

administration and authorities have also picked interest and have offered airtime on their sponsored Sunday FM radio show to be utilised in popularising OFSP for consumption behaviour change. Further support has been promised specifically to women and youth who desire to engage in OFSP production and as a result, a women's group has been formed.

Today we have over 1,000 pupils in Northern Uganda regularly consuming OFSP roots, baked products and flour in their diets which is an assurance that their Vitamin A requirements are adequately met. All of this simply because of change in behaviour.

And Moses has benefited too. He has increased production from 2 acres to 3.5 acres where he is expecting to produce more than 100 bags (12,000 kgs) thus earning an increased income for his household. "This is wonderful, now I have a market for my products" said Moses.

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The women measure the required amount of water to cook OFSP roots. (credit L. Kutegeka, BRAC)



**Capturing Our Learning:** An interactive "write-shop" (facilitated by Well Told Story) was held to capture participants stories. Participatory role-plays explored what happened in different countries along the value chain. Divided into 3 acts the role plays portrayed the problem being faced; the solution; and the new reality. A mock radio phone-in show was used to tease out technical issues. Commentators and facilitators identified significant "ah-haa" moments, probing actors and directors for more information, allowing commentators to explore how things happened differently across countries. Recording the information was a crucial part of the process! Participants took notes, spokespersons for each play recorded the action and "ah-haa" moments were recorded on flipcharts. By the end of 2 days, we had stories with heroes and data which danced. Countries had also deepened their understanding about their own value chain activities, and had shared valuable experiences.



OFSP roots are ready for eating - just as good as white fleshed roots if cooked in the right way (steamed like bananas with little water). (credit L. Kutegeka, BRAC)

## Learning Cases for promoting market development

### for orange-fleshed sweetpotato in East and Central Africa

How a simple cooking lesson can change lives: The role of communication for behaviour change in enhancing the uptake and adoption of OFSP in Uganda's Acholi subregion.

Kitgum farmer Bon-gomin Moses is a keen grower and consumer of orange-fleshed sweetpotatoes (OFSP). But his burgeoning family business was almost brought down because his customers weren't cooking his produce correctly.

By applying communication for behaviour change Lydia Kutegeka, Regional Coordinator Agriculture from BRAC and a value chain facilitator, was able to keep Mr Moses's business from failing at a crucial point in its development.

Separated from his wife, 33 year old Moses farms five acres of land with help from his two boys. In 2011 he learned about the health-giving properties of OFSP from BRAC and soon started to grow them on his farm. He cultivated two acres of land under OFSP, three acres under beans and one acre under okra.

A keen entrepreneur, Moses discovered a nearby market for his produce at Pandwong Muslim boarding primary school in October 2012. He informed head teacher Mrs. Aidah Opio of the fact that OFSP provides Vitamin A – essential for children's growth – and is rich in many other vitamins and minerals. A mother of four children herself, the head teacher was particularly interested in the information that OFSP is a good energy source that protects from infection and contributes to general body development as well as consumers' eye sight. She bought 50 bags, each weighing 120kgs (6,000kgs in total) of OFSP fresh roots to feed the children in her care. But when the school's cook prepared a meal for the students, the sweetpotatoes turned out mushy and soon the children complained to the teachers. When Moses approached the school for a repeat order of his OFSP roots, they turned him down and asked for their money back.



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It was at this point that Moses's membership of the Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA) set up by BRAC and Gulu University, came into its own. By helping members to share their troubles and analyse them together with researchers and facilitators, actors in the value chain like Moses have an active support system. PMCA is a participatory approach used by the International Potato Center (CIP) together with partners who include BRAC, an international NGO, Gulu University and Virtuous Springs Ltd., a local NGO, all working in Northern Uganda. The PMCA involves bringing together farmers, processors, traders and consumers to work out arrangements for enhancing production, distribution and consumption of agricultural commodities in a participatory manner. Representatives from each node of the chain regularly meet to discuss challenges and work out solutions in a climate of trust and cohesion.

