

Effects of commercialization of sweetpotato on gender relations and wellbeing among smallholder farmers

Technical workshop to review study findings and develop recommendations for improved programming

8–9 November 2018, Nairobi



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Netsayi Noris Mudege¹, Kellen Kebaara² and Elizabeth Mukewa²

¹ International Potato Center

² Independent consultant

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International Potato Center

P.O. Box 1558, Lima 12, Peru

cip@cgiar.org • www.cipotato.org

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Acronyms

CBO	Community-based organization
CHW	Community health worker
CIP	International Potato Center
DFID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
DVM	Decentralized vine multipliers
FGD	Focus group discussions
ICT	Information communication technology
IEC	Information, education and communication
IDI	Individual interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OFSP	Orange-fleshed sweetpotato
Q and A	Question and answer
SUSTAIN	Scaling Up Sweetpotato through Agriculture and Nutrition

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Background

The Scaling Up Sweetpotato through Agriculture and Nutrition (SUSTAIN) project undertook studies in Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique to understand how commercialization of sweetpotato value chains affected the wellbeing of smallholder farmers. An important focus of these studies was integration of gender in sweetpotato commercialization and scaling up. Historically, agriculture commercialization has not always been gender-responsive.

The studies sought to answer the following questions:

- How does the commercialization of sweetpotato value chains affect (positively or negatively) the wellbeing of smallholder farmers and their families, particularly women's opportunities as producers, traders and consumers?
- What are the gender implications of commercialization of sweetpotato value chains?
- What impact has sweetpotato production had on people's ability to move up and down the community poverty ladder?
- What are the nutritional, economic and social impacts of orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) commercialization?
- What are the differences in gender implications between white or yellow-fleshed sweetpotato that is sold via informal markets and OFSP, which, because of its planned market intervention, is sold in formal markets?

A two-day technical workshop was organized by the International Potato Center (CIP) and held in Nairobi in November 2018 to review study findings and develop recommendations for improved programming (see Annex 2 for workshop program). Workshop participants included representatives of NGOs, farmers, government departments, researchers and the private sector from Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Rwanda (see Annex 3 for list of participants). The workshop provided an opportunity for cross-learning among the projects represented.

Objectives

The workshop had the following key objectives:

- To present how different SUSTAIN project countries (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique) have integrated gender issues in order to facilitate cross-country learning.
- To present findings from the Kenya and Mozambique gender studies on the effect of commercialization on different demographics and communities.
- To reflect on the current approaches to commercialization and their impact on the ability of men, women and young people to benefit from agriculture commercialization processes.
- To provide an opportunity for the teams from Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania to learn from each other and acquire skills to apply as they develop strategies for integrating gender and youth into future OFSP commercialization interventions.
- To validate results of studies and co-develop recommendations for mainstreaming gender into sweetpotato commercialization interventions.

Workshop methodology

The meeting was designed and run to ensure that recommendations were developed in a participatory manner through the active involvement of different stakeholders: private sector, farmers, researchers and extension workers/government officers. The process followed was:

- **Step 1:** Presentations by SUSTAIN country project managers (Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique) on how they integrated gender into their projects and their reflections on their experiences. This was done to ensure that participants could start to reflect on these experiences, compare the different strategies employed in the different countries and reflect on what went well and what could be strengthened or

transferred from one country to another. This process helped ensure that the recommendations made during the workshop were aligned with project experiences and objectives.

- **Step 2:** Presentations of gender study findings from Kenya and Mozambique. This provided additional background information and helped participants to understand how the project and approaches uses provided opportunities, and in some cases created obstacles, for men and women. Copies of presentations made during step 1 and 2 were made available to participants so that they could refer to them as they developed recommendations and also validate the recommendations the gender team had developed.
- **Step 3:** Participants were split into occupation-based groups (private sector, farmers, researchers and extension workers/government officers) to develop recommendations and validate the recommendations developed as part of the studies in Kenya and Mozambique. They were provided with a standard reporting template.
- **Step 4:** Each group presented its recommendations in plenary and received feedback and comments from other participants.
- **Step 5:** Participants discussed and suggested changes to the report recommendations as part of a validation exercise.
- **Step 6:** The studies had not collected data on young people's experiences. Recognizing the importance of young people, participants viewed a documentary about young men and women sweetpotato vine farmers discussing the opportunities and challenges they faced in vine multiplication and also root marketing enterprises. Based on the experiences depicted in the film, participants were asked to suggest how young people can be integrated in and benefit from sweetpotato commercialization.

Expected outputs

- An emerging understanding of the issues affecting the ability of men, women and young people to benefit from agriculture commercialization interventions.
- Guidelines on integrating gender and youth in the design of projects focusing on commercialization of agriculture.

Day 1: Workshop opening

Introduction and purpose of the meeting

The workshop was opened by Netsayi Mudege who welcomed the participants and outlined the objectives of the two-day meeting.

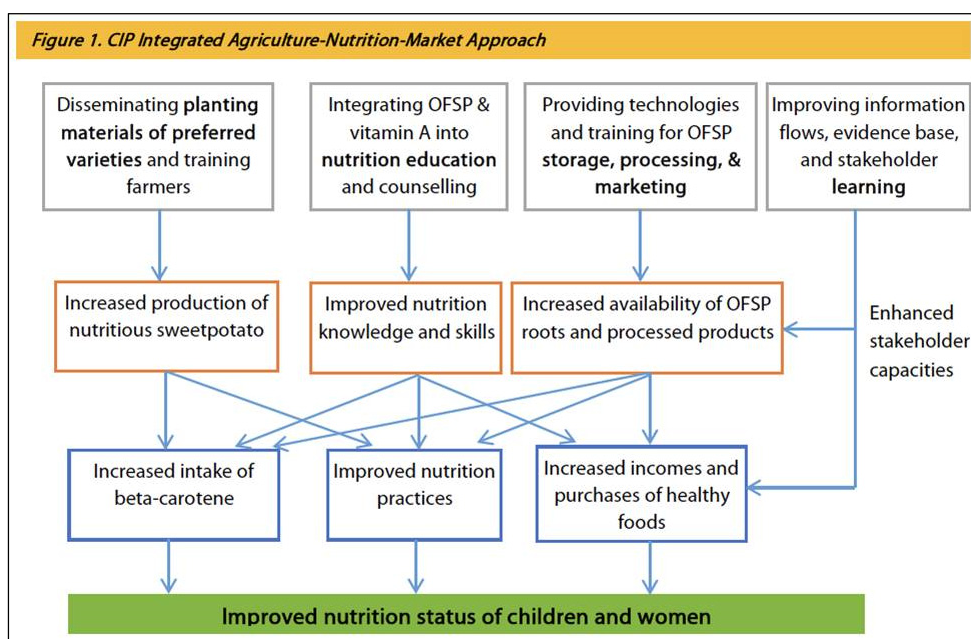
Participants introduced each other and described their expectations from the workshop. Several themes of interest emerged. Private sector actors mentioned interest in knowing what the plans were for ensuring a consistent supply of roots for their needs. Farmers mentioned two main interests: the need to ensure that varieties that were preferred by local informal markets were also being rolled out, not just the varieties needed by the private sector, and help in addressing farming challenges, such as long dry spells that make it difficult to conserve OFSP vines. Other expectations mentioned included: tailored strategies should be developed to integrate gender and young people in commercialization, and the opportunity to learn across projects and countries.

