

Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato in the School Feeding Program of Osun State, Nigeria: Conception, Inception & Inclusion

Olapeju Phorbee
Leader-Rainbow Project

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Background

- Sweetpotato for health and wealth in Nigeria and Jumpstarting OFSP in West Africa for diversified markets are the 2 projects in Nigeria focusing on the development of the value chain for health and wealth of the rural households.
- They both have 2 common beneficiary states in Nigeria-Osun & Kwara
- Various efforts have been made on the development of each of the value chain

Value Chain Activities

Establishment and empowerment of vines multipliers

Dissemination of vines to farmers and households for root production

Identification and training of processors on OFSP-based food development

Sensitization, public awareness and Advocacy to policy makers and investors on OFSP

Demand creation for OFSP roots at both formal and informal sectors

Demand creation for OFSP

- OFSP product processing
- Enrichment of some indigenous foods with OFSP for household consumption & commercialization
- Development of novel commercial OFSP products



Conception of OFSP inclusion in the school feeding program

- Out of search for OFSP demand at the formal sector, inclusion in the school feeding menu was conceived
- Osun state school feeding program happened to be very appropriate because the state is in the projects' state and the school feeding is the most successful

About the School Feeding Program in Osun State

- Osun state has the most successful school feeding program where the government feeds about 250,000 elementary 1-IV pupils on daily basis with varieties of balanced meals.
- This so far, has improved school enrolment as well as cognitive development of the pupil beneficiaries in the state
- Varieties of home-grown meals are served thus improving farmers' productivity, creating jobs for the women who are the school cooks.
- The program employed about 3,000 women to cook and serve the students, thus improving livelihoods of the women and youths in the state.

Inception

One approach used here was the formal introduction of OFSP to the government of Osun State for inclusion in the school feeding menu.

- This was achieved through
 - Advocacy
 - sensitization

Advocacy

Visits to all identified stakeholders including policy makers in the state

Special visit was made to the Deputy Governor of the state who doubles up as the Honorable Commissioner for Education.

Purpose of the Advocacy visit

- To intimate them with the inherent nutritional and economic benefits of the crop especially when included in the school feeding menu.
- Reduced incidence of vitamin A deficiency problem, which is long standing in Nigeria
- Income generation for youths and women especially the school cooks and small scale processors
- Through the pupils, households can have access to the vitamin A rich crop for improved household food and nutrition security.





Sensitization

Statewide sensitization of Stakeholders was organized in 6 representative schools in the six zones of the state.

All relevant stakeholders - head and health teachers, Parent-Teachers Associations, school cooks, farmer and O-MEALS team - were sensitized on the importance, agronomical, nutritional and economic benefits of OFSP

Myths around sweetpotato were dispelled.



Cooking demonstration and consumer acceptability assessment of OFSP pottage

- Also at the sensitization, the proposed OFSP meal; pottage was participatorily cooked by the cooks and assessed for consumer acceptability of some sensory attributes
- All together, 466 people participated in the assessment.



Consumer acceptability of OFSP Pottage among Osun school feeding stakeholders



Results

- Not less than 90% of the participants in all the 6 locations accepted the pottage for taste, colour, flavour, texture and overall acceptability.
- All of them were affirmative in the support for inclusion in the osun school feeding menu

Acceptability of OFSP by food Vendors and other Stakeholders

Attributes	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Taste*	371	1.09	0.38	1	5
Color*	371	1.07	0.36	1	5
Odor*	371	1.10	0.37	1	4
Softness*	372	1.11	0.38	1	4
Stickiness*	372	1.16	0.47	1	5
Appearance*	370	1.05	0.27	1	4
Overall acceptability*	366	1.08	0.35	1	4
Willingness to pay for white sweetpotato	372	20.22	16.08	5	150
Willingness to pay for yam	372	24.06	28.45	5	500
Willingness to pay for OFSP	372	32.69	21.43	5	150
Want OFSP in O-MEALS program	287	1	0	1	1

* Liker scale from 1 to 5 with 1=Like very much and 5=Dislike very much

INCLUSION

Feedbacks from the sensitization on the OFSP pottage acceptance were taken back to the Deputy Governor who finally gave her approval for inclusion in the school menu.