Moses shared his experience with his fellow members of the PMCA thematic group to which he belonged for some advice. Facilitators and members of the PMCA thematic group decided it would be simple to solve Moses' problem by using communication for behaviour change (CBC) methods.

"I and another colleague from Virtuous Springs had just returned from a CBC training which was held in Arusha and by using the knowledge and skills acquired there I thought that we could encourage the school to be more interested in

OFSP" Lydia Kutegeka Regional Coordinator Agriculture from BRAC and a PMCA facilitator commented.

CBC helps to encourage behaviour change by using simple communications rules. As with many communications interventions, this was merely a matter of thinking through the problem logically. The PMCA thematic group identified that the head teacher was interested in the nutritional aspects of eating OFSP; that she needed happy uncomplaining children; and that she wanted to feed them well but cheaply.

"We identified the head teacher as the main decision maker then analysed what she was interested in. Once we had done that, it was easy to plan an intervention that would solve her problems," explained Lydia.

The thematic group decided that a cheap, replicable and quick intervention would be to visit the school and teach them how to cook OFSP. They needed to move fast so that Moses's crop didn't deteriorate. Just one week after their meeting, Kutegeka and Justine Olweny, a Trainer of Trainees (TOT) on OFSP production technology, visited Pandwong Primary School and taught Lakot Sunday, the head cook at the school, better methods of cooking OFSP.

"OFSP roots are less expensive to cook since they require less fuel and water," explained Kutegeka. Mr Sunday had been cooking them for an hour when they only needed half an hour, and they only needed half the amount of water

normally used for white-fleshed sweetpotato.

In addition to the nutritional benefits which include: protection from infection, general body development, improved eye sight, and increased energy, OFSP also is a cheap and locally available means of acquiring vitamin A (as compared to vitamin A capsules or animal meat). And OFSP is cheap to prepare since it requires less water use and time thus less firewood. This was of particular interest to the school that was able to halve its fuel costs. One truck of fire wood costs USD 70 and Pandwong Primary School uses about five trucks of fire wood per term. "If we can reduce the number of trucks of fire wood from 5 to 4 trucks we will reduce our costs for feeding the children while at the same time providing more nutritious meals." Said the head teacher.

After the cooking class, teachers at the school were invited to subsequent PMCA group meetings and they eventually became actors in the PMCA process. "This change in behaviour by the school has triggered increased consumption of OFSP roots in Kitgum and Pader districts, especially among schools and their surrounding communities" says Kutegeka. "It's worth investing time in schools and students as they then take their knowledge home with them".

More than 50 farmers in the area have benefited from this increased consumption of OFSP. This has led to increased

demand for their produce and translated into greater revenue for their households since they are already aware of where to sell their products. The teachers in these schools have now joined the bandwagon by taking up OFSP root production themselves to supplement their incomes. Around four teachers who are members of PMCA thematic groups received the OFSP vines and now each has about half an acre of OFSP roots which they are planning to expand for commercial purposes. These include: Aidah Opio the Headteacher of Pandwong Boarding Primary School, Aol Evelyn from Lapana Primary School, Oloya Joel from Uganda Martyrs Centenary School and Abonga Charles from Kitgum Girls Primary School.

"This is great, we shall never buy any other type of sweetpotato for our school except Orange- Fleshed Sweetpotato" said Abonga Charles from Kitgum Girls Primary School.

Processors in these communities have now explored the option of using OFSP as ingredients in their products due to the nutritional benefits perceived by the communities where OFSP information has been disseminated. Currently OFSP is becoming an increasingly popular ingredient in many of the snacks consumed in these communities. Some of the OFSP based products include composite flour, crackies, scones, buns, doughnuts, chapatti and cakes.

As a result of the increasing popularity of OFSP, the local

Women farmers from Lagwayi and Olokilee farmer groups in Pader peel and wash the roots before cooking. (credit L. Kutegeka, BRAC)



The women carefully cover the roots with banana leaves so that the sweetpotatoes will be steamed to perfection. (credit L. Kutegeka, BRAC)

