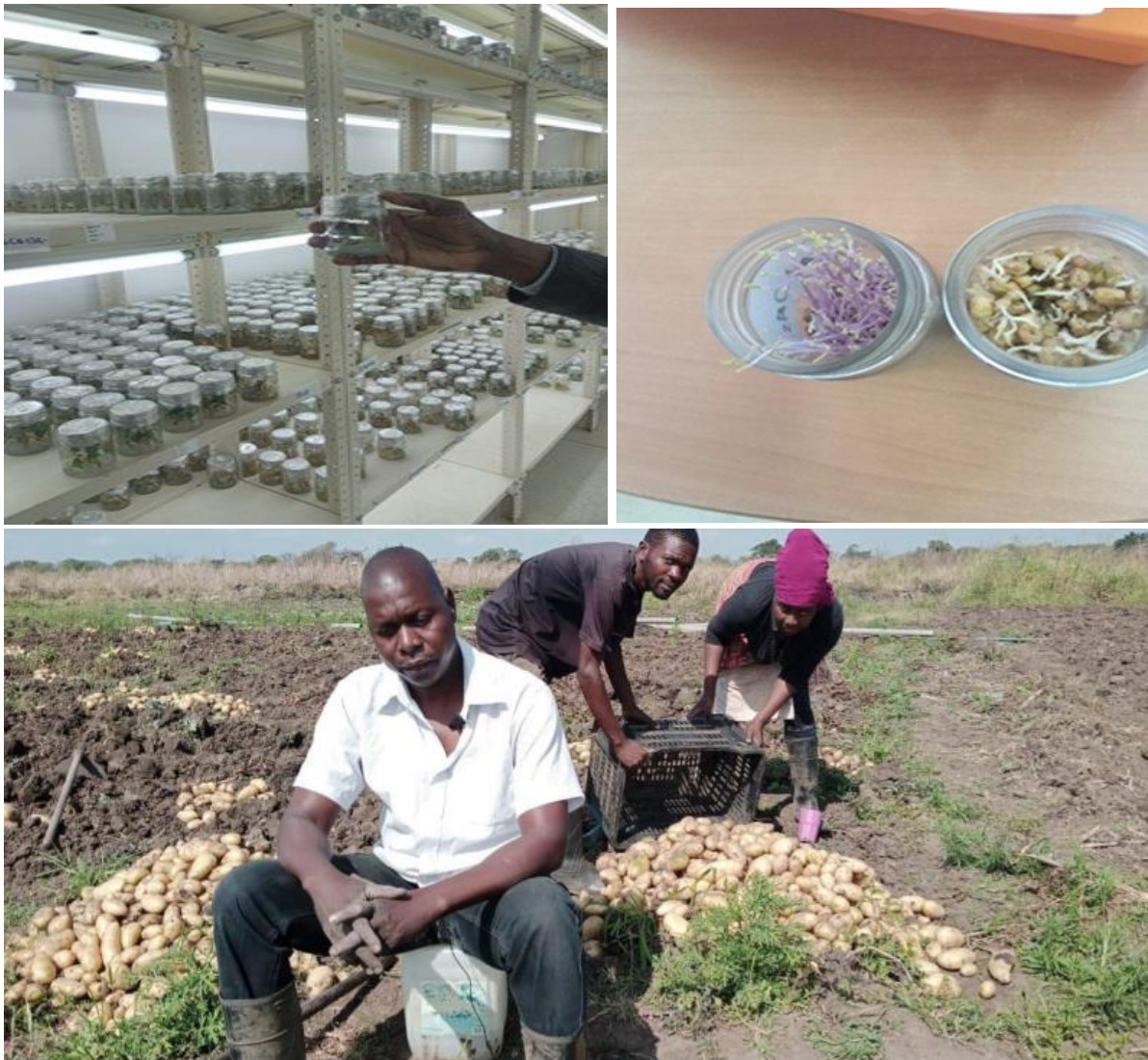




IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN MOZAMBIQUE

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT



PARTNER: UNITED PURPOSE MOZAMBIQUE

Project Synopsis

The project is a continuation of the global 'Potato Coalition Program' of which AOP is a consortium partner. The consortium comprises international NGOs United Purpose, Vita, AOP and the International Potato Centre; agricultural research agencies in Ireland, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Mozambique; the private sector; and universities in Europe and Africa.

