

# Developing Integrated Value Chains to Enhance Rural Smallholders' Incomes and Food (DIVERSIFY) Project-Malawi



Fig 1. Jean Pankuku inside her bakery and bread store in Blantyre, Malawi (Credit: V. Atakos)

## What is the problem?

Food security, poverty and climate change are the major problems affecting most people in Malawi especially in Balaka, Chiradzulu and Thyolo districts (Fig 2.) where this project is based. In addition to these, there is high population density and the farmers are used to growing only maize as a main crop. Due to these problems people have low incomes and limited diet diversification leading to malnutrition, especially among pregnant mothers and children. The Developing Integrated Value Chains to Enhance Rural Smallholder Incomes and Food (DIVERSIFY) project started in 2017 in the three target districts targeting 3,000 smallholder farmers. It is funded by the European Union with additional support from the Australian Government. It is being implemented by United Purpose (UP), the International Potato Center (CIP) and Imani Limited.

## What do we want to achieve?

DIVERSIFY seeks to build sustainable resilience among the 3,000 beneficiary households by 2020 through improved incomes, nutrition levels, food security and general livelihoods. This will be achieved through increased production, sale, processing and consumption of OFSP by accelerating farmer access to quality planting material of the best four new OFSP varieties: Chipika, Kadyaubwerer, Kaphulira and Mathuthu. This will in turn contribute to increased food availability, dietary diversity and new Vitamin A intake among pregnant mothers and children under the age of five years. The project is encouraging rainfed as well as winter production using irrigation to ensure continuous availability of OFSP roots and vines.

The project has reached 3,000 households with Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP) planting material, conducted value addition training and home-based food processing to 100 lead farmers who are continuously reaching other beneficiaries. Two processors (Mother Holdings Limited and Tehilah Food processing (Fig. 1)) are purchasing roots for making bread, crisps, buns and biscuits.



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The project is working with two processing companies: Mother's Holdings and Tehilah which are purchasing fresh roots from farmer groups to produce bread, buns, biscuits and mandazi.

## Where and with whom are we working?

DIVERSIFY is working with United Purpose (formally Concern Universal) and Imani Consulting group. It is

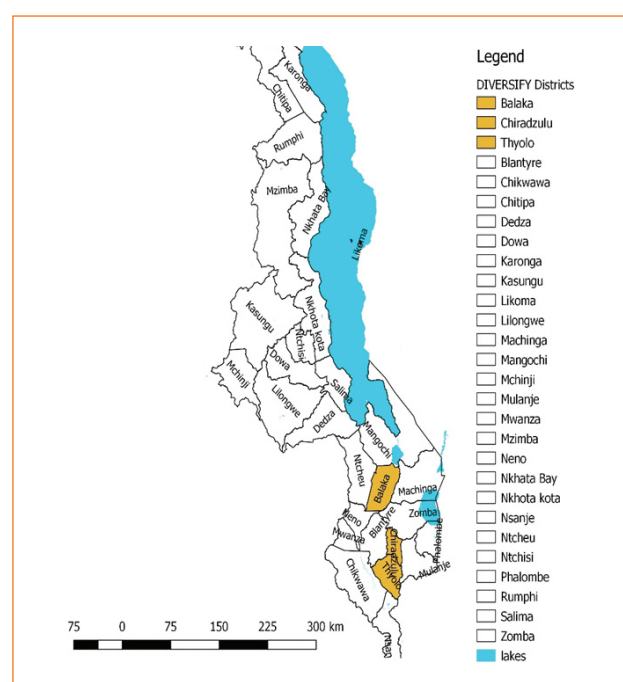


Fig 2. Map of Malawi showing target districts



**Fig 3.** Sample of the OFSP bread made by Mother's Holdings Bakery (Credit: K. Fungai)

reaching out to beneficiaries through the existing government structures in the Ministries of Agriculture and Health to help ensure sustainability at the end of the project. In the current phase, the project has targeted the three districts of Thyolo, Chiradzulu and Balaka where poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity are severe.

### How are we making it happen?

DIVERSIFY is training lead farmers and government extension staff who in turn reach out to the target beneficiaries. The project is training farmers to form groups to enable them to sell their produce together at a better price. It is also supporting nutrition education activities with training and information, education, and communication tools (IEC) such as brochures, T-shirts and decorated cloth worn as skirts. The project is introducing and promoting improved OFSP storage, utilization and value addition at the community level through home-based food processing technologies. It is also encouraging farmers to sell their extra roots to processing companies where they are utilized as ingredients in various products such as bread (Fig. 3).

### What have we achieved and learnt so far?

The project has reached 3,000 household farmers with OFSP planting material, conducted training on agronomy,

marketing, value addition and home-based food processing through 100 lead farmers who are continuing to reach beneficiaries. It has produced and distributed IEC and promotional materials for beneficiaries. The project has purchased, installed OFSP processing and storage equipment for Mother's Holdings (Fig. 4). It has developed OFSP recipes and trained bakery staff to make bread and other confectionaries. The project has observed that men, women and youth are able to participate in the production, selling and utilization of OFSP which is greatly improving their livelihoods. It has also learnt that both men and women need to be trained to improve nutrition in the communities.

### What next?

The project will continue to reach out to government extension workers and lead farmers to solidify the gains made. It also intends to conduct product feasibility, market acceptability, shelf-life and profitability studies, develop farmer root production and delivery routes all year round, establish root quality standards along with pricing with the purchasers, finalize product registration with Malawi Bureau of standards and continue to promote local value addition in Chiradzulu and Balaka.



**Fig 4.** Washing machine can clean 100 kgs of roots in 6 minutes at Mother's Holdings (Credit: J. Low)

### Contact

**Wells Kumwenda**, CIP-Malawi • [W.Kumenda@cgiar.org](mailto:W.Kumenda@cgiar.org)

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