



Cyclone Idai: Jump-starting farmer recovery in Mozambique



Cyclone Idai, which hit southern Africa on 15 March 2019, left more than 1000 dead and USD 2 billion of damage that included widespread crop loss. A collaboration of the International Potato Center (CIP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) put 7,500 farmers in Manica province, Mozambique on the road to recovery through distribution of 40 tons of orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) planting material.



40 tons
of planting
material
disseminated



7,500
FAMILIES
received and
planted vines

ADDITIONAL
20 tons
of vines slated
for September
distribution



Helped reestablish
SWEETPOTATO
PRODUCTION
for the future



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation





Distribution of sweetpotato planting materials sourced from CIP-trained farmers in Manica province, Mozambique. Credit: (CIP/Isabel Corthier).

Background

Sweetpotato is an ideal crop for disaster recovery because it produces food quickly. The high-yielding, CIP-bred OFSP varieties distributed by the ICRC are also rich in vitamin A, which is vital for healthy child development. Two months after planting, families can begin eating the plant's nutritious leaves, and after three months, the high-calorie- and vitamin-packed sweetpotatoes are ready to harvest.

CIP was well positioned to help farmers affected by Cyclone Idai because it has developed 22 climate-smart sweetpotato varieties for Mozambique and promoted them widely. CIP and partners had trained thousands of people in northern Mozambique in OFSP agronomy prior to Idai's destruction. However, because farmers plant sweetpotato vine cuttings rather than seeds, supplying them with planting material is challenging. CIP has thus trained decentralized vine multipliers (DVM) who multiply disease-free vines and sell quality planting material to local farmers and development organizations.

Outcomes

Following Idai's destruction, CIP staff contacted DVM's in the disaster area who had been trained through projects funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Some DVMs had already sold their vines, but the ICRC managed to purchase 40 tons of planting material from DVMs who helped distribute it to 7,500 families in Manica province.

Each family received and planted 5-6 kg of vines, enabling them to produce about 150 kg of sweetpotatoes by August, plus 125 kg of vines for the next planting season. That is enough planting material to produce about 1.25 tons of sweetpotato in the 2020 harvest. Because large areas of farmland remained flooded, CIP provided Manica's Provincial Directorate of Agriculture with OFSP vines to plant on two hectares, which will produce 20 tons of vines for distribution in September. By then, local DVMs will have another crop of vines for sale, further boosting OFSP consumption in the disaster area in late 2019.

Approximately 100 vine multipliers in Mozambique trained under projects funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, DFID, Irish Aid and USAID continue to grow and sell OFSP planting material, facilitating a steady increase in the number of Mozambican families benefitting from the food and nutrition security OFSP provides.



Sweetpotato planting material ready to be distributed to families affected by Cyclone Idai, Manica province, Mozambique. Credit: (CIP/Isabel Corthier).

Contact

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