Background to the SUSTAIN project

Tawanda Muzhingi (regional food scientist)

Tawanda's presentation covered the background of the SUSTAIN project as well as the project's theory of change, focusing on the three components of agriculture, nutrition and market access. SUSTAIN was built on the foundation of previous projects by CIP such as Sweetpotato Action for Security and Health in Africa (SASHA) and Reaching Agents of Change (RAC). SUSTAIN works in the main countries of Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Rwanda, and peripheral countries such as Bangladesh and Burundi.

SUSTAIN's theory of change has three components: agriculture, nutrition and market access.



After Tawanda's presentation, Netsayi, illustrated how gender is integrated into all the pillars of the theory of change. She gave examples of how gender had been integrated in the dissemination of planting materials, ensuring that men and women had access to nutrition education and counseling, and how gender considerations were integrated into training and other activities.



SUSTAIN_overview.pptx

The following question and answer session (Q and A) included:

Q: How much has been done in the commercialization work, and is there a leading variety or are we still at the discovery stage?

A: The development process is continual. New varieties are always being produced. We have disseminated a number of varieties. The number of disseminated varieties differ per country as some have more varieties than others. A lot of work has been done over the last five years in promoting varieties that people can grow for home use and commercialization; the preferred varieties have been taken up and commercialized. So many have been released.

Q: What strategies were used in commercializing OFSP, which is a vegetatively propagated crop and so would not be of interest to private sector enterprises?

A: For SUSTAIN, OFSP commercialization focused mainly on food products not the seed system, though SUSTAIN Malawi did work with a large private-sector entity to commercialize seed production. We could learn from their experience to find ways of developing sustainable seed systems with private sector participation.

Country reports on methods used to integrate gender into the SUSTAIN project in different countries

Gender integration in Kenya – highlights of experiences from western Kenya

Penina Muoki (agriculture value chain specialist)

Activities in western Kenya contribute to four outputs:

Output 1 Access to improved OFSP varieties by smallholders scaled up-reaching at least 35,000 households having children <5 years old.	Output 2 Access to improved nutritional knowledge & diversified use of OFSP by both female and male caregivers.	Output 3 At least one commercially marketed processed product that uses OFSP as a major ingredient in each target country.	Output 4 Evidence of achieving outcomes analyzed and disseminated.
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Penina pointed out that initially the project had not targeted gender issues; it was by chance that the participation of men and women ended up 50:50.

She stated that she had always found it difficult to integrate the profit motive of business in social development objectives such as social inclusion. She noted: *“The challenge is pursuing a combined commercial value chain and social commercial value chain. In many cases we make losses.”* She pointed out that it is often hard to be socially inclusive (beyond nutrition issues) in terms of participation in commercialized vine production when you are expected to scale up and meet certain goals.

She suggested that project managers tend to work with those who are capable of helping themselves reach their goals, which may mean that considerations such as gender may fall by the way side. She noted that male vine multipliers were expanding more rapidly than their female counterparts, possibly owing to the fact that financial, land and infrastructure resources were needed for vine multiplication.

One lesson is that in the future, project implementers should work with farmers based on merit; those who showed initiative and performed well. For example, she noted that periodic spot checks showed that the irrigation equipment provided to farmers was not used optimally. However, during the Q and A session, some participants thought the results from Kenya showed that merit-based support may favor male vine multipliers. Most likely only male decentralized vine multipliers (DVMs) will be selected if performance is the selection criterion.

Penina clarified that trader-farmer forums were used to reassure farmers that there was a market for their roots. The opportunities were equally available to men and women.



Gender_Integration_
in_Kenya.pptx

During the Q and A, it was suggested that the project needed to address the issue of varieties; farmers and consumers in Kenya tend to reject OFSP because of its low dry matter. Penina responded that OFSP could be used in recipes if the variety was not firm and to facilitate this sensory testing could be integrated into the project.

Additionally, other participants advised that for future phases the project should consider gender and age issues, especially due to the fact that women and young men do not have equal access to or control of land.

In response to Penina's suggestion that the project should consider working with larger-scale vine multipliers as they can help the project reach its target more easily, some participants commented that the project should not disqualify people because they have failed to expand their acreage under vine production: if 10 women grow a total of 5 acres of vines between them, the benefits will be distributed more widely than if one man grows 5 acres of vines. Participants thought that the projects needed to understand and address the challenges that women face so that they could participate in a meaningful way. Strategies that take women's special circumstances into account need to be developed.

One participant asked if sweetpotato could still be regarded as a women's crop when men are increasingly interested, involved and engaged in its cultivation and marketing, especially for commercialized OFSP? Penina noted that from the commercialization process perspective, sweetpotato was increasingly becoming a men's crop, although in terms of agronomic management it was still a women's crop. This generated debate; some participants thought it was still a women's crop because more women were involved, even if their plots were much smaller than men's plots.

Experience with gender integration in SUSTAIN Mozambique

Elijah Munda (associate scientist)

In Mozambique, the SUSTAIN project worked with 63 community facilitators responsible for beneficiary identification, community mobilization and nutrition information dissemination who were directly managed by Adem and the Catholic University of Mozambique (UCAM). The community facilitators held regular meetings with male farmers and community leaders. They encouraged men to allow their wives to participate in projects that empower women economically. In year 1 of the project not many men allowed their wives to participate as DVMs, but the situation improved in subsequent years with continued influence of community facilitators and project staff.

Elijah began by noting that, despite the progressive policies at government level, gender inequality was common in Mozambique. Women still faced obstacles to engage in economically viable activities. While sweetpotato is traditionally a women's crop in Mozambique, it has not been easy for women to participate in the lucrative OFSP value chain. For example, women could not open up big areas of land for commercialized vine multiplication as this required obtaining permission from their husbands, who were the land owners.

The prioritization of sweetpotato over other agricultural enterprises that men considered more important meant women could not increase their sweetpotato production areas. Men got involved as DVMs when they realized that it was a high-income enterprise.

