### **Recipes Prepared**

Several recipes were prepared using multi-mix principle during the training some of which include: - doughnuts, sweet beer, porridge with soya, cakes, flitters, flour, chips, meat mixed with boiled sweet potatoes OFSP juice, chigomwa (a cake made with sweet potatoes mixed with pigeon peas/cow peas), futali ( sweet potatoes mixed with soya or see potatoes mixed with groundnuts).

### **4.6 Staff training on Nutrition**

CADECOM in collaboration with the ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development conducted staff training on nutrition. This was attended by **10 men and 2 women**. The course covered a number of concepts and basics in nutrition aspects. The following was covered during the training:-

### **Course Content**

- ✓ Basic nutrition terms such as: - nutrition, malnutrition, stunting, waiting, underweight, retardation just to mention a few.
- ✓ Effects of malnutrition.
- ✓ Nutrition status in Malawi.
- ✓ The six food groups (Using the six food groups chart)
- ✓ Vitamin A Deficiency.
- ✓ Micronutrients – Vitamins and minerals.
- ✓ Importance of Vitamin A in the body.
- ✓ Malawi's staple foods

- ✓ Local OFSP recipes

#### **4.7 Farmer Training on Nutrition**

This training was conducted to equip the farmers with knowledge on nutrition and the importance of the orange fleshed sweet potato in rooting out hunger and vitamin A deficiency in their households. Participants to this training were sixty beneficiaries of the orange fleshed sweet potato vines from Livunzu, Mbewe and Mitole EPAs where the project is being implemented. The training was facilitated by experts from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

#### **Topics Covered**

The following topics were thoroughly covered.

##### **a) Basic Nutrition terms**

Participants were introduced to some nutrition terms such stunting, wasting and underweight, how these are detected, their causes and implications

##### **b) Background of nutrition for Malawi**

Regardless of the efforts to achieve food security in Malawi, malnutrition levels and Vitamin A Deficiency are still on the higher side hence the need to focus on household nutrition and utilization of agriculture produce. A brief background was given and linked to the orange fleshed sweet potato project.

##### **c) Effects of poor nutrition and the Importance of Good Nutrition**

Social, Health, Economic as well as cognitive effects of malnutrition were explained to the group. This generated a lot of interest to the participants since it revealed a lot of things they did not know about. There is a common belief that when a child has either marasmus or Kwashiorkor, it means that one the parents was unfaithful to the other so it affects the child (Tsempho). So instead of rushing to the hospital with the child they go to traditional healers and point fingers on each other. This delays treatment for the child as a result the child dies. Some of the participants even gave testimonies of their experiences on the matter.

##### **d) National and district Nutrition Status**

The prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight were presented in simple terms just to give a picture of national as well as district nutrition status in under-five children.

##### **e) Importance of Vitamin A in the body**

Vitamin A is one of the micronutrients of public health concern in Malawi. The orange fleshed sweet potato is being promoted since it contains beta carotene which is converted into vitamin A in the body.

The micronutrient is essential for good vision, effective immune system, foetus development and reproduction among other things.

**f) Prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency**

**g) Ways of combating malnutrition and VAD**

The use of the orange fleshed sweet potato was emphasized.

**h) Dietary diversification through the six food groups and Local orange fleshed sweet potato.**

**Attendance to the training Sessions**

| EPA          | Parish      | Sessions Planned | Sessions Conducted | Attendance |           |           |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
|              |             |                  |                    | Men        | Women     | Total     |
| Mitole       | Parish      | 1                | 1                  | 14         | 5         | 19        |
| Livunzu      | Nkhate      | 1                | 1                  | 11         | 8         | 19        |
| Mbewe        | St. Mathews | 1                | 1                  | 8          | 8         | 16        |
| <b>Total</b> |             | <b>3</b>         | <b>3</b>           | <b>33</b>  | <b>21</b> | <b>54</b> |

**a) Conclusion**

The orange fleshed Sweet potato is very good tool of achieving dietary diversification. It can be used instead of maize as a staple at the same time providing Vitamin A in the diet. Through production and selling of sweet potato products a household is able to realize income which can be used to access other nutritious food thereby improving nutrition status of household members. The training was successfully conducted and the objectives were well attained.