Because of the limited available multipliers and farmers, the actual feeding of the pupils with OFSP pottage started with a pilot in eight schools comprising 4,160 pupils consuming about 1.2 tons on weekly basis

The pilot schools were purposively selected considering proximity to OFSP farmers as well as to assess flow of the process and possibilities of scaling-up.



Other complimentary activities with the pilot

- Base and end line surveys were carried out in some of the pilot and few control schools on acceptance of the meal
- Knowledge of teachers on OFSP and other related issues for impact assessment, appropriate strategies for scaling up and certainty of sustainability were also assessed
- Monitoring of the pilot was ensured on weekly basis throughout the phase

Base and endline survey results

- *Baseline*
- The survey used structured questionnaire comprising socio-demographic information, knowledge of food and their nutrient composition, sources of information on sweetpotato, etc.
- In total, 60 teachers (5% male, 95% female), including 20 from non-pilot schools, were surveyed. *The details of the survey are available in the project reports.*
- Among the teachers, 63% reported farming outside their teaching profession and 30% farm sweetpotato while 49% know OFSP and 62% of this group know through friends & seminars that OFSP is a good source of vitamin A

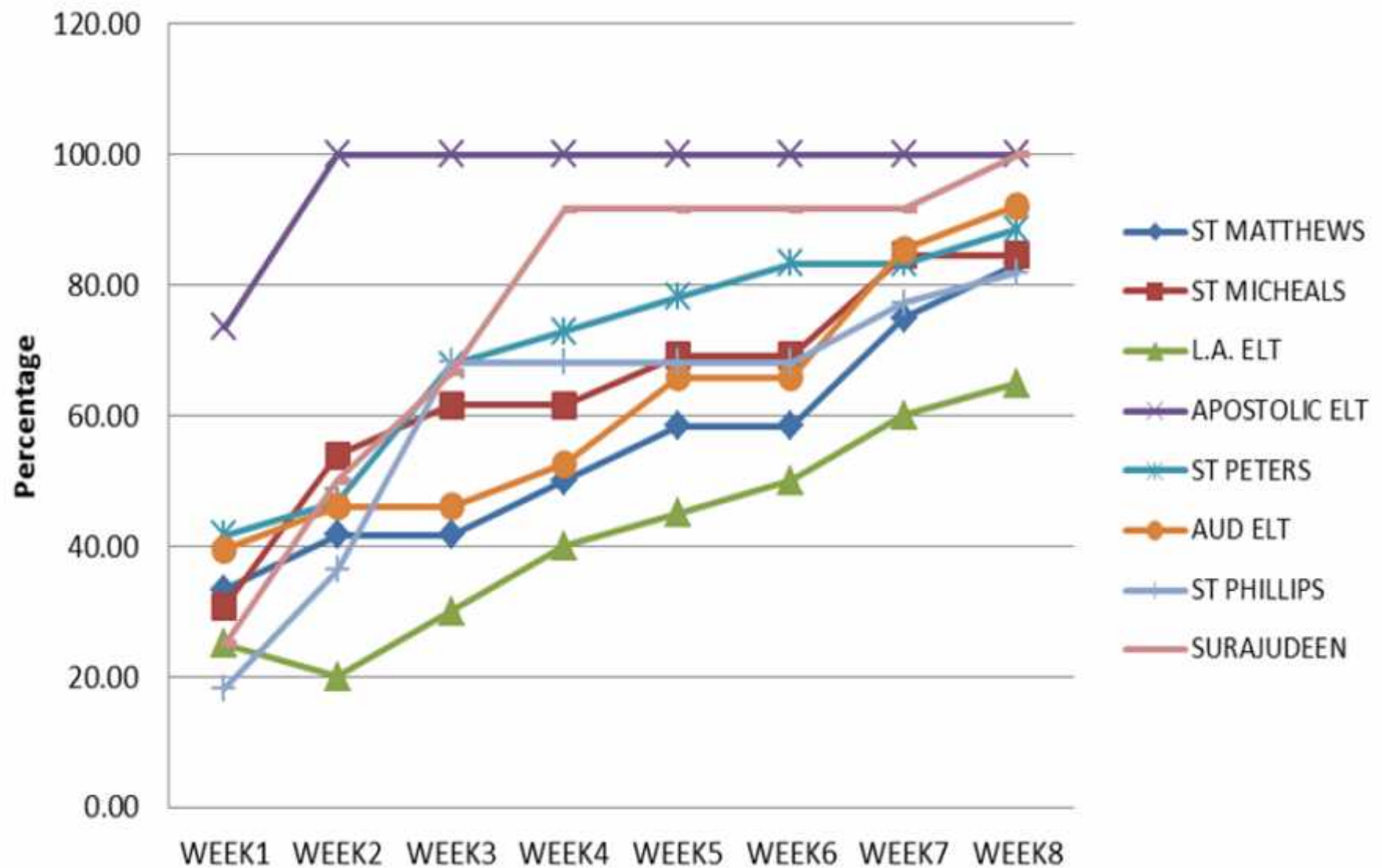
Endline

- After a term of feeding OFSP pottage in the 8 pilot schools, the same questionnaires were administered to the same number of respondents in the same schools.
- The findings here were very similar to those of the baseline but on awareness of OFSP, 88% were affirmative, unlike the baseline which was 49%.
- The increased awareness was obviously as a result of the OFSP inclusion in the school feeding menu coupled with the media awareness.
- Also, the same reasons were attributed to the increase in the knowledge of OFSP as a good source of vitamin A, which was found to increase from 62% at the baseline to 89% at the end line.