Notable successes

One unemployed female youth joined the project as a DVM after completing form 6, and with the proceeds from OFSP commercialisation she enrolled in a nurse training course and is now in her final year. She continues producing and selling OFSP roots and vines to sustain her studies in Chimoio, western Mozambique.

The number of women producing and selling OFSP was visibly increasing. In Maputo, for example in Bobole and Malanga area, the number of women who sell OFSP on market days has increased. In Chimoio, both men and women were involved in marketing OFSP in Mercado 38 and Beira, and the men in Beira market were mainly from Manica province.

The proceeds from OFSPs sales were used by households to buy other products, allowing dietary diversification. Improvement in livelihoods among households and an upward movement on the social ladder were reflected in farmers' abilities to build better houses, pay school fees, and buy school uniforms and irrigation equipment with the proceeds from sweetpotato commercialization. Livelihood improvement was particularly notable where women were involved in OFSP commercialization.

Q and A:

Q: How did the project ensure that farmers sold their produce to the people to whom they had been linked, as they could choose to sell it to intermediaries?

A: The project relies on and assumes truthful reporting by farmers, who call to provide updates on whom they have sold their crop to.

Elijah noted that women needed men in order to engage in sweetpotato commercial activities. He explained that in central Mozambique men did not trust their wives enough to let them to go from home for long periods, but in southern Mozambique women were highly mobile and could travel to far off places to sell their ware.

It emerged during the Q and A that, although linkages with the private sector processing partner, Zebra Farms, had worked well in the beginning, problems with paying farmers arose. This led to some farmers dropping out. CIP then started working with NGOs, such as Concern, to provide farmers with access to other more reliable buyers and markets.

Elijah explained that, as in other SUSTAIN countries, young people had not been directly targeted and so in Mozambique not many young people were involved. He suggested that SUSTAIN needed to use models that stimulate young people's participation. Some young couples began engaging in OFSP after learning about a young farmer who was paying for her nursing school fees using proceeds from sweetpotato vine sales. He noted that it was hard to involve young people because they normally only chose sweetpotato production as a last resort. Elijah also opined that expanding the portfolio of OFSP-based products sold by the private sector may help DVMs to expand their seed businesses; demand for seed would increase due to higher demand for the roots.

Experience with gender integration in SUSTAIN Malawi

Wells Kumwenda (project manager)

Wells pointed out that the Malawi model had initially used just one large seed producer. Gender was integrated at the level of nutrition.

SUSTAIN targeted women, pregnant mothers and households with a child under five years as project beneficiaries. It conducted nutrition training for mothers and caregivers with children. It encouraged mothers and women to form or join groups for producing OFSP vines and roots as a business to boost their household incomes.

Out of the 86,000 beneficiaries participating in the project, 50,000 were women. Some women managed to pay school fees, build better houses and purchase bicycles to help them carry produce or travel. Women beneficiary farmers were taught how to process and utilize OFSP.

Wells noted that, because of commercialization, men were increasingly participating in OFSP production. However, worrying trends had been observed where adult and young men were pushing women out of OFSP production and marketing. He noted that gender equity goals were suffering from male interference in women's OFSP commercialization efforts owing to their fear of income inequality favoring women and because of the need for women to seek permission to use land for OFSP. There is a need to integrate systems to check the situation because women could be displaced as OFSP farmers. With regard to youth involvement, Wells noted that there was need for mechanization and to provide young people with training and start-up capital.



SUSTAIN_Malawi.pp
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Q and A

Wells explained that they had selected Nakwale Farm because the owner had irrigation equipment. They realized, however, that because the farm was located in southern Malawi and vines were needed in the north; the arrangement was not effective. The project therefore trained three farmers and staff from Ripple Africa, an NGO, all in the northern region, to ensure that vines were produced closer to the people who needed them.

To ensure women's continuing involvement in sweetpotato, extra training was provided for women and attention given to understanding and addressing their special problems.

Elijah noted that in the Mozambique project community facilitators were now working with men in an attempt to influence cultural practices to permit women to engage in OFSP commercialization.

Summary of factors to consider in commercialization

After the presentations and Q and A sessions, Netsayi provided a summary of the factors to consider when implementing projects that seek to commercialize crops/agriculture:

- Cultural factors that may prevent women from participating and benefiting from commercialization
- Mobility issues for women
- Control of income – who earns it, who controls it, and how can we make sure that there is equity in income ownership and control
- Strategies to select farmers should ensure that women can participate in OFSP commercialization, otherwise men will take over and women will lose their source of income
- Mechanization is essential to attract young people
- We need to understand how the models are working and how we will change them if we needed.

Effects of sweetpotato commercialization on men and women producers and traders in Homa Bay and Bungoma, Kenya

Netsayi N Mudege (gender research coordinator), Norman Kwikiriza (research associate) and Simon Heck (leader of The Resilient Nutritious Sweetpotato Program for Africa, Asia and Haiti)

Netsayi presented the results from western Kenya. These showed that, while development efforts towards commercialization intend to increase economic, nutrition and social benefits for stakeholders, there are potential risks.

In terms of benefits, in some cases proceeds from sweetpotato sales had helped women start renting or even purchasing land in their own right so that they could farm successfully. Women mentioned independence as one of the benefits from commercialization of sweetpotato; they made their own money and could make decisions related to improving their household livelihood, for example by purchasing and owning livestock, which traditionally were the preserve of men. In other cases, however, women lost control of the sweetpotato trade when it became more profitable; men then become more engaged and they have also received training on production.

The introduction of new ways of farming, such as the use of ox-drawn ploughs, led to greater involvement of men because they usually owned and used the ploughs.

For the non-commercialized white sweetpotato, women controlled many of the plots, sales and income from sweetpotato. However, when it comes to decisions over the commercialized OFSP, men are often engaged as large sums of money are involved.



Sweetpotato commercialization in Homa

The study demonstrated that, while the value of sweetpotato from women-controlled plots was lower than that of men's, sweetpotato from plots controlled by both men and women had a higher value than plots controlled by men only. Additionally, while no women controlled the income derived from plots controlled by men, some men controlled the income from women-controlled plots. Women and men are engaged in different manners in sweetpotato production and utilization and at different points along the value chain. It was concluded that commercialization of sweetpotato can benefit both men and women if household approaches are adopted that facilitate men and women to participate as equal partners in the business.

Q and A

A participant noted that the variety being promoted was watery. If farmers are to benefit from commercialization, they need varieties with higher dry-matter content. Variety is key in value chain commercialization; only if the value chain satisfies the needs of the market can it have the potential for export production, like avocados do in Kenya. Commercial enterprises will come to you only if you have what they want.

