Empowerment by Women for Women in Nigeria

Introduction

The Women-In-Agriculture Unit (WIA) at University of Ibadan provides training activities on Sweet Potato processing to increase the likelihood of enhanced livelihoods for rural Nigerian women.

The Process of Empowerment

In the last two decades, a lot of attention has been drawn to the important role of rural women in agricultural production in developing countries, especially Nigeria. However, prior to the realization that rural women constitute an economically active population, women were largely not considered productive because they usually worked as unpaid family labour. Women are involved in many activities relating to food production and should be economically empowered to improve the standard of living of rural households so as to contribute to enhanced food security in Nigeria. Sweet potato is a crop processed by the rural women for income generation. Food processing of sweet potatoes can be one of the means to reach this end of food security and economic empowerment, with training of women by the Women-in-Agriculture Unit allowing research to be put into use by these women to increase the economic value of the sweet potato by reducing waste, improving it’s consumer appeal, quality, storability, and uses and availability over time and space.

The Sweet potato: A crop with immense potential if you know how

The Sweet potato can be prepared in many different ways to provide food for people. They be eaten as part of a main meal or as a snack, be fried into chips or roasted as whole roots. They can also be processed into a flour, (which can be fortified with wheat flour) and then fried into puff-puff (yeasty, fried sweet potato balls), chin-chin, and sweet potato cake and buns. Furthermore sweet potatoes can be fermented into industrial alcohol, vinegar, yeast and acetone. Therefore, the sweet potato has the potential to play an important role as a food security crop, providing a variety of human food, feed for animals and industrial products for empowering the low-income women producers in Nigeria.

The extension activities of the Women-in-Agriculture Unit, within the Agricultural Development Programme of Nigeria, include teaching how to make new sweet potato products, insight into the nutritional value of sweet potato, problems with the processing of sweet potato products and identification of new sweet potato products.

Training makes an impact on women’s lives

The research “Enhanced Livelihood for Women through Women-In-Agriculture Unit (WIA) Training Activities on Sweet Potato in Nigeria” revealed that women participating in the WIA programme enjoyed a number of advantages over their non-participant counterparts with whom they were compared. This is because these
women have a greater knowledge of and easier access to training and technologies through WIA extension agents.

To find out more information about this project and to if you are interested in knowing more uses of sweet potato, please contact Prof Stella O. Odebode, Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, or via mrsdrodebode@yahoo.com

Prof. Stella O. Odebode    Adeola F. Oladeji

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On the field    On the field
Training session

Sweet-potato flour  sweet-potato chin-chin

Sweet-potato cake  sweet-potato puff-puff