Partner **Profile**

SASHA
Sweetpotato Action for Security and Health in Africa

Kigali Institute of Science and Technology

The Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) is Rwanda's first technology-focused institution of higher education to be created by the government of Rwanda. It was established in November, 1997. Major partners in its creation were the Ministry of Education, the UNDP Rwanda, and GIZ, a German enterprise.

KIST is the first technological institute of higher education established by the government. At the time of its founding, there were hardly any qualified and experienced experts in the technical, scientific, administrative and managerial domains of the calibre the country presently needs. The few technical experts had either been killed or simply disappeared during the war and genocide of 1994. To date, they have not yet been replaced. There was therefore a great need for human resource development and skills promotion to replenish the labor market, to facilitate skills enhancement for the industrial and service sectors, and to meet the demand for technological, scientific, and administrative skills to enable socio - economic transformations.

The Institute started as a project through the combined efforts of Rwanda's Ministry of Education, UNDP Rwanda as the executor of the project, and GIZ as the implementing agency. Contribution for the Institute came from a UNDP Core Funding and through the UNDP Trust Fund from the Governments of Japan and the Netherlands, both of which enabled KIST to initiate operations very quickly, taking only two months for the first class of 209 students to begin their studies.

What is KIST's role in the SASHA project?

The KIST Food Science Department has been involved with the SASHA Rwanda Super Foods Proof-of-Concept project since its inception, pulling in highly-motivated students to explore uses of sweetpotato. With a rigorous academic program, students are prepared to write proposals for year-long projects that they undertake in their fourth, and final, year of study. Topics on orange-fleshed sweetpotato range from the control of sedimentation and the limiting of spoilage.

To date, students have been able to research the use of sweetpotato flour for biscuits and cakes and the shelflife of sweetpotato juice. This year, under the supervision of their professors and in new top-of-the-line facilities, students will further research of the use of sweetpotato purée. Many students have been excited to be involved in the project because of the real-world applicability of their results to encourage consumption of sweetpotato.

Website: www.kist.ac.rw

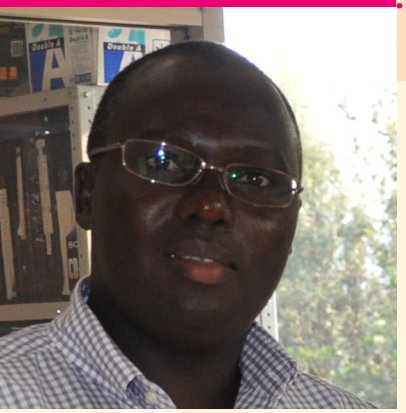
Partner Profile

SASHA
Sweetpotato Action for Security and Health in Africa

Professor Hilda Vasanthakaalam

Head of Department of Food Science, KIST

Professor Vasanthakaalam has been with the KIST Food Science Department since its founding in 2000. Professor Vasanthakaalam has over 20 years of experience teaching university students, in India and Rwanda.
She earned her MSc in Human Nutrition and PhD in Microbiology, studying the safety of road-side foods.



Professor Martin Ogwal

Professor of Food Chemistry, KIST

Professor Ogwal, Ugandan, has been a professor at KIST for the past year. An expert in post-harvest technologies, Professor Ogwal previously worked with Glico Products, a Japanese food processing company.

At KIST, Professor Ogwal teaches Food Chemistry courses and supervises 4th year students as they undertake their final projects.

Students Nathan, Bosco and Irakeza

Nathan, Bosco and Irakeza are third- and fourth-year students, studying in the KIST Food Science Department. Irakeza completed her orange-fleshed sweetpotato project on the shelf life of OFSP juice. Her project earned her the runner-up position for best undergraduate work throughout the university, as voted by faculty. Irakeza graduated in May and will be heading to Copenhagen University to pursue a Master's degree. Nathan and Bosco will be starting their projects this year, exploring sweetpotato purée. Nathan hopes to enter the food industry to focus on beverage technology and change negative perceptions of food science. Bosco is a young entrepreneur looking to make his own stamp in a field that is still in its infancy in the country.