A private sector player suggested that, in order to scale-up OFSP successfully, farmers need to try it out on a small plot of land, where the risk of failure would not have important consequences for them. He noted that to upscale, the project did not necessarily need many large farmers but could work with many smallholders. Similar successful models have been used for crops like French beans in Kenya: *"Our work with green beans involves 120,000 smallholders, and an important goal for us is to improve livelihoods. We introduced the beans to farmers as an additional, not a substitute, crop to what they were growing. This could be done for OFSP by having it introduced to farmers who already grow white sweetpotato. Farmers will try it out on a small land area without the fear of the risk of failure. From our experience this works."* (Gabriel Chinembiri)

Another participant noted that while farmers might be interested in commercializing OFSP, they may not have access to capital. If there was an institution that could use the crop as collateral, that could be of great significance for women, who usually do not own the land on which they farm and therefore cannot use it as collateral for loans to expand their business.

Issues to consider

- Now that we are helping to increase incomes, what can we do to encourage joint husband-wife decision-making in budgeting to make sure that we are not promoting practices that disfranchise those who do all the farm work (i.e. women) but are not in control of the income?
- If we are promoting commercialization and women are losing power over their crop, we need to be critical in our assessment of our strategies and work to understand the situation so that we can have both men and women benefiting from agriculture.

A gendered perspective of commercializing OFSP in Mozambique

Sarah Mayanja (presenter- research associate), Netsayi Mudege (gender research coordinator), Norman Kwikiriza (research associate) and Elijah Munda (associate scientist)

Sarah's presentation showed that in Mozambique there was increased engagement and interest by men in the sweetpotato value chain. While more women than men cultivated OFSP, men sold 20% more of the crop than women and also attained 9% higher prices per unit sold. Men's higher investment in and expansion of sweetpotato enterprises was attributed to their access to and control over resources, such as land and cattle, and also their off-farm employment.



Gender_and_OFSP_
Mozambique.pptx

The engagement of men in OFSP production and marketing did not seem to result in loss of control by women. On a scale from 0 to 5 (0 indicating no power, 5 complete power), women reported that their ability to make production-related decisions had increased on average from 2.6 to 3.2 within the three years of the start of the project. This was attributed to awareness raising undertaken by opinion leaders, training, and improved market linkages that accompanied the intervention. However, some men perceived women's engagement in sweetpotato commercialization as a threat to their own power; some forbade their wives from continuing as vine multiplication entrepreneurs and cases of domestic violence were also reported. Commercialization may, therefore, marginalize women from a crop that has hitherto been theirs. The economic benefits included ability to purchase motorbikes (mostly men), meet expenses for scholastic materials including school fees (mostly women) and to improve homes.

Women study participants who also participated in the SUSTAIN project stated that they had acquired marketing skills that enabled them to deal directly with traders instead of intermediaries. The prices for their sweetpotato produce improved when they sold jointly with their husbands, who were perceived as having better marketing skills given their engagement in other cash crop value chains. Women study participants who were producing and selling OFSP reported improvements in their wealth statuses. Positive changes in gender norms relating to the sharing of resources, asset acquisition and decision-making were observed at household level. Despite constraints like limited mobility and access to resources, and price fluctuations, sweetpotato commercialization generated more positive than negative effects for women and men. Commercialization does not always disadvantage women. If programs are designed in a gender-responsive way, including raising awareness of gender issues among communities and families, they can have positive effects on gender relations. Household approaches that promote meaningful joint decision-making should be adopted in program design so that women can benefit as much as men from the introduction of technologies and products.

Though women have benefited from OFSP commercialization, more support is needed to increase their participation in the most remunerative parts of the value chain, such as seed production and linkages with the processor. A few farmers had sold roots to the processor, Zebra Farms, but this linkage was not sustained. Such opportunities need to be explored as they offer openings for both women and men to engage in an upgraded chain.

Group exercise

Next, the participants were assigned to groups and given the task of using the results from the presentations to come up with recommendations on how to mainstream gender into sweetpotato commercialization processes, addressing the challenges facing men, women and young people in that process. Working in four groups, based on the professions represented at the workshop, the participants were asked to come up with strategies, activities and processes that they would develop and implement to mitigate the challenges and exploit the opportunities mentioned by participants of the study in Kenya and Mozambique.

Day 2

Recap

Day 2 started with a brief recap of the presentations and discussions from day 1. Observations made by participants about day one included:

- In planning and developing the strategies for gender integration, we need to have indicators to measure progress.

- Ways need to be found to ensure a balance in the benefits accruing from OFSP for women, men and young people to avoid disharmony in the household.
- The challenges affecting men, women and young farmers relate to culture, transport and lack of knowledge.
- The Mozambique presentation highlighted the importance for farmers to budget for the income from sweetpotato sales.
- The explanation on the meaning of gender balance showed that gender integration is not about favoring women but about equity and giving each gender an equal opportunity to benefit.
- In promoting OFSP commercialization, the greatest impediment to gender balance is cultural norms; the question we need to be asking ourselves is: how will we handle the commercialization work so that it fully addresses gender-related issues so all the genders prosper?
- A big challenge in OFSP commercialization is mechanization. We heard from the presentation that in Homa Bay sweetpotato production is affected when people who supply ploughing services do not turn up when they promise. We need to find ways to help farmers deal with this.
- In Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique, SUSTAIN has done a lot to promote gender equity, even though it was not a strategic goal of the project. Women have played a great role in the OFSP value chain and we have started to see the beginnings of gender parity. We should recognize that and reinforce success approaches.
- Is the market development for OFSP socially, commercially or social-commercially oriented? We need to think of these things as we define our strategies and approaches.
- Farmers in different countries face many challenges, for example in land access/ownership, especially women farmers (two participants).
- It seems that in Malawian men are fearful of women's access to income at the same level as theirs, but in Mozambique there seems to be more inclusiveness for women and in some cases some level of equity in reaping the benefits from OFSP. A gender focus is needed so that equity is achieved.
- Drought is a big issue in all the SUSTAIN project countries. In western Kenya soil fertility also is a problem, particularly since field officers are not equipped to help farmers resolve it.
- In OFSP commercialization, a lack of information, especially for women, is a major problem. Men have access to information from the radio and newspapers and through access to distance markets, but they do not share it. Advocacy is needed to show men the value of sharing information.
- Training for women is only provided locally. Men have access to training offered in distant locations. Mozambique has seen some change of attitude and women participate in the sharing of and budgeting for income from OFSP. The process used to achieve this provides an opportunity for learning that should be exploited elsewhere.
- Across the region the challenges are similar, and we need to bring all players, whether from government, extension or the private sector, to find a way of working together to create policies that tackle these challenges.
- The trends in the commercialization of OFSP have seen the increased involvement of men and young people and some marginalization of women. We need to empower women and create awareness about the need not to leave them behind.
- It seems that farmers and technical stakeholders do not take private sector needs into account when they develop program plans and strategies. For example, a trader might need certain volumes not supplied by the market; there is a disconnect between what is happening and what is needed. We need to think how that can be addressed to involve the private sector even in the growing of OFSP.
- Are we thinking of vitamin A or income as our focus? The private sector can be interested in both. The availability of vitamin A can be an entry point to promote OFSP and its products, and it makes business sense.
- NGOs in Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique face challenges emanating from their failure to integrate gender aspects in projects. SUSTAIN project implementers did a good job to incorporate gender integration. Culture is a big challenge, but things are changing. We need to think about how we can plan so that gender integration is included from the onset.

