

# Mitigating Drought Impacts in Southern Mozambique through Resilient, Nutritious Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato

So far, the project has reached over 21,000 direct beneficiary households.



Fig 1. A group of farmers in Moamba District, Maputo province after receiving their first amount of clean planting material (credit A. Naico)

## What is the problem?

In Mozambique, CIP and partners have been on the frontline for mitigating the effects of the recurrent floods and droughts. In the last two cropping seasons, most of the southern and central part of the country was hit by severe drought. Overall, 60-90% of affected farmers reported crop losses and field destruction among the hardships they have experienced. As response, the Government of Mozambique and CIP developed a mitigation strategy based on the agriculture-nutrition approach to delivery orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) technologies to increase food security and improve the diets of 25,000 poor households in Gaza, Inhambane, and Maputo Provinces.

## What do we want to achieve?

The specific objectives are:

1. Improved access to climate resilient,

drought-tolerant and nutritious OFSP varieties by 25,000 households in target districts in 3 provinces (Maputo, Gaza, and Inhambane).

2. Strengthened capacity for sweetpotato planting material management, improved production, and better sweetpotato storage among communities vulnerable to drought.
3. Improved nutrition knowledge and capacity for sweetpotato utilization in vulnerable households with children under 5 years of age.

## How are we going to make it happen?

The main approach of the project is to disseminate the new drought-tolerant OFSP varieties along with basic agronomic training and nutrition education – an approach that has resulted in sustained production and consumption of OFSP in Mozambique and other African countries. Overall, the project



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**Fig. 2** A local nurse with the beneficiaries after a nutritional education session (credit A. Naico)

objectives will be achieved through a combination of coordinated mass distribution of planting material through community-level field days and the establishment of decentralized multiplication plots among selected farmers for supplies in subsequent seasons. Similarly, nutrition education and food demonstrations will be centrally coordinated during the first year of implementation, while local health and nutrition agents are being trained for delivery in subsequent years.

### What we have achieved so far?

- About 21,672 direct household beneficiaries have been reached by the project. Overall, this represents almost 87% of the targeted project beneficiaries by July 31st 2017. The project has reached 99% of the target for Maputo province, 84% for Gaza province, and 72% in Inhambane. About 35% of the beneficiary households are headed by women.
- The project targeted 30 extension agents to be intensively trained on sweetpotato agronomy, including the different types of plant multiplication approaches, and M&E related aspects. Currently, 45 extension agents were trained, 11 of whom were female.
- About 12 hectares of clean planting material were established in 6 primary multiplication centers. Apart from the use in mass distributions, part of this material was used to establish 24 new DVMs (6 of them women) established in Maputo (8), Gaza (10), and Inhambane (6) to total almost 8 hectares established at community-level. The target was 52 DVMs to be established in the 13 districts, covering 8 hectares at community-level.
- Several field days that included the nutrition education and awareness creation were conducted. Almost 80% of the direct beneficiaries who received the planting material were exposed to some form



**Fig. 3** The President of Mozambique visits CIP and project activities at the 1st National Root and Tuber Crops Fair in Inhambane (credit A. Naico)

of nutrition messaging, particularly those related to the benefits of consuming OFSP.

- Promotion campaigns continued to be pursued. The last one was on July 5, during the first national roots and tuber crop fair conducted in one of the project's targeted provinces (Inhambane), where local farmers were exposed to new OFSP varieties, post-harvest techniques, and OFSP processed products. About 30,000 people visited the fair, including the President of Mozambique (Fig. 3)

### What is next?

A new project phase, starting on January 01, 2018 is on the table. This phase ended on July 31, 2017, however, due to persistent drought situation imposed by El Nino, project activities will continue to be pursued up to December 2017. During this period, the focus should be on the strengthening the current primary and secondary multiplication centers while preparing for the launching of the next cropping season. At the farmer level, most of the activities will be concentrated on the conservation of planting material.

At the DVM level, net-tunnel and other planting material conservation methods will be used. At least 2 DVMs in each of the 13 targeted districts will be equipped with the net tunnels. An equivalent number of extension agents shall be trained.

Most of the nutrition and agro-processing related activities will be reinforced during the ongoing harvesting season. A partner on nutrition segment will be engaged to speed up the implementation and scaling up of the nutrition-related activities.

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