Monitoring of the Pilot

- Every week, a monitoring team visited at least two schools to monitor the pilot and assess acceptability of the menu.
- At the visits, the team interviewed the teachers, pupils, caterers, headmasters, and health teachers.
- The questions asked focused on their assessment of the product, the problems encountered or observed the opinions for improvement, and any response (positive or negative) from the parents.
- The general questions directed to pupils were, 'did you eat OFSP last week? Why/not? What did your teachers/parents tell you about OFSP?'
- ***If we eat this product, our body will be healthy, our mind will be healthy, and we will be healthy to study better.***-says a pupil beneficiary

Acceptability of OFSP



Challenges

- Initial disagreement between farmers and cooks on logistics of root procurement especially costs of roots and transportation. This was resolved amicably between both parties.
- Farmers and Cooks' limited skills in calculating quantities of OFSP available roots and quantity required to serve a particular population of pupils respectively. This posed a challenge as it created gap between planning and implementation.
- DVMs and farmers' low capacity to meet the demand of roots for the school feeding. The OFSP inclusion was approved during dry season when roots were generally scarce coupled with the farmers' doubt that the inclusion was going to be approved. This resulted in root shortage during the pilot, thus necessitating sourcing roots outside the state of Osun.
- Problem of quality control was also experienced initially because different cooks across the zones were exploring different recipes. This was resolved by harmonizing recipe and O-MEALS team working closely with the cooks and monitoring on weekly basis to ensure uniformity of meals.
- Initial rejection of the OFSP pottage in few schools due to low awareness of the new meal. This was resolved by increasing public awareness of the crop and the program, exploring media sensitization across the state.