- In cases where we need to address gender issues, we could work with local gender champions to influence their communities.
- Nothing was mentioned on gender-based violence, although that issue was picked up in the interviews.
- On youth inclusion, we need to take into account that young people are interested in businesses that bring income quickly. Young people are involved in transportation, so they are involved in commercialization.
- Most of our agriculture is based on culture and we need to recognize that. Our biggest problem, which is food security, is not being addressed. If cultural barriers are not addressed, we will not achieve our goal.
- Let us treat agriculture as a business. The failure to prepare for the market in terms of volumes, prices and all that is needed for the market aspects to be articulated is something to be concerned about. OFSP production should be presented to farmers as a business venture. When we articulate the business aspects to households, we should address all the challenges of culture.

Recommendations: Addressing challenges facing men, women and young people in commercializing sweetpotato

For this session participants continued working in their four groups. Participants were tasked with suggesting strategies, activities and processes that they could develop and implement to mitigate the challenges and exploit the opportunities mentioned by participants of the study in Kenya and Mozambique.

After developing their own recommendations regarding integrating gender into commercialization, they then discussed the strategy developed by the gender team based on the study findings. This was to validate the study recommendations.

The private sector group was worried that challenging gender norms could be construed as confrontational. However, during discussions it was noted that, as organizations coming into communities with interventions, they need to understand the basis of gender norms and work to influence their change. Netsayi Mudege suggested that sometimes gender norms need to be challenged. Sometimes researchers and program managers are left behind because gender norms are in a state of flux. Gender norms in the communities where we work are already being challenged. Workshop participants were informed the final recommendations would integrate the recommendations from the study with the participant's own recommendations.

The recommendations from groups and the results of the validation exercise are outlined below by group:

Private sector and foundations group discussion

Key suggestions included:

- Undertake advocacy for the implementation and enforcement of existing land laws that favor women
- Develop education and awareness creation initiatives on women's land rights
- Provide training and capacity building on production, marketing and value addition
- Facilitate the linking up of men and women farmers with business development services
- Promote the provision of training on financial literacy for men and women
- Establish sweetpotato business incubation hubs for young men and women.



Click the icons below for the reports for their recommendations and validation discussions.



Private Sector and
Foundations



Private
sector_validation.

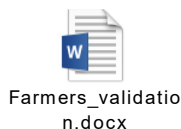
Farmers group discussion on recommendations

The farmers' group treated gender as a component that required its own specific strategies. It was pointed out during the plenary that since gender cuts across all facets of the farming enterprise, it should not be treated separately. The goal should be to ensure that for each strategy suggested, approaches are defined that show how it will work for men and women. Key suggestions included but were not limited to the following:

- Improve availability of vines by establishing vine multiplication centers
- Improve distribution networks particularly having vines available closer to farmers
- Research on drought tolerant varieties conducted by breeders
- Work with microfinance institutions to provide financial resources to interested men and women farmers
- Researchers and policy makers as well as target groups to challenge socio-cultural and gender norms that discriminate against women
- Intervention projects should also develop approaches that effectively challenge socio-cultural and gender norms that discriminate against women
- Facilitate the linking up of men and women farmers with markets.



Click the icons below for the reports for their recommendations and validation discussions.



Comments and questions

- We should not address gender separately. All these elements are affected by gender. We need to develop strategies for the specific genders, because their access to resources, such as capital and information, is not equal even with respect to sweetpotato. We are integrating gender into all the strategies to address the challenges, but we need to specify which strategy will work for men, for women or for young people.
- In working with chiefs, we have to be very strategic. Chiefs could resist what we are trying to achieve because they see it as a threat to their power. To make sure they do not block transformative agendas you need to understand their agenda and how yours fits into theirs.
- Let us work with chiefs in a way that shows them that what we are doing is not bad for them. Let us show them that it is not an issue of power but of passing the right information to them. It is about justice.

Extension workers group discussion on recommendations

Key suggestions included:

- Promote the use of triples S method in dry areas
- Help the development of strategic partnerships with financial institutions, such as the development of farmer-friendly loan products, for instance with CRDB Bank in Tanzania, FINCA International, women- and youth-oriented microfinance institutions.
- Facilitate the introduction of saving and loan groups into extension outreach.
- Facilitate the provision of training for men and women on financial management and skills
- Facilitate the introduction of women farmers to table banking¹ or other banking mechanisms

¹ Table banking is a group funding strategy where members of a particular group meet once every month, place their savings, loan repayments and other contributions on the table then borrow immediately either as long term or short term loans to one or a number of interested members.

- Facilitate the linking up of farmers with insurance companies or other insurance products such as mobilizing farmers into savings and internal lending communities, such as the chamas (informal cooperatives) in Kenya
- Engage in dialogue with local opinion leaders, as entry points into dialogue with communities.



Click the icons below for the reports for their recommendations and validation discussions.



Researchers group discussion on recommendations

Researchers suggested the following key recommendations:

- Ensure gender integration strategies are included in research from the onset of projects
- Review other complementary interventions e.g. wash, sanitation and hygiene initiatives before developing gender implementation plans
- Develop mechanization strategies that take the needs of men and women into account when developing tools and machines
- Promote the provision of training on financial literacy for men and women
- Develop and implement gender transformative strategies to advocate for change in deep-rooted norms, perception and culture, which deter women from benefiting from commercialization
- Develop strategies which seek to create opportunities for young people to become involved in employment activities in sweetpotato agri-food supply chain
- Identify and introduce improved agronomic practices to both men and women to promote the commercialization of quality sweetpotato.



Click the icons below for the reports for their recommendations and validation discussions.



Comments and questions to the researchers from other participants

Q: We need to record our failures not just our success stories to allow learning from our mistakes.

A: Yes, this is already being done and lessons from the implementation of our projects are used in informing the development of plans and strategies for subsequent projects.

