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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

INTERNATIONAL POTATO CENTER(CIP)

Markets, Processing and Utilization Community of Practice Annual Meeting, Kisumu, Kenya 1st to 3rd March, 2017

Enhancing adoption of OFSP in Malawi through an integrated promotion approach

By

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Promoting orange fleshed sweetpotato to improve nutrition and livelihoods



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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Where we are working
- Why orange fleshed sweetpotatoes
- Areas of focus
- Key areas for awareness creation
- Promotional and demand creation activities
- Measuring effectiveness
- Barriers and opportunities for OFSP adoption
- Options for improvement?

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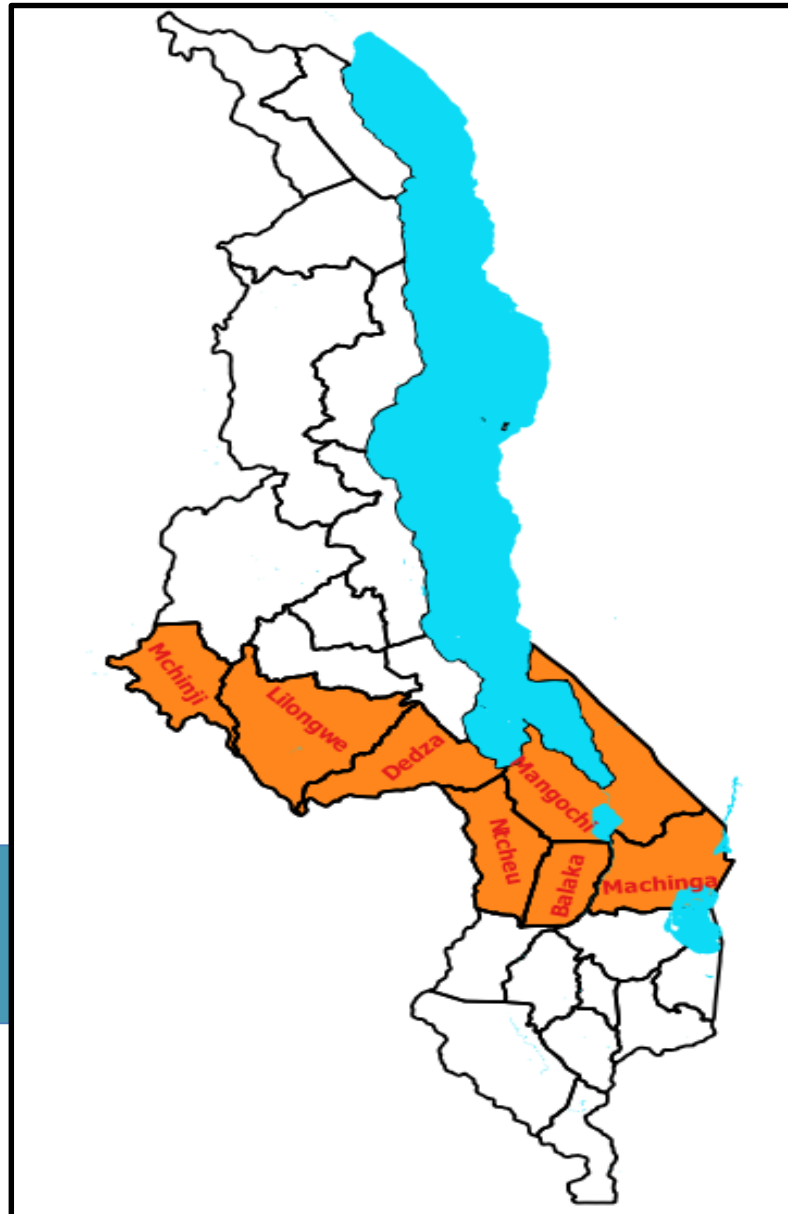
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Where we are
working



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WHY OFSP?

- Undernutrition in Malawi is high: 800,000 children under the age of five are stunted and one million suffer from vitamin A deficiency (VAD)
- OFSP varieties stand out as a proven, cost effective tool to reduce VAD and provide additional vital nutrients to vulnerable populations
- Fortunately, the six OFSP varieties are available for scaling out in Malawi
- In the Feed the Future Malawi Improved Seed Systems and Technologies (MISST) project the lives of 62,500 households will be directly impacted through OFSP out-scaling activities
- However, there is limited awareness of the benefits of OFSP varieties beyond these direct beneficiaries
- Enhanced adoption depends on promotional activities

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KEY AREAS FOR AWARENESS CREATION

