



ENHANCING FOOD, NUTRITION, INCOME SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD OF SMALL HOLDER FARMERS IN SOUTH GONDER AND GOMA REGIONS OF ETHIOPIA

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT



PARTNER: VITA-ETHIOPIA

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 Ethiopia, the project focussed on activities leading to increased adoption of agricultural technologies and practices; strengthening local enterprises; post-harvest handling and processing; creating universal access to improved potato seed; increasing the yield of potato and highland maize and other crops used as a rotation crop with potato; increasing access to potato seed through enhancing the capacity of seed multiplier cooperatives and research centres; supporting the Quality Declared Seed System; leveraging innovation and learnings from previous Vita potato initiatives; implementing best practice replicable models from the Ethiopian Potato Coalition; and establishing a holistic community-led model.

Evaluation Key Findings

- Women and men were disproportionately represented as project beneficiaries. Women's participation in Chinja was 29%. In Bonke Woreda women's participation was 7%. Vita has a target of 30% women participating. Low participation in Boke was because involvement in cooperatives is based on land ownership, and land titles are held by men. The few women participants were female heads of households.
- The project contributed immensely to hunger reduction and livelihood improvement through the introduction of disease-free Irish potato seed, enable in a large part by the introduction of greenhouses.
- The strategy for food security enhancement strongly focused on sustainability through the development of virus-free tissue culture plantlets.
- Decentralisation of the production of disease-free planting material ensured cost effective and efficient access to planting material for smallholder farmers.
- The Universal Seed Access Program for poorer households enabled seed access for all farmers, with the 'pass-on scheme' further enhancing access.
- The project prioritised access to disease free seed for Irish potato, a major food crop in the Ethiopian highlands, ensuring food security for the target communities, which had been experiencing reduced yields due to increased pest and disease incidences.
- The easy access to disease free seed enabled increased productivity, and allowed for the sale of excess produce to increase household income.
- The project introduced highland maize, oats, beans, and vegetables, along with recipes for using those foods. Coupled with training on nutrition and use of the new recipes, the project has led to more diverse diets, and contributed to reductions in the likelihood of malnutrition.
- The initiatives strategically addressed food, nutrition, and income security needs of smallholder communities of South Gonder and Goma Zones.
- Greenhouses and capacity building on best practice in the production of Irish potato, contributed to greater seed access. This led to increased productivity, improving household food and income security as farmers retained 40% of their produce for household use, and sold the surplus.

- Structured marketing systems strengthened income generation, especially for seed production cooperatives who are certified to produce disease-free seed material.
- Market linkage components of the project introduced farmers to external markets, ensuring improved income streams for targeted farmers. Market linkages are key to sustainability and there are opportunities to further strengthen these.
- The ROI for every AUD invested is AUD\$1.45 showing that the project has positively impacted social development in the target communities.
- Through institutional linkages and the decentralisation of disease-free seed production and marketing, strong sustainability frameworks were established.
- Farmers can access support through agricultural extension services during seed and ware potato production; research is accessible for first generation multiplication in local greenhouses.
- Cooperatives have savings accounts, enabling them to plan for and support future activities.

Evaluator's Recommendations

- Comprehensively report and substantiate outcomes and impacts in annual reports, to ensure project value is relayed to stakeholders.
- Consider gender transformation capacity building of communities in collaboration with the Government ministry working on women/gender issues, to enhance women's participation in agriculture activities. Where possible, re-consider land ownership models or project beneficiary models to involve women more effectively.
- Consider upscaling the greenhouse technology to other woredas to decentralise improved seed production, and help match supply and demand, thereby rationalising the market prices of seed.
- Consider how to further progress current woredas, and introduce the technologies to new woredas, to intensify and extend benefits to more communities.
- Where possible, consider increasing seed allocation under USAP which will also correspond to the pass on seed from the benefiting households.
- Consider the USAP to be supported through the seed multiplication cooperatives thereby reaching out to more farmers
- Consider working closely with the department of environment on disaster risk reduction and injecting resources for perennial cropping to stabilise soils in the highlands. On all agricultural technologies to be transferred to the communities, technologies to mitigate against soil erosion should be stressed.
- Consider capacity building of cooperatives to ensure mutual benefit of communities from seed sales. Cooperatives can ensure a prescribed percentage ploughed back to the communities and farmers contributing to the seed sold on the structured market for mutual benefit.
- Through the Department of Agriculture, introduce more crops for crop rotation and other perennial crops such as apples and peach for crop diversification.

Evaluator's Conclusion

The project contributed to increased household access to income and asset accumulation through localised production of improved disease-free seed and improved production technologies for food security. There were various factors which contributed towards these outcomes, including project design, implementation approaches, and strong partnerships.

The project achieved its objectives in all the domains. Linking cooperatives to extension services and research ensured smooth flow of technologies and enabled access to improved seed and climate-smart technologies.

The project was highly relevant as all objectives responded to the needs of communities. The project design was relevant and was highly responsive to community needs. The approach to implementation ensured strong community involvement.

The project contributed towards increased agricultural productivity as well as increased incomes. Farmers were able to transform their livelihoods by purchasing household assets, improving living standards and meeting household expenses which they previously struggled to meet.

The project laid a strong foundation for activities to continue for an extended period after project completion. Sustainability structures were put in place through capacity building and skills transfer, development, and sustenance of partnerships, as well as introduction of technology.