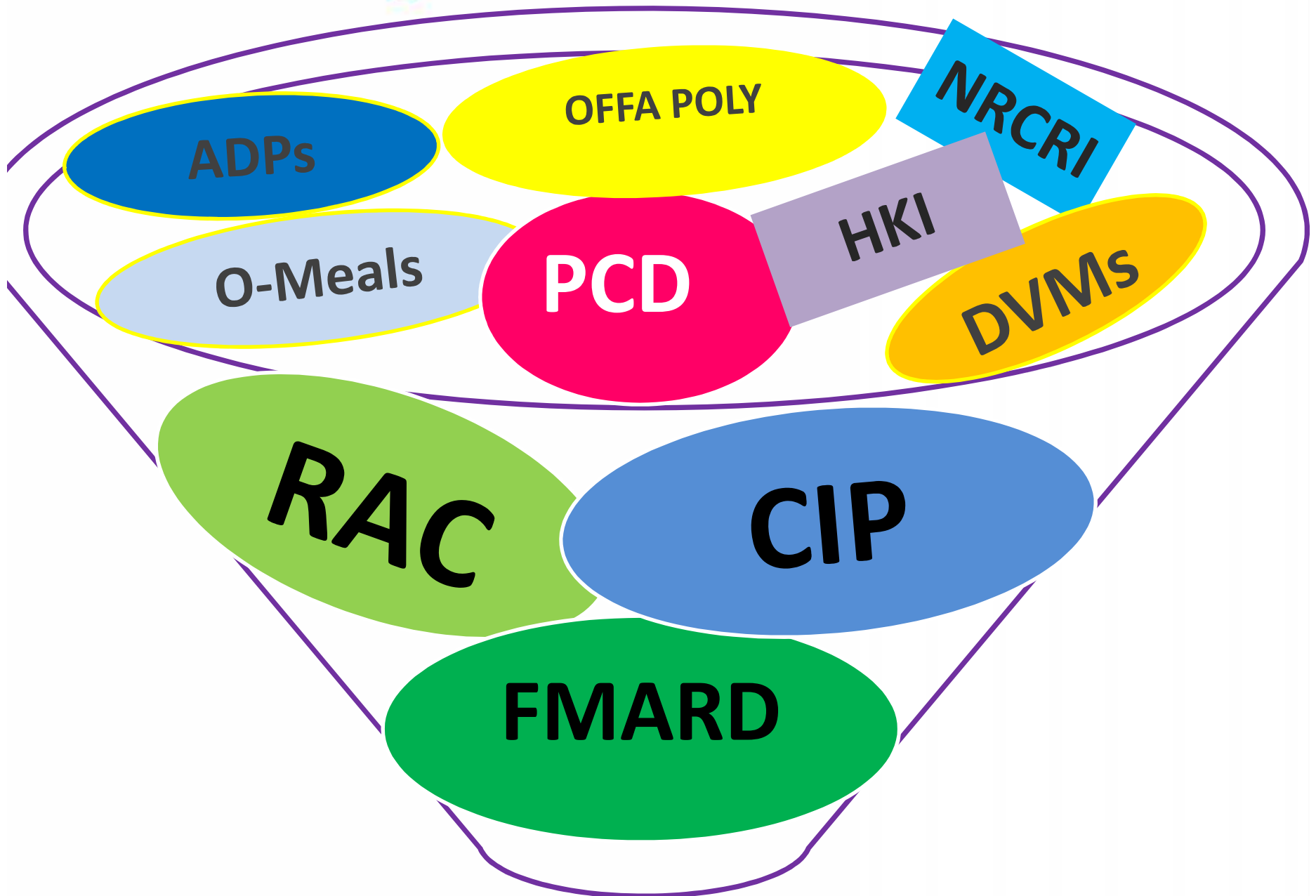
Way forward

Establishment of commercial OFSP farmers to serve the program

Scaling up to more schools by the next academic session

Results, findings and experiences of the pilot were documented for possible adoption in other states of Nigeria.

Acknowledgements



THANK YOU!!!! Murakoze!!!
Mercy!!!! A DUPE!!!!
Na gode!!! Dalu!!!!!!!





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