- Limited understanding of the contribution of OFSP to food and nutrition security and mitigating the effects of climate change
- Poor knowledge and skills on rapid vine multiplication and vine conservation over the dry season resulting in insufficient quantities of the planting materials at the on-set of the rainy season
- Poor linkages between buyers and suppliers of OFSP planting material
- Limited knowledge on the market potential of the OFSP roots
- Limited awareness on options for utilization at household level

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AREAS OF FOCUS

Scaling out OFSP technologies to 62,500 households in seven FtF ZOI Districts through an integrated agriculture, nutrition and marketing approach:

- Commercial and decentralized vine multiplication
- Mother-baby variety demonstrations, vine distributions and farmer trainings
- Nutrition trainings and recipe demonstrations
- Trainings and IEC materials linking agriculture and nutrition
- Storage, marketing and urban demand creation





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PROMOTION AND DEMAND CREATION ACTIVITIES

- Mother Baby Trials
- Newspaper Articles
- TV and Radio Adverts
- Live comedy and Drama
- OFSP promotional song
- Training of Hotel Chefs on OFSP Recipes
- IEC material Development on nutrition sensitive agriculture
- T-Shirts, Wrappers and Caps with nutrition messages

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MOTHER BABY TRIALS

- This is a simple design developed in the late 1990's in Malawi by Siegfried Gassman of ICRISAT
- The name 'mother & baby' was coined by one of the early participating farmers
- It consists of one central, farmer-hosted location that has all treatments (varieties) surrounded by many farmers hosted satellite fields that have only one treatment
- All participating farmers and all interested farmers are invited to field days to harvest the mother plots and discuss varietal performance and sweetpotato in general
- Cooking demonstrations and sensory evaluations are also conducted

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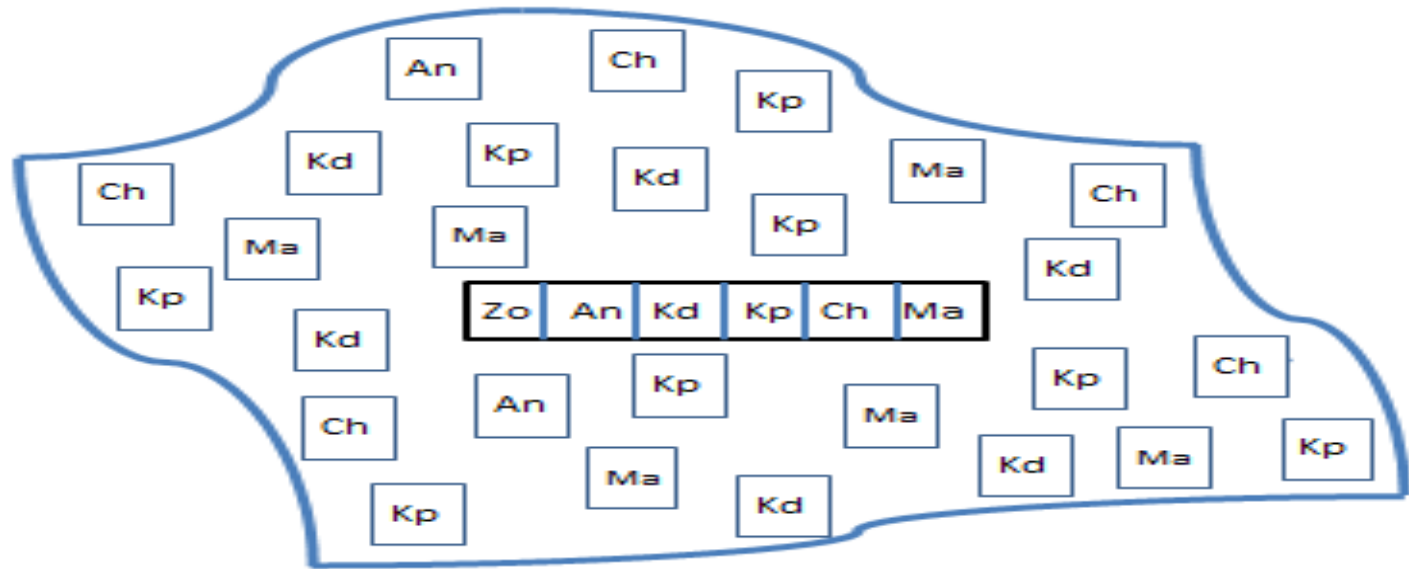




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MOTHER & BABY TRIAL DESIGN



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VINE MULTIPLICATION



- Over 15 commercial (left) and 90 community based (right) multipliers are now actively multiplying and selling clean planting material of the six OFSP varieties.
- This benefits local communities as well as NGO's seeking to procure clean planting material





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VARIETY DEMOS AND FARMER TRAININGS



Over 40,000 direct beneficiaries received planting material and training on agronomic practices, vine conservation and nutrition messages through mother baby trials (MBT).





