

## Factsheet final findings Applied Research Fund Call 3



### Improving and promoting the use of Moringa Oleifera leaves for a better maternal and early childhood nutrition in Benin (FortiMoringa)

#### Summary

The ARF project 'FortiMoringa' started on 15 January 2017 and aims to valorize Moringa Oleifera leaves for a better nutrition of vulnerable groups in Benin. It seeks scientific evidence to enable scaling up the uses of Moringa Oleifera as a valuable local food resource and income source, to improve maternal and early child nutrition and health. The project is being implemented through six work packages, using a multidisciplinary multi-stakeholder approach. Activities are currently undergoing, mainly a bio-efficacy study among women and children under the age of five years.

#### Research findings

For producers, optimal conditions for Moringa leaves production and preservation of Moringa seeds were determined, as well as appropriate cutting height and type of fertilizer that increases leaves yield. For processors, the fortified infant flour formulas and Moringa leaves powder (MLP) were developed. For MLP, drying parameters for nutrients preservation were determined. Improved recipes of Moringa-based meals were developed and tested. A set of six communication tools are being used for behaviour change communication (bcc) actions at community and household level. The monthly communication sessions with both groups do not only focus on Moringa but additional nutrition and food security topics are addressed based on the enquiries of the women. The association of women processors (AWP) received training in cooking healthy Moringa-based recipes. During the culinary sessions the women were also trained on the quality and safety throughout production and processing chains, which increased the quality of the MLP produced for selling to the community.

#### Outcomes achieved

The continuous bcc activities raised the interest and awareness of the community on Moringa and its various benefits. The intensive bcc actions at household and community level have led to an increased demand of MLP in the villages around the epicenter of Kissamey (Department of Couffo). The women association of the epicenter also got more demand from community members because they became aware of the uses of Moringa for nutrition and economic benefits.

#### Project messages to

##### A) Actors from private sector:

- The private sector stakeholders should take up the Moringa leaves products developed within this project to make their business nutrition-sensitive while diversifying their income.

##### B) Civil society and practitioners organizations:

- Civil society should use the evidence-based bcc materials developed within this project to raise awareness among consumers about the nutrition value of Moringa leaves. This will help increase the demand of Moringa leaves product.

### C) Policy makers:

- Moringa leaves as vegetable are part of the key food groups to be promoted in the diet. The results of this project can be used as evidence to facilitate an enabling environment for integrating Moringa production in the food supply chain. This will increase the efficiency of our food system to deliver sustainable healthy diets that drive better nutrition outcomes.

#### Knowledge products

- Six bcc tools (large and small posters, flipbooks and twelve live videos) on two nutritive recipes of Moringa leaves.
- 4 BSc reports on improved methods for Moringa trees cultivation.
- 2 MSc reports on a standardized method for MLP processing and conservation.
- 1 MSc report on the nutritional profile and safety status of MLP.
- 5 porridge formulas developed for incorporating MLP into infant food.
- Project poster "[Improving and promoting the use of moringa leaves for a better maternal and early childhood nutrition - Benin](#)". By the Project research team for the Third international workshop of ARF in Ethiopia (February 2018).
- PowerPoint presentation "[Project progress: Improving production of Moringa leaves and seeds](#)". By the Project research team (September 2017).

#### Knowledge networks

The Moringa Promotion Campaign, an initiative implemented by The Hunger Project (THP) Benin, has created momentum towards the improvement of dried Moringa leaf powder to improve nutrition in Benin. It has led to the establishment of a partnership between THP-Benin and more than twenty actors including the University of Abomey-Calavi and the National Council of Food and Nutrition. It has also promoted information sharing at the national level between actors and has enabled the establishment of a network (Benin Moringa Impact Network – BeMIN) which includes more than ten (10) civil society organizations.

The networking around the Moringa Campaign has involved actors from outside Benin namely THP Malawi, THP Uganda and THP Ethiopia, who took inspiration from the Beninese experiences and started promoting Moringa as well.

Many journalists are interested in promoting Moringa and have facilitated several broadcast programs including a radio program ("[L'invité du Jour](#)") that is particularly appreciated and widely listened to.

#### Knowledge co-creation

The project is implemented on a co-creation basis. Periodic workshops are designed to share problems and formulated solutions which serve to conduct the research. The results are also shared during the periodic workshops to get inputs from consortium partners. For example, the first research protocol to improve Moringa leaves production has been revised to take into account additional plots to better assess the effect of space between plants.

Several follow up and steering committee meetings were organized. A secretariat has been set up in order to ensure regular reporting and the following up of the agreed conclusions.

The co-creation process has been extended to the partners on the ground who have expressed their interest in having evidence on intensified plantation to produce Moringa leaves in peri-urban and urban vegetable gardens. This has been taken into account and the results will be shared not only with peri-urban and urban partners that also with rural farmers/partners.

#### Consortium Partners

- [The Hunger Project](#) (Benin)
- [Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques, Université d'Abomey-Calavi](#) (Benin)
- [Division of Human Nutrition, Wageningen University & Research](#) (Netherlands)

#### Contact person

M. Pascal Djohossou  
[pascal.djohossou@thp.org](mailto:pascal.djohossou@thp.org)

#### Project website

[F&BKP Research Project page](#)