

Invest in Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa

An estimated 218 million Africans suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition. Promoting orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) varieties that are early maturing, high yielding, drought-tolerant and high in beta-carotene can contribute to increased dietary diversity, food security and household income in Africa.



Photo Credit: HKI

Food availability

- Sweetpotato provides higher yields per given area in a shorter time compared to maize or cassava
- The crop can be produced on marginal soils and easily integrated into many cropping systems
- Improved, early maturing sweetpotato varieties are ready in 3- 5 months

post-harvest techniques can improve storage life and access to fresh roots among urban consumers

- OFSP can substitute for potato in making some products and serve as a partial substitute (20-50%) for wheat flour which improves the accessibility and shelf life of this nutrient-rich crop

which is critical for child survival

- Both the roots and leaves of sweetpotato are highly nutritious
- Promoting OFSP can empower African women, who are often responsible for growing this crop, by improving their knowledge of nutrition and providing higher income from the sale of roots and processed products
- A wide range of OFSP-based processed products, such as bakery products, juice, chips, crisps, flour and noodles, can open up new markets for the food industry

Food access

- Sweetpotato has relatively low labour requirements compared to other crops
- Some varieties can be stored in the ground for some time. Improved

Food utilization

- Unlike white or yellow varieties, orange-fleshed sweetpotato provides significant amounts of vitamin A,

Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) Project advocates for increased investment in orange-fleshed sweetpotato food-based approaches to combat vitamin A deficiency (VAD) among children less than five years old and their mothers. RAC also builds institutional capacity to design and implement gender sensitive projects to ensure wide access and utilization of orange-fleshed sweetpotato in selected African Countries. Its efforts contribute to the broader Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative (SPHI) which aims to improve the lives of 10 million African families by 2020.

Contacts:

Adiel Mbabu (CIP), RAC Project Manager
a.mbabu@cgiar.org

Sonii David (HKI), Gender and Advocacy Advisor
sdavid@hki.org

Julia Tagwireyi (HKI), Regional Advocacy Advisor
jtagwireyi@hki.org

