

Let's Consume What We Grow: Developing Cashew-Based Products Tailored to Consumer Needs



Africa produces 60% of the world's cashew nuts and generates over 3 million tonnes of raw cashew nuts - and therefore more than 30 million tonnes of cashew apples. Yet these apples are usually neither processed nor consumed locally.

This situation can be explained by several factors, including a lack of knowledge regarding the nutritional benefits of cashews, and the limited availability of affordable cashew-derived products in local markets.

In order to address this situation, it is crucial to develop and provide cashew-based products that are tailored to the eating habits of African consumers and in line with market expectations.

A Strategic Response: Developing Cashew Products Centred on Consumer Needs

To meet such consumer-driven growth, there must be a corresponding increase in supply. In order to meet customer needs, a product development process must be conducted. This includes identifying market expectations, conceptualising products, creating roadmaps, launching products and collecting and analysing customer feedback. Depending on the type of product, it may also involve targeted training.

Developing Innovative Cashew-Based Products

To increase the consumption of locally produced cashew products, MOVE supports local businesses in developing edible and non-edible products made from cashews (both the nut and the apple). To achieve this, MOVE collaborates closely with key stakeholders in the sector. After an in-depth analysis of supply and demand, beneficiary companies were selected and participated in workshops to clarify their needs and the support available to them. The selected companies, which are all legally registered, then received financial and technical assistance to develop and launch their products on the market.

Furthermore, MOVE has organised four (4) training sessions on the nutritional benefits of cashew apples, as well as the variety of local recipes and products that can be developed. Due to their rich nutritional profile, cashew apples are ideal for producing juices, smoothies, vinegar, alcoholic beverages, jams, syrups and dried fruit snacks. Beyond food, they can also be used for animal feed, compost, bioenergy, biogas, skincare products, natural dyes and much more besides.

From Training to Market

So far, four training sessions on cashew apple processing have been held in three countries: two in Ghana, one in Nigeria and one in Sierra Leone. A total of 269 people have participated in these sessions. The participants, who included private-sector partners, entrepreneurs, lecturers, professors, farmers and nurses, were carefully selected to ensure a multiplier effect, enabling them to train others or develop new products for emerging markets.

As a result, participants gained the hands-on skills needed to transform cashew apples into value-added products. Building on these efforts, **39 new products** have been developed under the MOVE project in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, with more being developed in Ghana and Nigeria. Of these, **33 are cashew kernel-based** and **6 are cashew apple-based**.



Notably, **19 of these products** are already being marketed through supermarkets, online sales, word-of-mouth recommendations, or at fairs and exhibitions, which highlights the economic potential of local cashew processing. In addition to food products, cosmetics such as body creams, soaps, shampoos and hair oils have also been developed using cashews.

As the cashew nut is still relatively unknown to the general public, it is important to raise awareness and encourage greater local consumption. Exhibitions and fairs play a crucial role in this, promoting cashew-based products to a wider audience.

Since its inception, MOVE has participated in around **15 exhibitions**, showcasing small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), cashew by-products, local rice, and communication tools such as recipe books and bookmarks, which highlight the benefits of local consumption. While developing new consumer-oriented products is important, making them available to the market is equally critical. This allows consumers to enjoy the benefits of cashews and increases the income of local processors.

To encourage greater local consumption, MOVE continues to provide technical support, including expert advice, strategic marketing manuals, training sessions and recipe books that showcase the culinary diversity of cashews.

By developing innovative cashew products that align with local dietary habits and consumer needs, MOVE demonstrates that African resources can be valorised, added value can be created, and food sovereignty can be strengthened. This represents a true revolution in consumption patterns, serving both community well-being and local economic dynamism, going beyond simply processing nuts or apples.

Consuming what we grow is no longer an unattainable ideal, but a developing reality: one that is sustainable, inclusive and full of flavour. It is now up to us to support this movement, ensuring that cashews become a powerful symbol of food sovereignty and local pride.

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