

# MOBILE KITCHENS FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION: EVIDENCE FROM A BEHAVIOUR CHANGE INTERVENTION TO INTRODUCE ORANGE-FLESHED SWEETPOTATO IN TIGRAY, ETHIOPIA

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## Background

White fleshed sweetpotatoes is traditionally cultivated and consumed in some parts of Ethiopia. However, the production and consumption of both white and orange-fleshed Sweetpotato in Tigray region, northern part of Ethiopia is new. With the context of reducing hunger and improving human nutrition, the International Potato Center (CIP) with financial assistance of USAID and Irish Aid has been implementing a “Better Potato for Better Life” and “Nutrition” projects to exploit the potential of potato and Orange Flashed Sweet Potato (OFSP) to reduce food security and dependency on cereals in Tigray. In line with this, different behavioral communication strategy has been developed for promotion of OFSP consumption in Tigray. Mobile Kitchen demonstration is a cooking demonstration of different food recipes of sweetpotato at different community events such as traditional festivals, community trainings, exhibitions, community fairs, and meetings. Mums for Mums (M4M) and Women Association of Tigray (WAT) are the CIP project partners that prepared a recipe book and provided capacity building training to project areas communities, Health Extension Workers, and Agriculture Extension Workers and demonstrated how to prepare different recipes from OFSP.

The primary objective of the research was to assess whether mobile kitchens are an effective tool to increase consumption of Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP) as a nutritious food in Tigray, Ethiopia, where sweetpotato was previously not consumed

## Materials and Methods

A participatory action research approach was chosen to assess cost-effectiveness and adoption rates of OFSP promotion in new communities using community women development groups as the primary extension agents. The investigation covered interventions in 7 communities involving 7,700 households from 2010 to 2012. Moreover, CIP Irish Aid and USAID Project



Cooking Demonstration of Sweetpotato week Mekelle University (credit Mum for Mums (credit -T. Haile)



School children enjoying eating sweetpotato ( credit -T. Haile)

## Results

The main findings include that 6,000 households were reached at an average cost of US\$ 1.75 per household leading to the adoption of improved nutrition behavior among 5,000 households of the population in the targeted communities. in daily diets particularly during harvest (September to January).

## Discussion and Conclusions

This evidence indicates that mobile kitchens are an effective tool for reaching large numbers of remote rural populations at relatively low cost in a short period of time. Secondly, it suggests that mobile kitchens are effective for inducing nutrition behavior change among these target groups including adoption of new crops such as OFSP.



Different Sweetpotato product display at annual farmers field day

## Acknowledgments



Successful promotion on Better sweetpotato for Better Health at 'Ashenda' Annual public festival ( credit T. Haile)

## Citations

Mariama M. Fofanah (2011) Communication Strategy for the Promotion of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato in Tigray, Ethiopia.

International Potato Center (CIP) (2012) Alleviation of food insecurity and malnutrition in Tigray, Ethiopia, through promotion of potato and sweetpotato: Project Report 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. Prepared for Irish Aid.

International Potato Center (CIP) (2012) Alleviation of food insecurity and malnutrition in Tigray, Ethiopia, through promotion of potato and sweetpotato: Project Financial Report 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. Prepared for Irish Aid.