**b) Challenges**

- ✓ Funeral in the area hence absenteeism by some farmers.

**4.8 Data Processing Training**

Mr. Luka Mwanjohi from Kenya through the CIP Office at Bvumbwe Research Station conducted staff training on data entry using the **CS Pro 4.1 package**. The course took place at CADECOM Office and was attended by Dr. P. Abidin, John Kazembe, John Ndovi, B.Tivalenji and Montfort Chisale. The course was aimed at imparting knowledge and skills on how to capture data using the CS Pro 4.1 package. The package/ data base introduced will assist to capture:-

- Beneficiary registration details.
- Voucher distribution details.

- Monitoring on the use of vouchers through the records that will be made at Decentralized Vine Multiplier level (DVM farm).
- Mapping of the Decentralized Vine Multipliers.

The programme will assist to monitor the progress of voucher system that was introduced. Data capturing will be done at EPA level through the forms that will be provided. Thereafter data entry will be done at the office for the programme.

#### **4.8 Zondeni Sweet Potato Field Day at Bvumbwe Research**

A total of three staff from CADECOM, 6 from Chikhwawa District Agriculture Office and 4 farmers attended a Field Day at Bvumbwe Research Station that was organized by CIP Office at Bvumbwe Research. The objective of the field day was to evaluate the performance of the Zondeni/maize intercropping trials. In addition to this the participants to the programme were briefed and oriented on sweet potato disease screening process that is done in three stages:

- The first round of seed is screened at Nairobi in laboratories.
- The seed is sent back to Malawi for the second of screening through laboratories.
- Final stage is done and green houses where further screening and hardening off is done.

The participants were also oriented on the major Zondeni seed multiplication programme sweet being carried out at the research station.

Finally there was participatory evaluation of the Zondeni/maize inter planting trials. There were six treatments for the trials such as:

- ✓ 2 rows sweet potato and 1 row maize
- ✓ 1 row sweet potato and 1 row maize
- ✓ 1 row sweet potato and 2 rows maize
- ✓ Intra planting 3 plants sweet potato and 1 plant maize
- ✓ Sweet potato pure stand
- ✓ Maize pure stand

These trials were replicated 3 times

The participants were requested to observe the performance of the six trials and choose the one they liked most basing on the visual performance observed. It was announced that there will be a harvesting field day where the participants will make a choice of the trial they would want to promote depending on actual yield performance.





***Sweet potato Field day at Bvumbwe Research Station***

In addition to this the participants were served with Zondeni sweet potato chips so as to taste its palatability and thereafter take the message to the farmers they work with. The sweet potato chip was served with fried chicken. The participants enjoyed this delicious meal and promised to practice this at their respective homes and sections with the farmers they work with.



***Staff and farmers being served with chips at Bvumbwe Field day***

### **Sweet potato screening**

The participants to the field day were briefed on how the sweet potato vines in use are screened. It was said that the first round of screening is done at Nairobi and this continues in Malawi. It was said that the

multiplication starts from the laboratory and plantlets are taken to the screen house when they have few leaves. The process continues until the sweet potato plants are hardened off.

## **5.0 REVIEW MEETING**

As part of its planning process, CADECOM organized review meetings. The aim of the review meeting was to share the progress of CIP activities in the respective EPAs as one way of tracking achievements in our activity plans.

The main activities during the review meetings were to set new dates on activity plans, identify responsible officers to take lead on some activities and to strategize on follow-up on the vines collected and planted using subsidized vouchers, follow-ups to several activities in the field.

Issues of potential market for the sweetpotatoes for the farmers were also highlighted. CADECOM will synchronize initiative on marketing of sweetpotatoes with plans that CIP is undertaking.

## **6.0 DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (DEC)**

CADECOM and the District Agriculture Office conducted a District Executive Committee Meeting. The objective of the meeting was to:-

- Orient DEC members on the progress of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato Project.
- Orient Stakeholders on the overview of the Rooting out Hunger Programme in Malawi and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- To make the DEC members appreciate the importance of using Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato.

