REFLECTIONS ON THE SUA-INTSORMIL PROJECT (2005-2011)

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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Training Package

- The training package from FPC (UNL) forms a good basis to start from
- Training materials need customization to suit the local conditions
- The package exclusively focuses on food processors only. It should address other actors along the value-chain, especially on the supply chain (farmers and traders)

Farmers, Traders → PROCESSOR → Retailers, Supermarkets

(Supply Chain) (Distrib. Chain)

- Originally the training was designed for one day. It should be extended to 2 days (to cover both theory and practical)

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Research Strategy and Approach

- The Research Strategy and Approach are appropriate (are based on proven experience of the FPC (UNL) (20+ years)
- Starts with training of processors (*Idea to Product*) and (*Product to Profit*) – theory and practical
- Allows flexibility to the use of existing localized educational materials
- Involves continuous/regular M&E to allow timely response to changing conditions/situations
- Targets to work closely with local machine manufacturers to re-engineer sorghum processing machines that are not readily available in the local market

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- For sustainability, the project did two things;
  - Extended program expertise by training at PhD level 2 project team members (1 from Tanzania and 1 from Zambia)
  - Shared widely educational and dissemination materials to interested stakeholders (NGOs, Local Government Authorities, media etc)

GENERAL OBSERATIONS

Selection of Stakeholders to work with

- Work closely with Local Government Authorities (LGA) to identify the people/groups to work with
- Start with a large number of processors/groups as a significant proportion will drop out along the way!
- You need a multidisciplinary team, including a sociologist to handle challenges associated with group dynamics (often leading to group disintegration)
- At a level of small-scale sorghum processing, women groups are more serious/determine than groups of men or youths

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

Stakeholders of interest along the Value Chain

- Farmers (sorghum producers)
- Supply Chain Traders
- Small-scale processors
- Large-scale processors
- Product retailers
- Supermarkets

SPECIFIC OBSERATIONS

Farmers

- Most of them have low level of education

  (Therefore, work closely with the local extension agents)
- They resist changes (they prefer to use traditional ways that they are familiar with)
- Identify a few progressive farmers and work with them closely (one-on-one) so that they eventually act as role models
- Link farmers (who adopt and apply the good postharvest handling practices) with reliable markets that offer better prices
- They lack good storage facilities for long storage. Compelled to sell the product soon after harvest (hence low prices)
- They complain of lack of reliable markets for their sorghum

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

Supply Chain Traders

- **They are more united than farmers and they use this unity to dictate sorghum prices: *buying price* and *selling price***
- **They try hard to discourage direct communication between farmers and processors (this is increasingly becoming difficult)**
- **They demand farmers to produce high quality sorghum grain (HQSG) but they are not willing to pay good price for HQSG!**
- **They prefer to buy sorghum cheaply at the time of harvest, stock for some time and wait for better prices. Some traders lack good storage facilities – hence the grains loose quality**

SPECIFIC OBSERATIONS

Small-scale processors

- They process a wide range of sorghum products (the main ones are: ready-to-eat snacks, "*Lishe*" and sorghum flour)
- Low volume of production (less than 3 tonnes per month)
- Some work as individuals but most work in groups
- They are very concerned with the poor quality of sorghum from farmers (sand contamination, mould growth, insect infestation)
- They are prepared to pay premium price for HQSG
- Poor working facilities and poor working premises (hence hard to register their businesses: **LGA**, **TFDA** and **TBS**)
- Sorghum de-hulling is principally done by mortar and pestle (one of the biggest snags for business expansion)

SPECIFIC OBSERATIONS

Large-scale processors

- Large volume of production (more than 30 tonnes per month)
- They are few in number and are located in big cities
- They do not buy sorghum directly from farmers
- They are still reluctant to invest heavily in sorghum business
- They have equipment to sort clean grains from rubbish / contaminants. The processor pays only for the clean grains. This minimizes product adulteration
- They are concerned with the low quantity and quality of sorghum obtained from farmers. At times they are forced to import.

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

Product Retailers

- Are the main distributors of shelf-stable sorghum products ("Lishe" and flour)
- They demand products of consistently good quality. Some processors fail to meet this condition!
- They prefer registered products (TFDA and TBS) but they also accept non-registered products
- Majority take products on credit and pay only after sale. This limits the operation of processors (small working capital)

SPECIFIC OBSERATIONS

Supermarkets

- At the moment supermarkets are not involved very much in the distribution of shelf-stable sorghum products
- Some reasons for their low involvement include;
  - Low level of production of these products (most of these are produced by small-scale processors)
  - Most of these products are not registered with TFDA and TBS
  - Lack of consistency in product quality produced by some processors (variability from one batch to another)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- When adopting this model to other places, the model must be customized adequately to suit the local conditions
- Implementation of the model should involve more stakeholders along the value chain (other than processors)
- Implementation should last long enough (at least 4 years) for meaningful impact – because it involves behavioral change on the part of stakeholders (farmers, traders, processors etc)
- The projects should have own vehicles. This is because most project sites are far away from the project hosting institutions – hence high costs of transport

Thank You

for your

Attention