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NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- In Malawi there are 2 major Print Newspapers
- Several columns are available on which agriculture articles can be published
- CIP-MISST OFSP Component is publishing in the local media to reach a wider audience on the benefits of OFSP

18 OPINION

THE NATION
WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

My Turn

Sweet potatoes as a cash crop

To many Malawians, sweet potatoes do not feature highly as a cash crop. Smallholder farmers prefer traditional tobacco and cotton. Due to volatile prices of these traditional cash crops, soy beans, pigeon peas, groundnuts and other legumes are gaining ground as farmers have decided to diversify.

So far, there is no talk about the potential benefits of producing sweet potatoes as a cash crop.

Potatoes are the third most important food crop in Malawi after maize and cassava. They are grown almost everywhere in the country.

Unlike other crops, they do not depend heavily on fertiliser and chemicals. Potato farmers attain good yields as long as the soils are fertile, planting material is disease-free and basic crop management practices are followed.

Because of this, sweet potatoes are mistakenly dubbed a 'poor man's crop'.

However, yields can even be increased further by fertiliser application and early planting.

For three decades, plant breeders have developed improved varieties to address food insecurity. These constitute the widely grown variety such as Kenya, Senusa and Mugamba.

The focus of breeding programmes has broadened from food security to addressing 'hidden hunger' which is manifested by lack of vital nutrients such as vitamin A, iodine and iron in food.

In most developing countries, vitamin A deficiency is a major cause of malnutrition among under-five children. It also causes night blindness and even permanent blindness in severe cases.

Luckily, the remedy is the consumption and utilisation of pro-vitamin A rich foods, including orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP).

Several varieties of OFSP are now available for out scaling in many sub-Saharan African countries.

Available varieties in Malawi are Anaakwanire, Chipika, Kadyubweleni, Kapuhira, Muthuthu and Zondeni.

Today, the socio-economic situation in Malawi calls for concerted efforts to address issues of hunger, food, nutrition and income security.

Government and non governmental organisations are promoting production and consumption of OFSP in their specific programmes targeting mainly pregnant women, breast feeding mothers and under-five children.

The drought-tolerant crop helps mitigate effects of climate change.

Unfortunately, every year there is a big mismatch in the seed system between demand and supply of OFSP planting material especially at the onset of the rainy season.

Most of the NGOs and government departments face hiccups when sourcing high quality disease-free planting material of the right variety at the required time.

This in itself is an opportunity for bold and enterprising farmers to invest in substantial areas of irrigable land for seed multiplication that should supply adequate quantities when needed by this growing market.

Through proper marketing, profit can be made by supplying sweet potato planting material to government departments, NGOs and commercial producers.

The OFSP roots are also processed into a myriad of recipes by urban hotels and restaurants. They are becoming increasingly popular by urban consumers for home consumption.

Nutrition experts are advocating dietary diversification of which the nutritious OFSP can be an integral part. The increasing urban demand can be met by strengthening the capacity of farmers to produce and supply fresh OFSP roots all year round through staggered planting under irrigation.

With the necessary agreements and market linkages put in place, OFSP farmers can have a steady flow of income by utilising this niche market in the urban hotels and restaurants.

Supplying to the confectionary industry and bakeries is another avenue OFSP farmers can take. Currently, Universal Industries and Malawi Sun Bakery in Blantyre have developed and rolled out OFSP biscuits, bread and crisps.

Thus with the necessary awareness creation and better institutional arrangements between government, NGOs, private companies and farmers, OFSP can be turned into a viable cash crop. ■

“ Nutrition experts are advocating for dietary diversification of which the nutritious OFSP can be an integral part. ”

BRIAN ANDREW KACHISA

The author works for the International Potato Centre (CIP) as a training and promotions officer for The Feed the Future Malawi Improved Seed Systems and Technologies (Misst)

NOTICE: Contributors are advised to include a passport size photograph and a sentence about themselves. Limit write-up to 700 words. Email your article to jshavula@mnation.com

The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of the publisher. —Editor