The presentations covered the following:

- ❖ *The overview of the programme in the implementing countries.*
- ❖ *Rooting out Hunger Programme in relation to Health.*
- ❖ *Programme location.*
- ❖ *Programme funding.*
- ❖ *Programme beneficiaries and their location in terms of traditional Authorities and Parishes.*
- ❖ *Decentralized vine multiplication programme.*
- ❖ *Various farmer training sessions (sweet potato processing, production, nutrition for both staff and farmers, field days).*
- ❖ *Challenges of the sweet potato programme.*

## **7.0 Farmer Training on Record Keeping**

The training session was attended by 21 men and 1 female lady. The two farmers were not in attendance because of sickness.

### **Area of Coverage**

*The course covered the following areas:*

- *Importance of record keeping at the farm.*

- *Definition of record keeping.*
- *OFSP Beneficiary registration process.*
- *How to transact CIP Vouchers during sweet potato vine selling period with the use of special forms (OFSP Vine Distribution).*
- *Transactions of farm inputs and outputs at the farm.*

## **8.0 CHIPPING MACHINE**

The CIP Office at Bvumbwe Research Station procured and delivered a Sweet Potato chipping machine to Chikwawa CADECOM Office for use by farmers and clubs.

The chipped sweet potatoes will be dried for milling to make flour which could be used to make:

- ***Porridge.***
- ***Bread and doughnuts.***
- ***Mandasi***
- ***Thobwa (sweet beer)***
- ***Juice***



***Handing over ceremony of the Sweet Potato Chipping Machine at CADECOM Office***

## **9.0 MARKET FAIR**

CADECOM Chikwawa in collaboration with International Sweet Potato Centre (CIP) and the Chikhwawa District Agriculture Office exhibited various products processed from Zondeni Sweet potato at a Market Fair that was organized by WALA Chikwawa and Nsanje. The products were: doughnuts, cakes, chips, chigomwa (sweet potato mixed with cow peas or beans), and juice made from sweet potato tubers and

leaves, mbalare (sweet potatoes mixed with meat); mandasi, sweet beer, porridge just to mention a few.

- CADECOM promoted Zondeni sweet potato chips served with chicken. This was a new product to many people and it stole the show.
- So many bought this product and this was taken as lunch by many on the day. A good amount of revenue was realized from the sales.

The objective of the fair was to make:

- ✓ Farmers show the type of crops they are producing in the field and also indicate the quantities they have which can be offered for sale.
- ✓ Farmers and produce buyers to interact and make arrangements for the sale of the available produce currently with farmers.
- ✓ Private companies market their agricultural equipment.
- ✓ NGOs, Private Companies and government departments deliver to farmers the various services they offer.





*Some of the recipes exhibited by CADECOM and District Agriculture Office at the Market Fair*

## 10.0 CHALLENGES

- ***Dry spell in some days hence difficult to plant.***

Although CIP made arrangements for the subsidized vouchers on good time, Chikwawa experienced dry spells that most farmers feared losing their vines to the dry conditions. Farmers opted to wait a little longer. Most farmers got their vines around February-March when there were some improvements on the rainfall. CADECOM requests CIP to consider supporting farmers with treadle pumps to irrigate crops during dry spells.

- ***Loss of vouchers by some farmers.***

During the time to collect vines from Decentralized vine multipliers, some farmers were not able to produce the vouchers giving reasons that the vouchers were lost. This presented some challenges as the vine multipliers needed the vouchers to claim the money for the vines collected by the farmers. This information in some cases came late. It may still possible to assist the farmers if other vouchers could be made available but have a system to track the vouchers that were given previously to avoid cheating by some individuals by getting twice the allocation using the vouchers that were claimed lost.

## 11.0 OPPORTUNITIES

- Available support from collaborators.
- Fund availability.
- Good market for potatoes

## **12.0 NEXT STEP/ WAYFORWARD**

- Conduct Demonstrations on how to preserve the non marketable storage roots to be used as source of planting material.
- Conduct training on vine multiplication for the 12 new farmers.
- Conduct tour to Blantyre on marketing of Zondeni sweet potato.
- Distribute vines for multiplication.
- Distribute sweet potato vouchers.