Q: Availability and promotion of new varieties of OFSP are the crux of the matter if the intention is to commercialize OFSP. One of the marketing challenges is associated with the unpopularity of the low dry-matter content of the varieties promoted.

A: It is probably just in Kenya where there is a variety issue. Mozambique has 22 varieties. In Mozambique we conduct on-farm trials with farmers to choose varieties based on their preferences. We ended up distributing five or more varieties. In situations where new varieties are not being developed, there are possibilities for cross-border transfer of varieties from neighboring countries.

Q: Mainstreaming of multidisciplinary teams in research is essential to promote holistic approaches in the development of research projects to ensure that issues such as gender integration are addressed from the very beginning of projects. Do you have social scientists in your team?

A: CIP is already doing this and has teams of gender and marketing specialists, and social scientists.

Q: Farmer testing is something I am against. It affects marketing when the varieties farmers select do not match what the market needs.

A: If our testing is wide, for example 100 varieties, it will capture the market requirements. A: The variety that is wet might not be popular for eating but it is used in juices. The involvement of the private sector in variety development is necessary.

A: At CIP we have a protocol for variety selection. It requires that we have a basket of choices, not just not one variety. We also work with the private sector and that is how we ended up with the watery variety, which farmers like for processing.

Integration of youth issues into the strategy

Since the SUSTAIN project did not focus on young people, the two studies conducted in Kenya and Mozambique did not include them in their explorations of gender issues. However, in recognition of the importance of young people in agriculture, the project, in collaboration with other projects within CIP, shot a short film in which researchers interviewed several young men and women, and also adults involved in sweetpotato seed or root production. Farmers featured in the film are not necessarily those who have worked with CIP but are ordinary farmers. Sometimes their definition of 'seed' is different from CIP's standard definition. The film was used at the workshop to elicit discussions about young people's issues so that these could be addressed in the development of strategies.

To watch the Homa Bay sweetpotato seed farmers' film, [click here](#).

After watching the film, participants worked in groups to make suggestions to foster young people's involvement in sweetpotato value chains that could be integrated into the strategy document. Their discussions were guided by the following questions:

- What parts of this story are similar to the experiences that you have in engaging young people, men or women, in commercialization of crops/agribusiness development?
- What are the implications of this in the way commercialization projects are developed?
- From the film, are there any strategies that farmers/researchers could adopt to promote participation of young men and women in commercialization of agriculture? What may be the best way to engage young men and women?

There were no presentations in the plenary session, but participants were asked to integrate youth issues into the strategies they were developing in their various groups.

Prior to starting their group work, participants made the following comments on issues arising from the video:

- I liked the openness of the discussion and the interaction. The issue of timing mentioned is a big concern; maybe it requires drawing up a calendar.
- The government should go beyond just passing laws and making policies to see to their implementation. It should be involved in defining of roles so that everyone knows what is happening.
- Seed propagation, seed cost and formalization of the seed value chain might have negative connotations among farmers who are used to getting seed free. How do you change the mindset so that farmers are open to buying seed?
- Even farmers at village level are aware of the need for crop insurance; how can that be incorporated in OFSP farming and commercialization?
- I liked the fact that farmers were looking at what they themselves could do, not just what the government can do for them.
- The issue of contracting and the value of such agreements are important, since contracts give power to farmers.
- The quality of the vines shown in the video is of concern. If farmers are growing vines for sale, the vines need to be and look healthy so that farmers who buy them will appreciate the quality of the product they are paying for.
- Some of the innovations that we came up with in previous seed work in CIP included branding and packaging. Farmers were handling those vines with extreme care. We need to think of a quality product.
- Packaging means providing information on the product.
- Social media is coming out as an important information tool, even for older farmers. It could be exploited in interesting ways to interact with young people.
- We need to foster policy dialogue to make sure that policies favoring OFSP are developed.
- The Building Nutritious Food Baskets project is developing a policy model that we might be able to borrow from.

Concluding remarks

Netsayi Mudege concluded the workshop by noting that when we develop interventions, we should ensure that we consider gender since men and women may be affected differently. If we want to ensure that both men and women benefit and that gender inequalities are reduced, we need to understand what men and women need and what is the best way to work with them. Additionally, she stated that the workshop illustrated that it is not only about gender but also about other form of social differences within communities and how these identities intersect with one another to make some people more vulnerable than others.

She made reference to the power walk activity (see Annex 4) which participants had participated in to illustrate how different identities intersect; for example, being a woman, who is a widow and has young children to take care of is different from being an educated woman who is a local teacher and has access to land. Approaches to reach them may be different.

She informed participants that once the report was completed and the recommendations were developed and finalized she would share the document with participants for their own reference.

She ended by thanking participants for accepting the invitation to participate and for their active engagement over two days.

Annex 1: Workshop evaluation

Comment	Participant age	
	Male	Female
What I learned		
I learned from the last exercise about community and gender diversity needs and opportunities	45	
Gender inclusivity in OFSP	33	
OFSP business can improve livelihoods		50
OFSP commercialization	30	
Finding the appropriate information channel to reach farmers was a major challenge	33	
Finding the appropriate information channel to reach farmers was a major challenge in the implementation of the project		40
Perception of information can affect the success of a project		
Women, men and youth should be encouraged to participate in commercialization of OFSP so that all genders benefit equally		
Empower females and the youth for their participation in the OFSP value chain	37	
In commercializing sweetpotato (OFSP) efforts have to be directed at the youth and women, who are marginalized groups	28	
Culture can impede development and so it is essential to change community attitudes	43	
It is important to involve both genders in decision-making in commercializing OFSP		46
Involve the youth in the OFSP value chain	45	
Use of community dialogues as an entry point into communities with deep-seated cultural norms		55
There is need for financial accessibility for female farmers during commercialization of farming	43	
When making decisions we should consult all stakeholders without segregating women and youth		39
Involve the youth		59
I will take gender factors seriously and mainstream them in my work	55	
To start farming OFSP	53	
Gender inclusivity is necessary in agricultural activities	52	
When a project comes into a community not everyone benefits. Those that are disadvantaged, i.e. the youth and the widowed never really benefit owing to several factors	37	
As farmers we can tackle many of our challenges by working as groups. Moreover, our results will improve because we will share knowledge and experiences		44
In our farming activities we need to include women, men and the youth		
Women, men and the youth are able to take part in farming OFSP		19
Joint family budgeting is essential for effective household financial management	46	
Gender matters in business when dealing with communities	52	
The need for promotion in marketing OFSP		36
I will go and implement community dialogues as a way of bringing about gender equality in all aspects	49	
Gender consideration is a factor in youth involvement	54	
Roles and responsibilities of the various members of households	52	
What went well		
Group work accompanying the presentations increased the level of understanding on what was happening in the communities	33	
Presentations were well organized and interesting	49	
Group discussions provided a conducive environment for cross-learning among the countries		
Group activities and discussions were very interactive and productive	52	
Interactive participation, e.g. recap of the previous day in a circle using a ball, group discussions, feedback from the countries	54	
Presentations were simple, clear and easy to understand and relate to		46
Facilitation was good		
Presentations were well organized	45	
Presentations and group discussions went well	55	
Group discussions and presentations		50
Time management was good	30	
Participatory delivery of content		
Workshop environment was good for consultation and discussion	52	
Engagement of the participants		–
Discussion in the meeting went well		19