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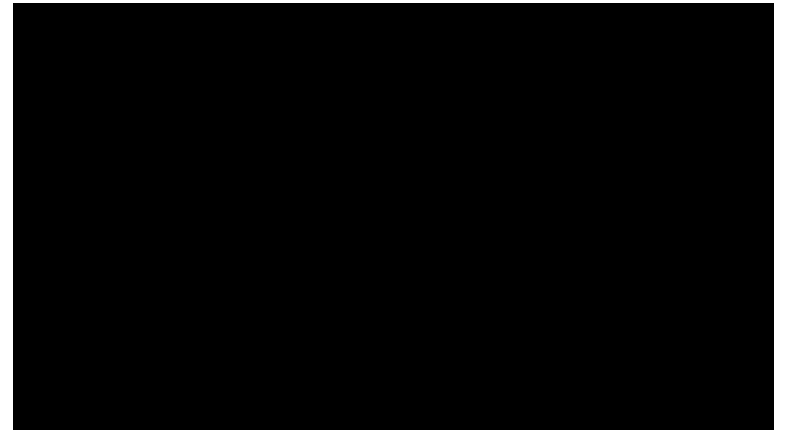




TV & RADIO ADVERTS

- TV and Radio adverts were developed to reach a wider audience
- Currently, only the National Radio (MBC Radio 1 & 2) and MBC-TV are broadcasting
- To be expanded to other radios and TVs in the next quarter

Sample advert:



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LIVE COMEDY AND THEATRE

- Engaged a nationally known Comedian (*Chindime* and *Samalani*) to create awareness on the benefits of OFSP
- 3 sites per district (7 Districts) were identified
- 21 sites in total were reached
- Activity took place on market days to reach as many people as possible
- Estimated to have reached 15,000 men, women boys and girls

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OFSP PROMOTIONAL SONG

- Engaged a nationally known musician (Skeffa Chimoto) to compose an OFSP song
- Has done several USAID promotional activities and is currently the brand ambassador
- The song details the nutritional benefits of OFSP to the target beneficiaries
- Audio song has been developed, video is yet to be developed
- The song and video will be part of the song album to be released later this year
- This will ensure that it is not a stand alone activity
- *Sample promotion song:*



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NUTRITION TRAININGS AND RECIPES



190 frontline workers have been trained in nutrition and recipe demonstration to be rolled out at community level. Chefs of hotels and restaurants in Lilongwe have been trained on recipes to create urban demand for OFSP



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NUTRITION LED AGRICULTURE

CIP/MISST engaged with government Departments of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS (DNHA) and department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) to explore the gap in availability of IEC materials on nutrition sensitive agriculture.



Government approved a separate technical working group (TWG) on nutrition-led agriculture to report to the National Nutrition Committee in Malawi. The TWG will contribute to enhancing agriculture-nutrition linkages and IEC materials in Malawi.



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TRAINING OF HOTEL CHEFS ON OFSP RECIPES

- Sweetpotatoes fits everybody's dish
- Urbans hotels and restaurants can embrace OFSP
- This will allow urban consumers to incorporate OFSP in their diet
- The project trained hotels and restaurants chefs on different OFSP recipes
- These will be aired on radio and TV for wider adoption in the targeted households

[VIDEO_TS\VTS_01_0.IFO](#)

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STORAGE AND MARKETING



- Staff from more than 10 project partners received trainings on root storage and marketing
- 25 on-farm sweetpotato root storage evaluation sites (left) have been established



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IEC MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT & NUTRITION SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE

- There is continuous development and dissemination of IEC materials on all aspects of OFSP value chain (seed, agronomy, pest and disease management, marketing, promotion and processing)
- These materials are distributed to the targeted audience during meetings, trainings, workshops, field days, open days

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T-SHIRTS, WRAPPERS AND CAPS

- Designed T-shirts and wrappers in collaboration with Regional Communication Specialist-then...
- Pending USAID-Malawi approval these will be printed and distributed to the targeted audience



front



back

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MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF THE APPROACHES

- Number of rural and urban households adopting the nutritious OFSP varieties through conducting a survey and or stakeholder meetings
- Radio and TV listenership/viewership of promotional songs and adverts will be used to gauge the number of people reached

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BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOPTION

Some barriers for adoption of OFSP by smallholder farmers addressed by MISST

1. Limited availability of planting materials for OFSP
2. Significant proportion of communities unaware of the nutritional benefits of OFSP and the six available OFSP varieties

Opportunities to enhance adoption

1. More intensive awareness creation campaigns
2. Many partners are interested in adopting OFSP in their programs with technical support from CIP
3. The color and texture of OFSP is acceptable in Malawi, and even more acceptable to children.
4. Market potential in fresh root markets as well as a huge opportunity to increase production driven by value addition (example: 40-50% of wheat flour in bread can be replaced by OFSP puree, crisps, biscuits, baby food, urban hotels and restaurants)



Currently CIP works with a wide range of government departments and NGO's to scale out OFSP technologies in all regions of Malawi. Other donors include Irish Aid (South) and DFID (North).



OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT?

- What areas do we need to improve on?

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GO YE AND PLANT MORE OFSP



Photo credit: Brian Kachisa, CIP, Lilongwe



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