In this phase of the project, in Mozambique, the project concentrated on the sustainability aspects in terms of actions with government, seed producers and the private sector. The project also involved activities related to value addition through post-harvest handling and packaging with the aim of building consumer confidence in purchasing nationally grown potatoes and enhancing market linkages. Small technological innovations such as low-cost irrigation systems and net tunnels to protect sweet potato planting material from diseases were to be introduced to farmers.

Evaluation Key Findings

- The project achieved its goal despite limited resources.
- Effective project management enabled engagement of more beneficiaries and public sector actors, researchers, and the private sector. Collaboration and coordination among implementing entities and stakeholders improved project efficiency.
- The planned activities were delivered, and outcomes achieved, resulting in project impact and the possibility for scaling up.
- Need remains to increase volumes of Irish potato production to meet market demand.
- The project is relevant, appropriate, and aligned with government plans and priorities.
- Project interventions include the assurance of quality seed to small holder farmers which still a major challenge for increasing agricultural productivity.
- The number of beneficiaries with disability increased over time.
- Many beneficiaries were women, aligning with the project objective of women's empowerment.
- The number of beneficiaries grew each year because of the impact of the project in the communities.
- There is a high likelihood of the continuation of project outcomes through productive and market activities, due to adoption by beneficiaries of what they learnt in training sessions and the involvement of local and central government authorities, who will continue to support communities.
- Extending the project for a further period will help entrench the outcomes and impact.
- Farmers reported increased income due to better access to markets, allowing them to improve their standard of living. This includes better education and healthcare; better houses; acquisition of goods and services; and improved diets.
- The project showed the advantages of Irish potato cultivation for consumption and sale.

Evaluator's Recommendations

- Train farmer's associations in accountability, to be able to estimate the costs of production and profits gained and record production data.
- Implement measures to mitigate conflicts between farmers and wildlife.

- Strengthen the linkages between farmers and input providers, such as seed suppliers.
- Establish measures to mitigate climate change such as diversification of activities into areas like fish farming, poultry raising, and other activities.
- Clarify the names and agronomic characteristics of the varieties provided to farmers so they can select preferred varieties for production, sale, and consumption.
- Train reference farmers in seed production to reduce the shortage of seed, particularly for Irish potato.

Evaluator's Conclusion

The project improved the wellbeing of target communities in Maputo and Manica Provinces. Women were heavily involved, contributing to women's empowerment. Farmer associations were provided with seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides, and were regularly trained in best production practices. This led to an increase in productivity.

Involvement of the Institute for Agricultural Research of Mozambique (IIAM) and the International Potato Center (CIP) in the provision of early generation seed and training of farmers in seed multiplication and production practices will ensure access to quality seed. The involvement of IIAM and extension officers will increase the level of adoption of new varieties and sustainability in the use of quality seed.

Crop diversification of Irish potato, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and vegetables will improve food security and nutrition. Farmer were trained in the preparation, processing, and use of OFSP, which is rich in beta-carotene, improving nutrition. There is an opportunity to introduce poultry keeping, to increase protein in diets and diversify production and income to buy other products, reducing hunger.

Despite the cost of production, the farmers that were interviewed reported an improvement in income resulting from the opportunity to access Irish and sweet potato markets. The project allowed communities to capitalise on market opportunities and improve their wellbeing.

In the target communities, positive changes could be seen, including:

- knowledge and improvement in the adoption of good production practices for Irish potato and sweet potato;
- availability and diversification of food;
- increase in income resulting from the sale of potatoes, which was invested in the education of children, purchase of animals, acquisition of goods, improvement, and construction of housing; and
- establishment of savings groups that help when crops are lost.

Several external factors pose challenges for the project. These include the impacts of climate change which is leading to new pests and diseases and extreme weather events. The intrusion of wild animals leads to the destruction of crops and impacts farm output.