Group discussion sessions were well patronized	43	
Learning how CIP is involving the farmers in order to learn their challenges rather than taking a research only approach, and the use of participatory method involving all the stakeholders in the OFSP project		44
A wide range of stakeholders was represented and they interacted fruitfully, which will enrich the strategy		35
Deep consultation: a lot was gained even though the time was short		
Open discussion with the stakeholders	33	40
An eye-opener on gender inclusiveness in OFSP production	37	
Understanding the challenge of gender issues in the society	53	
The training sessions were engaging, especially the group work and presentations and the gender drill was perfect	28	
Acquisition of knowledge through sharing of experiences from other countries		43
All the presentations for the three countries – Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique		36
The involvement of all stakeholders, i.e. farmers, researchers, NGOs and the private sector		39
The workshop was interactive and was an opportunity to meet people from diverse cultures	37	
The group exercises to supplement the theory part for effective learning	46	
The presentations were clear and articulated well to bring out the key points of the workshop	52	
Facilitation was good and the presenters were conversant with the subject matter	33	
Accommodation was good		
The presentation of the Mozambique study	45	
Group work		
Time management		
What could be improved		
Accommodation not to be full but as an incentive participants should be allowed to seek accommodation individually and to receive per diems	46	
Allow participants to get alternative accommodation		46
Make accommodation half board so that participants take home better money	45	
Allow participants to seek accommodation in a place of their choice	52	
Improve on time management		
Keeping time during comment and question and answer sessions		50
Involving all the gender groups in decision-making and planning	33	
Involving all the gender groups in decision-making and planning		40
Assist in gender policy-making and implementation (sensitization)		
More materials should be provided to participants before the workshop	30	
Field visit to meet and visit OFSP farmers in the county where the workshop is convened	55	
Improve on youth involvement		59
Assign each participant a task to ensure maximum participation from every individual		43
Invite more private sector stakeholders to provide input into your plans	53	
Everything was organized perfectly; I saw no faults. Good work, CIP!	28	
There is need to allow time for foreigners to see Nairobi or other location	37	
Have more outside participation to assist to evaluate and validate area of study, a cross-section of value chain players and industry players should be included to balance opinion. Private and public sector participation may help with some of the problems encountered in the study	52	
More women and youth could be invited to attend and allowed more space to share their thoughts		55
Increase participation of the youth	43	
More youths need to be involved as participants during the training events	33	
Participants should be notified in far in advance of the event	37	
Ways should be found to encourage the youth to work as farmers		19
Language barrier was an issue	48	
Nothing should be changed		36
Include more exercises	45	
Bring live experiences on gender		
Issues to be dealt with during discussions need to be available to participants before hand	52	
Integrate gender strategies in the project at the onset	54	
Include policy-makers like chiefs and ministers		39
Hotel should provide better IT support to avoid delays in managing slide presentations	49	

Annex 2: Program

Time	Topic	Person responsible
Day 1: Understanding gender integration within SUSTAIN		
08:30–09:00	Participant introduction and purpose of meeting	Netsayi Mudege
09:00–09:15	Background to the SUSTAIN projects	Tawanda Muzhingi
09:15–09:45	Experience with gender integration: SUSTAIN Kenya	Penina Muoki
9:45–10:00	Experience with gender integration: SUSTAIN Mozambique	Elijah Munda
10:00–10:15	Experience with gender integration: SUSTAIN Malawi	Wells Kumwenda
10:15–10:30	Discussion session	Netsayi Mudege
10:30–11:00	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
11:00–11:30	Presentation of Study Findings (Kenya)	Netsayi Mudege
11:30–11:40	Discussion session / Questions	Netsayi Mudege
11:40–13:00	<i>Group exercise 1: Focusing on the challenges and opportunities mentioned by study participants in Kenya, discuss strategies would you devise, and activities/processes you would implement to mitigate the challenges for men and women and to take advantage of the opportunities. (Use template provided)</i>	Group exercise
13:00–14:00	Lunch	
14:00–14:30	Presentation of study findings (Mozambique)	Sarah Mayanja
14:30–14:40	Discussion session/Questions	Netsayi Mudege
14:40–15:00	Integrating findings from Mozambique continue with exercise 1	
15:00–15:30	Tea/coffee break	
15:30–16:30	Continue with exercise 1	Netsayi Mudege
16:30	END OF DAY	
Day 2: Decision-making and youth engagement		
08:30–09:00	RECAP	
09:00–10:30	Group presentations and discussions	
10:30–11:00	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
11:00–11:30	Video screening (10 minutes introduction to video + instructions + participants) 20 minutes video showing	Netsayi Mudege
11:30–11:40	Questions and comments	Plenary
11:30–12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parts of this story are similar to experiences that you have in engaging young people, men or women in commercialization of crops/agribusiness development? • What are the implications of this in the way commercialization projects are developed? • From the video, are there any strategies that farmers/researchers could adopt to promote participation of young men and women in commercialization of agriculture? What may be the best way to engage young men and women? • Integrate strategies into the strategy document 	Group exercise
13:00–14:00	LUNCH BREAK	
14:00–14:45	Presentations of additional strategies for youth integration	Plenary
14:45–15:15	Presentation of study recommendations	Netsayi Mudege
15:15–15:30	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
15:30–16:30	Group validation of study recommendations	Group work
16:30–17:30	Plenary presentations	Group presentations
17:30–18:00	Power walk	Netsayi Mudege
18:00	Workshop evaluation and end of day	Netsayi Mudege

