

Strengthening the potato value chain in Kenya



The situation

In Kenya, about 20 % of the population are considered to be malnourished and around 46 % live on less than 1USD a day. Agriculture is the most important economic sector in Kenya, providing employment and income opportunities for more than 70 % of the rural dwellers. However, the mainly small-scale farms are not able to produce enough food for Kenya's growing population.

Potatoes are the second most important staple food in Kenya, after maize, and they are an important source of income for roughly 800,000

farmers, one third of whom are women. The market for potatoes is constantly growing on account of the expansion of the middle class, and it offers a variety of opportunities for generating income.

Potatoes deliver high yields in relatively short growth cycles (90 to 120 days), and the fact that they also provide valuable nutritional content (carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, and minerals such as potassium) makes them a key staple food in the achievement of food security in Kenya.

Activities in Kenya

The program works on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

- Field of activity 1 focuses on improving productivity and quality in potato production, with the long-term aim of increasing yields and income from sustainable potato growing. Training courses have two principal goals: teaching methods of cultivation that are innovative, resource-friendly and appropriate, and enhancing farmers' entrepreneurial skills.
- Field of activity 2 seeks to raise the level of knowledge on family nutrition in order to help improve people's diets. This is supported by holding meetings in the counties at which training is given on

topics such as cooking and hygiene.

- Measures in field of activity 3 are aimed at strengthening the exchange of expertise through a public-private dialogue in the potato sector. The program promotes exchange formats involving policy-makers, local and international research institutions, and the private sector.

Our objective

We support smallholder farmers in their efforts to increase their potato yields. We also contribute to improving nutrition, and boost the exchange of expertise in the potato sector.



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Region(s)

Kenya (Nyandarua and Bungoma counties)

Term

January 2016 to June 2021

Budget

EUR 2.65 million

Implementation partners

Departments of Agriculture of Nyandarua and Bungoma counties, National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK), International Potato Center (CIP), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), local and international companies

Lead executing agency

Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF)

Target group

Small-scale farmers, malnourished people



How we work in practice

Jane Wamwathi Maina is a 60-year-old potato farmer living in Nyandarua County in central Kenya. She has been growing potatoes on about 0.4 hectares of land for 25 years. As the potato has a short growing period of only three months, she is normally able to feed her family and pay the school fees for her children. However, Jane has no access to disease-free seed stock, so as a rule she uses her own seed potatoes from the previous crop – which more often than not are already infected with diseases. Moreover, she is unfamiliar with many of the types of diseases that can affect potatoes, and is unsure of how she can combat them effectively. As a result, yields are low.

Together with other potato farmers, Jane has therefore taken part in training courses covering innovative, resource-friendly, and appropriate cultivation methods. She has also been able to improve her entrepreneurial skills.

Participants in the courses are offered regular soil tests and the use of disease-free seed potatoes. They also find out how to identify and correctly treat potato diseases, enabling farmers such as Jane to increase their potato yields and harvest more good-quality potatoes.



Impact

Thanks to the training courses, Jane has learnt how to identify diseases at an early stage and now knows how to deal with them. She is also aware of the importance of disease-free seed potatoes and is familiar with cultivation techniques that increase yields. These include making sure there is sufficient spacing between the plants, as well as testing the soil from time to time, as the state of the soil provides pointers as to what nutrients the potatoes are lacking. Jane is already sure that she will be able to harvest more potatoes next season, and that they will be a better quality product, so her income will be higher.

Published by

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July 2017