Enhancing nutrition security and incomes through adding value to indigenous vegetables in East and Central Uganda

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Project summary

Sub-Saharan Africa is replete with many indigenous vegetable species that contain vitamins and minerals which are essential in the absorption and metabolism of food. Alarmingly, up to 50% of the population, especially women and children below the age of 5 years, is deficient in vitamins and minerals due to postharvest losses.

This project intends to add value to African indigenous vegetables through participatory varietal selection as well as adapting existing (local and exotic) postharvest technologies and processes to local situations and conditions in order to prolong vegetable shelf-life.

This is expected to increase vegetable consumption in nutritionally vulnerable populations while increasing the incomes of those engaged in their production.

The project works with farming communities in Eastern and Central Uganda while targeting urban populations with the end products. The innovations of prolonging shelf-life are to be shared with other practitioners in East Africa.

Project objectives

This project intends to improve post-harvest handling and preservation of African indigenous vegetables (especially Solanaceae sp) in order to prolong their shelf life and hence increase their consumption in nutritionally vulnerable populations while increasing revenue of those engaged in their production. More specifically, the project intends to generate:

- Better knowledge of indigenous vegetable varieties with prolonged shelf life.
- Increased knowledge about technologies and processes for prolonging shelf life of indigenous vegetables.
- Better understanding of efficient delivery pathways for value added indigenous vegetables to end-markets.
Afri-Sol is a network of scientists and other stakeholders with interest in Solanaceae species in Africa.

Afri-Sol is affiliated to the Sol Genomics Network (www.solgenomics.net).

Activities and results

Result 1: Varieties of indigenous vegetables with longer shelf-life and processing potential identified and profiled

Activities:
- Participatory identification and collecting of indigenous vegetables good post-harvest traits and desired consumer preferences.
- Characterisation and profiling of the collection.

Result 2: Appropriate processing and handling mechanisms/technologies for indigenous vegetables adopted.

Activities:
- Participatory identification of currently used processing and handling technologies for indigenous vegetables.
- Laboratory testing of existing processing and handling technologies.
- Participatory testing of processing and handling technologies in field with end users.
- Pilot study of selected processing and handling technologies with volunteers.

Result 3: Appropriate delivery pathways of value-added indigenous vegetables established.

Activities:
- Demand and study conducted on potential market for value added indigenous vegetables.
- Supply chain study on processed indigenous vegetables.
- Integration of value chain actors into appropriate delivery pathways.

Information sharing mechanisms on utilisation of indigenous vegetables established

Activities:
- Production of information products
- Awareness campaigns on importance of indigenous vegetables in diets.
- Establishment of a network for information sharing.