

Moving ahead with the Nutritious Sweetpotato in Inhambane, Mozambique



Fig 1. Culinary demonstration at Tessolo community, Mabote district, Inhambane province. (Credit: B. Rakotoarisoa)

What is the problem?

In contrast to Niassa, sweetpotato is a neglected crop in Inhambane and OFSP is almost unknown by most of the communities. The province, known for its sandy soils and stunning beaches, has limited natural resources for production of OFSP and access by consumers is limited due to high prices for the roots in the market. This is due to sweetpotato roots coming mainly from Manica province. Levels of stunting among children under five years of age reach 36% in Inhambane province and the consumption of vitamin A rich foods is low. Nutritional knowledge among caregivers is also basic.

What do we want to achieve?

By the end of 2019, we want to contribute to improved food security, nutrition and rural income opportunities in a sustainable way by strengthening the capacity of local government authorities (LGA) and Non-Governmental Organizations' service providers in Inhambane Province to increase adoption of OFSP farming and its appropriate use in the diet (Fig. 1). This will be done using a participatory "Planning-Implementation-Learning Cycle" approach on the OFSP value chain, increasing understanding of OFSP's contribution to food security and dietary diversity among pregnant women and children under five years in the target communities; and increasing the opportunities for improving household income from sales of roots and leaves from improved OFSP varieties and OFSP-based products.

Where and with whom are we working?

In 2018-19, we worked in four districts of Inhambane province (Govuro, Mabote, Massinga and Vilankulos),

From the lessons learned from previous activities in the Niassa province and recognizing that the agro-climatic conditions were completely different, the project started to implement field activities in a new province, Inhambane, on August 21, 2018. During the launch of the agricultural campaign for 2018-2019, the Inhambane government's agricultural director appreciated the Nutritious Sweetpotato project and showed high support concerning the selected districts for implementing its activities utilizing the orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP). All economic activity technicians (SDAEs) were involved in the training process, which covered agronomic information as well as culinary demonstrations to improve the quality of the daily diet at the community level and raise OFSP demand.



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covering 36 administrative posts with SDAEs of four districts, the Nutrition department within the Health service, and NGOs such as and GAPI, schools and churches (Fig. 2). Previously, some vine multipliers had been established in the Province as part of an emergency response to a prolonged drought.

How are we making it happen?

CIP capitalized on the lessons learned and implemented a process with SDAEs and other collaborative partners to ensure the distribution of OFSP vines in Inhambane from July 2017-2018. The implementation strategy includes:

- Selection of committed communities for the intervention after conducting an awareness campaign;
- OFSP vine distribution to selected communities;

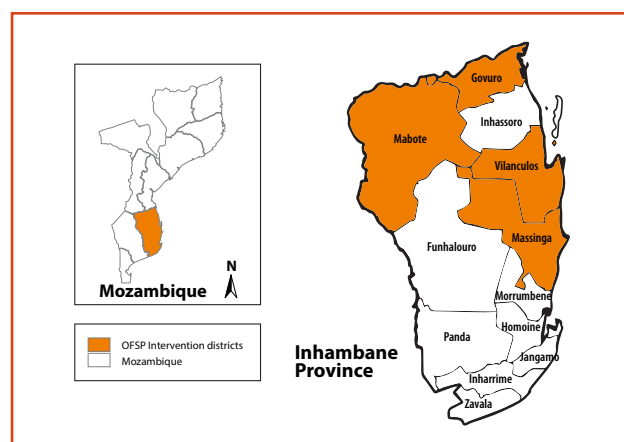


Fig 2. Showing just 4 districts



Fig 3. Culinary demonstrations at Machengue community, Vilankulos district, Inhambane province. (Credit: N. Baloi)



Fig 4. DVM during a fair (Aug 2018) in Massinga district, Inhambane. (Credit: B. Rakotoarisoa)

- Facilitating integration of evidence and lessons into government plans and NGO programs;
- Capacity building of SDAE technicians and Decentralized Vine Multipliers (DVMs);
- Surveys assessing distribution reach and update of the new OFSP varieties, nutrition and market presence and prices for the 4 intervention districts.

What have we achieved so far?

- From June 2018, 19,040 kgs of vines, from the OFSP varieties Sumaia, Delvia, Irene, Namanga, Alisha and Cecilia, were distributed within 16 localities, located in four districts.
- 7,074 beneficiaries received OFSP vines, of which 4,266 were women. 3,826 households have planted OFSP and 6,214 households planted other sweetpotato varieties.
- 62 technicians (20 women) were trained in vine multiplication and root production.
- 55 technicians (17 women) were trained on market linkages and 38 technicians (14 women) in nutrition.
- 10 demonstration plots were installed.
- 116 old and new DVMs (31 women) were trained in OFSP vine multiplication and OFSP root production.
- 15 DVMs (two women) were trained on market linkages.
- Sweetpotato market prices were surveyed in 10 localities.
- 106 volunteers (76 women) at four communities participated in cooking demonstrations (Fig. 3).
- Baseline survey data were collected from 276 households in eight localities (64 households in Vilankulos district; 77 in Govuro; 54 in Mabote; and 81 in Massinga).
- The project participated in five public agricultural-oriented events in Massinga, Inharrime and Vilankulos districts from August 2018 to June 2019. DVMs

displayed and sold OFSP roots and made new links with markets (Fig. 4).

- The Inhambane teams participated with other Irish Aid projects in a workshop held in Ethiopia on System Strengthening Lessons from Irish Aid projects. Another meeting was held with the government and other stakeholders to discuss and plan for large-scale implementation in Niassa and Inhambane in November 2018.
- The project leader participated actively in three SPHI Community of Practice meetings: the Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation in Entebbe, Uganda; the Seed Systems in Mekelle, Ethiopia and the Speedbreeders and Genomics in Maputo, Mozambique so as to share lessons learned with a broader community of technical experts and learn from others.
- A external project impact evaluation team conducted field work from June 26 to July 6, 2019 to gather lessons learned in Niassa and the status of the implementation in Inhambane.

What's next?

Capacity building for sustainability will continue where partners are encouraged and supported to implement individual workplans from the trainings with limited supervision. However, with the climate change effect and the drier conditions in Inhambane, greater use of drip irrigation and the Triple S root-based method for assuring planting material are a must as the basis for planting material conservation and multiplication. Results from the external evaluation will be used to improve project implementation in Inhambane. Awareness of nutritional value and market are still on-going activities and will be enhanced during the remaining period of implementation. The government is committed to integrate OFSP into the agriculture program plan.

Contact

Benjamin Rakotoarisoa, CIP-Mozambique, b.rakotoarisoa@cgiar.org
Joao Valeriano, SDAE-Massinga, joavjoao@hotmail.com

Direct partners: Serviço Distrital de Actividade Economicas (SDAE), The District Service for Economic Activities; Secretariado Técnico de Segurança Alimentar e Nutrição (SETSAN), The Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition.

Indirect partners: Direcção Provincial de Saúde (DPA), Rede Cristão, Govuro, The Instituto de Professores in Vilankulo, GAPI Vilankulo.

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