

Viable Sweetpotato Technologies for Africa (VISTA) Project Mozambique

In 2017, 16,500 households received a total of 132 tons of disease-free planting material. We trained 427 community health workers on improved child feeding practices and a better diet for mothers, and other relevant nutritional and dietary topics. About 6,000 families were reached with nutrition training in Nampula and Zambézia provinces.



Fig. 1 Farmers in Mocuba District collecting OFSP vines. (credit O. Jeque)

What is the problem?

Orange-fleshed sweetpotatoes (OFSP) have the potential of improving the food security and nutrition of rural communities. However, increased OFSP consumption is hampered by demand and supply constraints. The demand for OFSP is limited by the lack of awareness of rural, mostly illiterate women about its nutritional benefits for their families, especially young children. They also lack knowledge about suitable recipes and are faced with limited marketing opportunities. The supply is constrained by the unavailability of locally adapted OFSP varieties, and the prolonged drought (more than six months) in intervention districts. Drought and rainfall variability restrict OFSP cultivation to the rainy season. These conditions call for the dissemination of knowledge on OFSP production techniques in adverse conditions.

What do we want to achieve?

The Viable Sweetpotato Technologies for Africa (VISTA) Project Mozambique contributes to improved nutrition, food security and incomes of smallholder

farming families through increased production and better utilization of nutritious OFSP varieties. The project is funded by Feed the Future/USAID for seven years (2014-2021). By 2021, we intend to reach more than 100,000 direct beneficiary households, and 375,000 indirect beneficiary households with our interventions.

Where are we working?

We work in eleven districts in Nampula Province, (Angoche, Larde, Malema, Monapo, Moma, Mecota, Mecuburi, Mogovolas, Murrupula, Nampula City, Rapale) and five in Zambézia Province (Alto Molócuè, Gile, Gurue, Mucuba, Nicoadala), covering 500 communities, all of which are considered Feed the Future zones of influence.

How do we make it happen?

We are using a three-pronged integrated approach: agriculture-nutrition-marketing to sustainably improve the food security, nutrition and income of smallholder families. Apart from improving access to quality planting materials (Fig. 1), we use nutri-



Reaching 10 million African households by 2020

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- Instituto de Investigaçao Agrária de Moçambique (IIAM)
- Serviço Distrital de Actividade Economicas (SDAE)





tion messaging and campaigns on the integration of OFSP into local food preparation and infant feeding. The project has three major components:

Increased production of OFSP through use of productive, locally adapted varieties, and sustainable agricultural practices. This involves the multiplication of planting materials and farmer training on sweetpotato agronomy and conservation technologies. Vine multipliers use net tunnels to protect basic seed from disease-carrying insect vectors (Fig. 2).

Increased OFSP consumption by children under five years of age and women through (1) nutrition education and counseling; (2) promotion of recipes and guidelines for household-level OFSP utilization as a healthy food for all; (3) broad education campaigns on nutrient-rich foods.

Increased agricultural incomes from sales of roots, vines, leaves, and OFSP-processed products.

What have we achieved so far?

In addition to 22,500 households who received planting materials in the first two years of the project (2014-2016); 16,500 additional households benefited from a total of 132 tons of disease-free planting material in 2017.

We have established 70 Decentralized Vine Multipliers (DVMs) (Table 1). We trained 64 nurses and 63 health promoters, who in turn trained 427 community health workers on improved child feeding practices, and other relevant nutritional and dietary topics. About 6,000 families were reached with nutrition training in Nampula and Zambézia provinces (Table 2).

On 8 May 2017, we inaugurated our project office located at Instituto de Investigação Agrária de Moçambique (IIAM), Nampula.

Table 1. Total number of DVMs, area under vine multiplication, and number of beneficiary households that received OFSP vines, quantity of vines produced, and area planted with OFSP by district (January 2016 - June 2017)

District	No. DVMs	Area by DVMs (ha)	Number of beneficiaries	Quantity of vines (kg)	Area planted (ha)
Zambezia	29	6.2	7,934	63,472	79.4
Nampula	41	13	8,526	68,208	85
Grand total	70	19	16,460	131,680	165
Annual target	72	14.4	15,000	120,000	150
Percent of target	97%	132%	110%	110%	110%

Table 2. Number of families and children under five and under two years (U2) reached through nutrition training by project supported community health workers (CHWs)

District	No. of CHW	No. of Families	Women		# Children U5		# Children U2	
			Pregnant	Lactating	Female	Male	Female	Male
Malema	90	1,840	311	801	1,508	1,065	712	602
Monapo	94	1,902	226	912	1,724	1,288	826	657
Murrupula	120	2,117	344	1,175	1,858	1,670	1,079	886
Total	304	5,859	881	2,888	5,090	4,023	2,617	2,145



Fig. 2 Net tunnel construction training in Nampula. (credit B. Rakotoarisoa)

la station (Fig. 3). The event was attended by about 200 people, among them the Minister of Agriculture and Nutrition Security (Mr. José Pacheco), the Governor of Nampula Province (Mr. Victor Borges), the US ambassador (Dr Dean Pittman), the Director General of IIAM (Dr. Olga Faftine), CIP's Regional Director for Africa (Dr. Adiel Mbabu), and CIP's Sweetpotato Global Program leader (Dr. Simon Heck).

What's next?

The project will continue expanding its activities into new and remote districts by establishing ten new DVMs and implementing the Mother-Baby-Trial approach. Ten recently hired field coordinators will be posted in remote districts to assist with project implementation. About 250 individuals will be trained on vine conservation technologies and other OFSP topics, using modules adopted from the 'Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Sweetpotato' Training of Trainers' course. About 170 health professionals will receive refresher training on the basic nutrition modules.



Fig. 3 Mozambique Minister of Agriculture and Food Security hands OFSP vines to a beneficiary during the VISTA project launch (credit B. Rakotoarisoa)