Annex 3: Participants

Last name	First name	Title	Institution	Country	Email
Achila	Berly Achieng	Sub-County Agribusiness Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	Kenya	berylachila12@gmail.com
Akoth	Linnea		Farmer	Kenya	linneakoth8@gmail.com
Akumo	Casmiel	Sub-County Crop Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	Kenya	akumocasmiel@yahoo.com
Chinembiri	Gabriel	GM-Agro	Industrial Promotion Services	Kenya	gabrielchinembiri@ipskenya.com
Dos Santos Jr	Manuel	Director	ADEM	Mozambique	adem.chimoio@gmail.com
Enock	Judith M.		OFSP Farmer	Tanzania	judithmaro877@gmail.com
Grant	Frederick	Nutritionist	CIP	Tanzania	f.grant@cgiar.org
Jaffu	Joseph	Managing Director	MUMI Enterprises	Malawi	joseph.jaffu@yahoo.com
Kebaara	Kellen	Consultant		Kenya	kebaa002@umnedu
Kebwaro	Peninah		-	Kenya	kebwaropeninah@yahoo.com
Kumwenda	Wells		CIP	Malawi	w.kumwenda@cgiar.org
Kyando	Kijuli	Driver	IITA	Tanzania	kijulikyando45@gmail.com
Laga	W. Odhiambo	Farmer	Community Hope Foundation	Kenya	lalawoowill72@gmail.com
Landa	Vania G.	Technician of Extension	UCAM	Mozambique	langacarlanla@gmail.com
Manhe	Nkwabi	Managing Partner	Joeny Agribusiness	Tanzania	jonathan.nkwabi@gmail.com
Maru	Joyce	Program Coordinator	CIP	Kenya	j.maru@cgiar.org
Mayanja	Sarah	RA	CIP	Uganda	s.mayanja@cgiar.org
Mcewan	Margaret	Senior Project Manager	CIP	Kenya	
Moye	Thaddeus	Owner	Hot Oven Bakery	Tanzania	thadeusmoye@yahoo.com
Mukewa	Elizabeth	Gender Consultant	CIP	Kenya	skyliz68@yahoo.com
Munda	Elijah	Senior Agronomist	CIP	Mozambique	e.munda@cgiar.org
Muoki	Peninah	Agriculture Value Chain Specialist	CIP	Kenya	p.muoki@cgiar.org
Muzhingi	Tawanda	Food Scientist	CIP	Kenya	t.muzhingi@cgiar.org
Mwangala	Stacy	Deputy Chief of Party	Sygenta Foundation	Kenya	stacy.mwangala@sygenta.com
Ndirngwe	Jean	Head of Sweetpotato	RAB	Rwanda	ndrick3@gmail.com
Netsayi	Mudege	Gender Specialist	CIP	Kenya	n.mudenge@cgiar.org
Ndonga	Joshua	Farmer	-	Kenya	-
Nyamai O.	Michael	Executive Director	REPSO	Kenya	refso2002@gmail.com
Nyandiko	Steve O.	Sub-County Crop Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	Kenya	nyandikosteve@yahoo.com
Nyayiera	Charles O.	Principal Agricultural Officer	Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries	Kenya	charlesnyayiera@gmail.com
Obuyiyi	Esther	Farmer	-	Kenya	-

Last name	First name	Title	Institution	Country	Email
Odhus	Mathews O.	Project Officer	Ugunja Community Resources Center	Kenya	mathewsomosh2013@gmail.com
Ojwang	Rose A.	Farmer	-	Kenya	-
Oima	Bernard O.	Sub-County Crop Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	Kenya	oimabenard@gmail.com
Onyango	Charles O.	M&E Specialist	Sygenta Foundation	Kenya	charles.onyango@sygenta.com
Otieno	Kennedy	Farmer	-	Kenya	-
Phikani	Maria	Farmer	Matamando Farms	Malawi	mbatata2016@yahoo.com
Yassin	Imran	Livelihood Coordinator	Feed the Children	Malawi	imran.yassin@feedthechildren.org

Annex 4: Power walk

Facilitated by Netsayi Mudege

This activity was conducted at the meeting to alert participants why it is important to understand social differentiation at the community level when introducing interventions as well as to show how interventions may have different impact on different people depending on their social. This activity was highly appreciated by participants

Objectives of the power walk include:

- To sensitize participants to power relations and the level and extent of marginalization experienced by different members of the society;
- To show how social position affects rights;
- To show how some program decisions can improve or worsen marginalization of individuals in the community.

The activity involved prior definition of characters and creation of their list by the facilitator, taking into account the training on and experience with gender integration and experiences from OFSP commercialization. This was important to show the challenges faced by different segments of the community such as women, girls, children and the youth in accessing resources owing to their social status, and the implications on their livelihood and participation in OFSP commercialization.

Click on the icon below for the methodology for carrying out the power walk activities as well as the characters and statements that were used.



The power walk participants are getting into position at the starting point, where they will stand shoulder to shoulder in a line.



The inequality gap gets bigger as some people move forward, some much further than others, in response to the statements read out by the facilitator. Participants who were left quite far behind could not be captured in the frame of this photograph.

The participants were surprised by the results of the exercise. For example, a men and women characters with the same attributes ended up at different points at the end of the exercise usually with the men far ahead. Some characters like vulnerable street children ended up at the same level, while some women with good jobs moved

ahead. This exercise managed to show the participants how gender intersects with other demographic factors such as age, class and literacy levels to determine how a person will benefit or not benefit from community interventions.

Sample responses

17-year-old girl from an ethnic minority who was a victim of trafficking and is now returned to the community: *I am a young girl who has faced trafficking and cannot be accepted in my community. Everyone looks at me as though it was my mistake. I feel awful and have no resources to support me in rebuilding my life. I am a shame to my community. (The girl was standing way behind others in the community)*

Female Journalist aged 26: *I am a female journalist who has an education and a lot going for me. I have no limitations in my social or economic life. Four statements applied to me: I moved forward and that felt good. I make my own decisions and can access all the resources that I need. And I make my own decisions. I will continue to work even after I get married. (Was way ahead of others in the community)*

Village chief (man): *I am a male village chief. I am a leader in my community and a man for that matter. I take my own decisions and I guide others, who look up to me, and I solve problems in my community. I am usually consulted on different issues affecting my community. I have a source of income, my children can go to school and I can afford to live a moderately good life. (Was way ahead of others in the community)*

The main learning points for this activity were:

- Individuals' access to rights is shaped by their social position and power relative to others in their society.
- A person's social position (or relative power) is affected by his or her age and gender (as well as by other social characteristics such as ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, disability etc.)
- Development interventions can increase or decrease power imbalances and inequalities.



The International Potato Center (known by its Spanish acronym CIP) is a research-for-development organization with a focus on potato, sweetpotato, and Andean roots and tubers. CIP is dedicated to delivering sustainable science-based solutions to the pressing world issues of hunger, poverty, gender equity, climate change and the preservation of our Earth's fragile biodiversity and natural resources.

www.cipotato.org



CIP is a CGIAR Research Center

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. Its science is carried out by 15 Research Centers in close collaboration with hundreds of partners across the globe.

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