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DVM Registration: A Strategy to Increase Access to Quality Sweetpotato Vines in Africa



Background

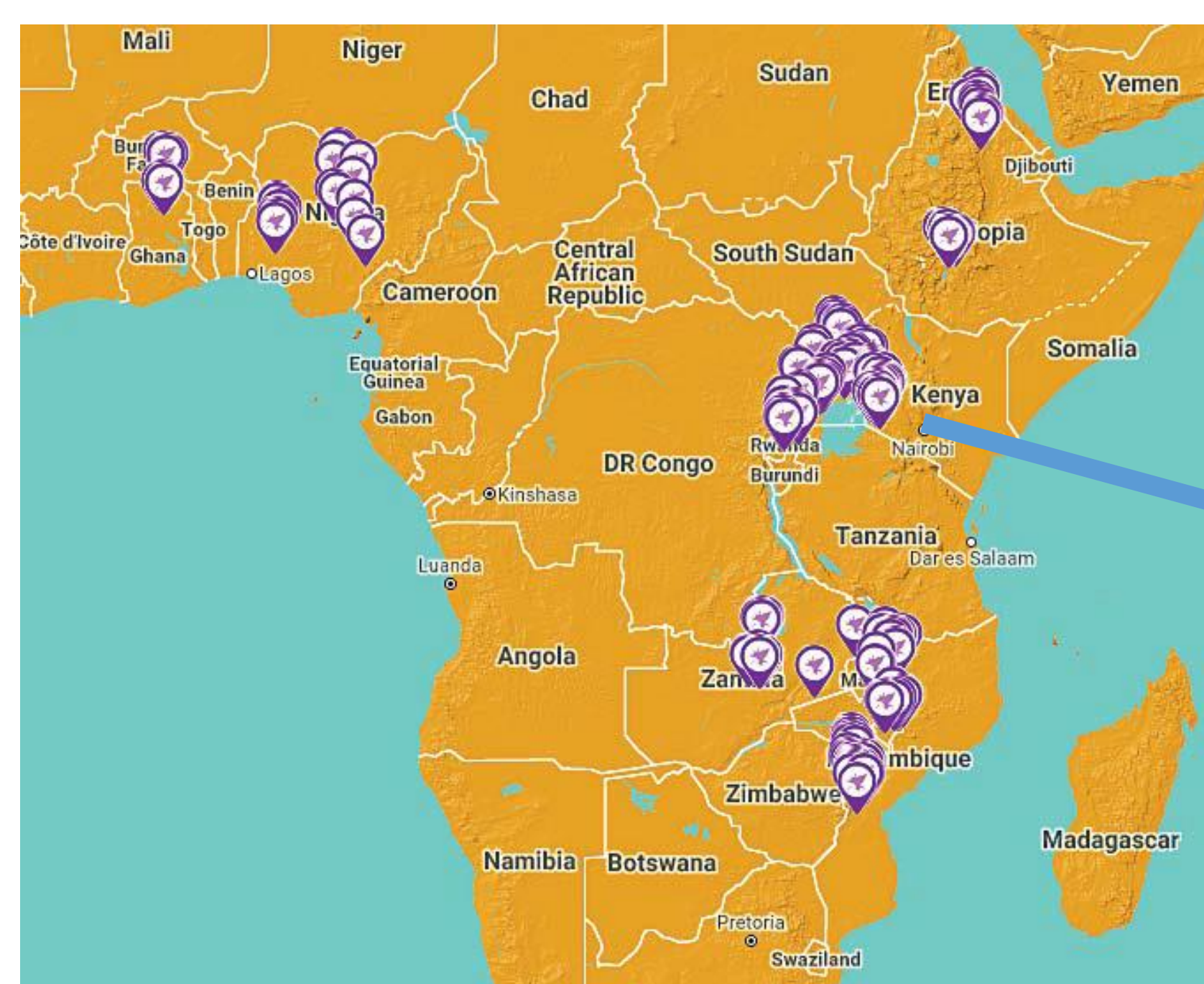
Micronutrient deficiency (MD) continues to be a major challenge in Africa. Efforts to combat MD have focused on, among others, Vitamin A micronutrient deficiency through conventional breeding of orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) varieties. Consequently, 70 OFSP varieties have been released in Africa between 2009-2016. However, access to clean planting OFSP vines remains a major challenge. One of the strategies used by projects to tackle this challenge has been to establish OFSP multipliers closest to the farmers. These Decentralized Vine Multipliers (DVMs), receive training on sweetpotato agronomy, pest and disease management and nutritional benefits of OFSP. They are in turn expected to pass this information to eligible beneficiaries in their communities. This poster synthesizes the lessons learned from annual registration of DVMs in SPHI countries.

