Improving Child Nutrition in Zanzibar - Farmers Trained on Growing Orange Flesh Sweet Potato

Orange Flesh Sweet Potato is a highly nutritious crop currently being used in Zanzibar’s school meals programme, with the potential to eliminate vitamin A deficiency commonly found in Zanzibari school children.

At present, a number of farmers throughout the archipelago are unaware of its nutritional value and how to grow and store it. To address this issue, Imperial College London’s the Partnership for Child Development trained local farmers supplying the islands’ school feeding programme to produce and store the potatoes so that they can be steadily delivered to schools throughout the year to combat child malnutrition.

Mr. Deme Maliyabwana, a local farmer from Pemba’s Micheweni district said, “This is a very good training for us; we did not know that Orange Flesh Sweet Potatoes were any different from other sweet potatoes.” He continued, “I now know how to harvest and store the potatoes properly so they can survive more than three months - before I could only store the potatoes for a month at the most.”

PCD in collaboration with the International Potato Centre (CIP) and the Zanzibar Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI) supported the Government of Zanzibar to train just under 40 OFSP farmers in two districts in Zanzibar’s Unguja and Pemba’s islands in late July.

Pemba’s Agriculture Development Officer, Mr Abdalla Hamad Faki said, “The Ministry of Agriculture will facilitate better farming methods in the future so that more farmers will be able to supply the potatoes for a whole year to the schools.” He carried on, “Not only will the nutrition of children in the schools improve but the farmers will be given a ready market to sell their produce to.”

ZARI co-trainer Miss Salma Mohamed also added, “ZARI shall collaborate with the farmers to provide large quantities of the potatoes which are disease and pest free – a common challenge for farmers.”

Alongside farmers, teachers joined the training to understand the benefits of the OFSP so they
will be able to identify it as it is delivered to their schools.

The Government of Zanzibar’s Ministry of Agriculture hosted the training with representatives from the Department of Food Security and Nutrition and District Agricultural Officers who co-facilitated the training.

- Click to read more about Zanzibar's HGSF programme.