Game for innovation
Women in India and Africa try out new technologies

Be it for a healthy snack for kids or preparation of eco-friendly bio-charcoal, introducing processing empowers women to find a market for innovative sorghum products.

INDIA

Off-farm initiatives
A booklet triggers a venture

Dibyajyothi Borgohain, a first-time entrepreneur talks of her agribusiness start-up – Ind-Millet Foods...

It started off a year and half ago when my friends and I were looking for business avenues for healthy snacks for kids. The ICRISAT Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP) stall at an exhibition had an interesting booklet. We wrote to AIP evincing our interest.

Lab visit
A lab visit was arranged for us. We went through the products and opted for sorghum crispies. You can’t stop kids from eating fried crispies available in the market, so we thought of giving them a healthier option in the form of baked sorghum crispies.

Testing times
With guidance and technical support from AIP we created a product which we tested in schools, exhibitions and carnivals. It took us eight months to work out the product. We made five batches modifying the composition based on feedback and market surveys of similar products available in the market. Size, taste and the level of crispiness were the major factors that we worked on.

Technical backstopping from AIP
My partners Madhavi Pomar and Jayanthi Satram and I are homemakers and first-time entrepreneurs. After managing our homes for years, we felt we could manage anything! And we did it with ICRISAT’s support.

Future plans
Once we develop a good market for the product we want to procure the raw material directly from the farmers. We want to create more opportunities for other women.

Watch video - www.youtube.com/watch?v=miO2hHSaArY
Women farmers in Kano, Nigeria, were trained on benefiting from technologies for enhancing the sorghum value chain. The workshop for trainers focused on using sorghum in making bakery products like bread, cakes, cookies, biscuits and a local product called *gurasa* (flat bread) and producing bio-charcoal. Sessions dealt with topics like food safety practices, hygiene, sanitation, and entrepreneurship. The training aimed to build the capacity of rural women to actualize the objective of Nigeria Sorghum Transformation Value Chain (STVC) in reducing poverty, improving food security, nutrition and health of women and children.

ICRISAT and STVC used the opportunity to link up with Africent Integrated Trade Microfinance Cooperative Society. The society provided training on carbonizing of agricultural waste product to make bio-charcoal. Large-scale adoption of this technology will help reduce the level of deforestation in semi-arid regions since women could use bio-charcoal as an alternative source of energy for household use as well as income generation.

This women’s group in Nigeria sells bread, cakes, biscuits and other traditional dishes made from millet, sorghum and groundnut. About 1,200 women from 60 groups were trained on use of sorghum for household utilization and income generation as part of the STVC project.

More on AIP: [http://www.aipicrisat.org](http://www.aipicrisat.org)