Methodology

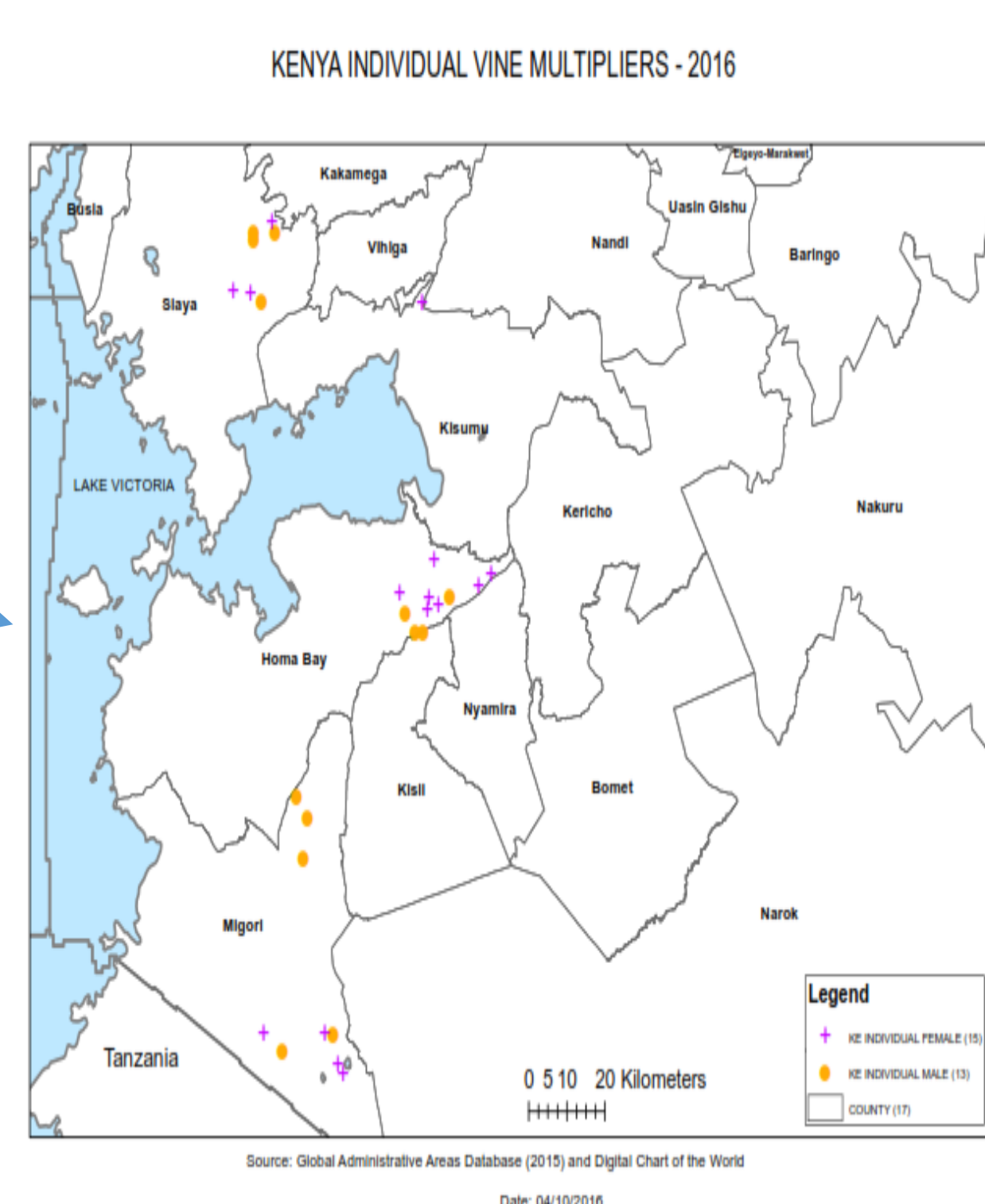
Open Data Kit (ODK) technology was employed to register and collect information about the DVMs. Data forms were designed to collect basic personal and farm characteristics. Location data and a picture of the plot were also collected. The data were collected from vine multipliers that receive regular agronomic support from CIP and/or its partners. The data is updated annually. Contacts and location of DVMs based on the collected location data are posted on the Sweetpotato Knowledge Portal (www.sweetpotatoknowledge.org). The portal targets farmers and/or organizations interested in finding a multiplier of quality vines.

Results

#1: DVM registration makes multipliers easy to find by buyers



DVM map on the Sweetpotato Knowledge Portal



#2. There are very few DVMs, and only 31% are women

Table 1: Current DVMs (as of October, 2016)

Country	Male	Female	Country	Male	Female
Uganda	38	22	Malawi	18	4
Kenya	62	45	Zambia	171	60
Tanzania	81	72	Mozambique	96	25
Rwanda*	17	29	Nigeria	27	10
Ethiopia*	75	5	Ghana	34	2

* Ethiopia and Rwanda have 9 and 16 group DVMs, respectively

#3. The DVMs were relatively old in age, small, and have leadership roles

Table 2: Some characteristics of DVMs (based on 2015 data)

DVM characteristics	Male	Female	Reflections
Age (years)	48.0	48.4	Need to encourage youth DVMs
Total farm ≤ 5 acres (%)	78.0	81.0	Need for more large commercial DVMs
Belonged to a farm group (%)	77.2	88.8	Increases opportunity for vine sharing & formation of group DVMs
Had leadership roles (%)	75.1	80.4	Increases opportunity for vine sharing

#4. Irrigation and vine conservation are critical to the success of DVMs

❖ Only 58% of DVMs had irrigation equipment



Vines conserved in a stream in Malawi



A DVM in Ethiopia uses a well to irrigate vines

#5. DVMs differ in terms of size, capacity, and in the level of management

❖ Some big, others very small; Some well-endowed, others not



#6. Labelling of the plots need to be emphasized and improved

❖ Marketing of the quality vines require clear and correct variety labelling
❖ 75% of the DVMs had no labels. Of the rest, 15% had poor labels



Concluding remarks

- ❖ There is need to encourage youth DVMs through targeted incentives
- ❖ Careful attention needed when selecting DVMs. Community leaders and groups members increase likelihood of vine sharing but tend to be busy people
- ❖ Drought is a major challenge, hence the need to promote irrigation and vine conservation
- ❖ Labelling is critical, and important to encourage. It creates a brand, communicates quality.
- ❖ Reaching 10 million households by 2020 will require establishing more multipliers
- ❖ Women multipliers should be encouraged by tackling their limiting constraints

