

Ex-Post Evaluation of the Introduction and Promotion of Grain Amaranth Program in Eastern Africa (1998-2008)



April/May 2014

Lead Evaluators: Thomas Post (Ph.D.) and Dorothy Nakimbugwe (Ph.D.)

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation focused mainly on the work of World Renew in the introduction and promotion of grain amaranth in certain communities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It focused on discovering lessons learned concerning effective and ineffective promotional methods and factors of relevance and sustainability that affect the adoption or non-adoption of the grain among the communities



Purpose of the Evaluation

- To verify the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of introducing and promoting amaranth in the target communities, particularly after the withdrawal of World Renew support for the program.
- To assess the level of adoption of amaranth by project participants and other non-participating smallholder farmers in the communities.
- To identify the challenges of amaranth producers, traders and consumers and suggest ways of addressing issues that hinder production, consumption and marketing of amaranth.
- To study and document the process of change in rural communities using introduction and promotion of amaranth as a case study and use the result as a lesson in future similar interventions in rural communities.
- To assess “unfinished business” related to introduction and promotion of amaranth such as marketing and dietary integration of the grain and recommend ways of maximizing the benefits of Amaranth for addressing household food security (nutrition and income security).



Evaluation Methods

- **Partner Interviews:** Anglican Development Services (ADS) of Western Kenya, Church of Uganda Diocese of Lango in Lira, Uganda, and Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) of Kabale, Uganda
- **Questionnaires:** Farmers were selected from seven sites: two in Western Kenya, three in Uganda, and two in Tanzania.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** conducted in 6 communities, located in four distinct regions in East Africa: Kenya (in Eastern and Western Kenya) and Uganda (northern and western Uganda).



Evaluation Findings Summary

This evaluation found evidence that the introduction and promotion of grain amaranth that World Renew and others began in the late 1990s and early to mid-2000s were **sustainable**. In view of the promising evidence of health and nutritional impact World Renew and other organizations should consider **further promotional work** on seed selection, soil fertility restoration, nutritional promotion, marketing linkages, and research into the interaction of amaranth with the human immune system.

Grain Amaranth Food Utilization for better nutrition and health



Grain amaranth income generating agro-business



Key Recommendations

- World Renew and other organizations should experiment with amaranth promotion as a nutrition supplement for mothers and children in the first 1000 days of life and should reinforce training on the nutritional benefits of amaranth for mothers and children of all ages. This seems particularly relevant for populations suffering chronic malnutrition and high rates of child stunting as does SW Uganda.
- World Renew's successful experience with amaranth as a drought resistant, multi-purpose nutritional supplement crop should be shared with the CFGB members in East Africa and beyond.
- World Renew should produce accurate promotional materials on amaranth and make them available to its partners.
- World Renew and other organizations should promote soil fertility restoration methods, e.g., crop rotations, legume cover crops, fertilizing trees: simultaneously with amaranth or before its introduction.
- World Renew and its partners should provide farmers training on seed selection and provide quality amaranth seed from Kenya where the degree of crossing with black-seeded wild types merits this.



- That NGOs and church-based organizations should be careful to avoid promising markets, but can be helpful in organizing farmers to collectively market amaranth to businesses. Unless a market is ensured grain amaranth should be introduced to new areas as a nutrition supplement for home consumption first, i.e., before raising expectations about cash cropping.
- The case of the Anglican Development Services (ADS) of Western Kenya in helping farmers organize themselves and set up collection centers for the marketing of their production to amaranth millers should be considered for lessons learned. World Renew should continue to monitor the learning of ADS in marketing.
- World Renew should share this evaluation report with research organizations because research is needed to understand the dynamics of the nutritional and health effects that occur when amaranth is consumed, particularly the effects on the human immune system. Records kept in hospitals and health centers in amaranth growing regions could provide useful data for research. Data from the “Community Connector” project in Uganda could also provide research information. More research is also needed on the agronomic and production aspects of amaranth.

