

FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

Building A Community of Advocates for Orange Flesh Sweetpotato In Ghana

COMMUNITY OF OFSP ADVOCATES' REVIEW MEETING



FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ROOM, ACCRA
2ND SEPTEMBER, 2014

Facilitated by Sonia Kwami

This document presents the deliberations and outcomes of a half day meeting, organized by Farm Radio International with support from Helen Keller international to review progress made by the Community of Practice on Orange Flesh Sweetpotato (OFSP) in Ghana



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1.0 Introduction

Farm Radio international and Helen Keller International have over the past **five??** years worked collaboratively in a funding partnership to promote food abased approaches to address vitamin a Deficiency in Ghana, using the orange Fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP). Current efforts by both government and the NGO sector to promote this initiative are encouraging though there is still much ground to cover. It was there for imperative to develop a roadmap for institutionalizing advocacy for integrating food based approaches as part of a comprehensive strategy to address VD in Ghana.

As part of a sustainability strategy and promoting a wider network of OFSP practioners/advocates, a Community of Learning Platform was established on the 14th of February 2014 with the following as its modus operandi:

- A Working Group/Action Driven Taskforce at the centre, linking all issues connected to OFSP, sharing of experiences using bottom up approach, members fuelling each other with information and learning from each other on new trends of issues connected to OFSP.
- Promoting and sharing information on Sweetpotato with emphasis on OFSP in Ghana.
- An open membership of people working along the OFSP value chain interested in promoting OFSP. E.g. Researchers, breeders, NGOs, entrepreneurs, health services, MoFA, Media (general-print, electronic, radio, TV etc.)
- Connecting with each other by using both online and offline communication tools regularly.
- To facilitate smooth discussions, the group would be sub-divided based on areas of specialty, such as production, marketing etc to feed into the wider group.
- There would be face to face meeting at least twice a year, planned field visits etc.
- The group was to be led by a steering committee with support from the facilitator. Members would be representatives from the various links from the value chain and would meet virtually or physically.
- It was suggested that, an advocacy expert was needed to support in lobbying; but this was not conclusive.
- As a first step, a Google group was created to facilitate communication.

It was expected that, the group would sustain advocacy for increasing awareness on the role of OFSP in reducing VAD in Ghana.

2.0 Workshop Objectives, Format and Methodology

The objectives for the half day review session were as follows:

1. To review progress made by Community of Practice to date, and share ideas on sustaining the group.
2. Discuss mechanisms for sustaining OFSP advocacy in Ghana.

The workshop was conducted combining a mini-conference format and a question oriented organization with discussions amongst participants. The specific methodology used was an adaption of the learning discussion forum where some members with expertise in different areas of the OFSP value chain shared progress, insights, and challenges as well as lessons in their respective areas of expertise. This was followed by plenary where participants asked questions, sought further clarifications on issues, made comments. The highlight of the approach is to draw out what has changed since the last meeting and to share useful lessons for progressing.

Furthermore, networking and interaction over snack and lunch break was strongly encouraged to deepen discussions and to share knowledge about people's specialty in the OFSP value chain.

2.1 Panel Discussion and Presentations

This session sought to facilitate discussion and to answer the following key question of: What is happening with OFSP in Ghana under the areas of Nutrition, utilization of OFSP, media outreach and awareness raising as well as research on OFSP in Ghana.

Each panel member made a presentation and this was followed by in-depth discussions by participants.

1. **Presentation 1:** Progress to date by Farm Radio International
2. **Presentation 2:** Research - Ted Carrey, International Potato Centre
3. **Presentation 3:** Progress to date by MOFA Women in Agriculture Programme

(Detailed presentations attached as appendix)

During the plenary participants were also given the opportunity to share progress made by their organizations towards promoting OFSP in Ghana.

3.0 Updates and Summary of Progress to Date

3.1 Farm Radio International – By Rosemond Ohene

Presentation on Progress Made on Learning Platform

- The report for the previous workshop has been shared with all participants
- Development of a Google site to serve as the online platform for the community of practice.
- Setting up of a taskforce or steering committee.
- Mapping exercise of current OFSP practitioners completed and results would be shared
- Online meetings not held as most members did not register immediately; hence their passwords expired.

General Presentation on Progress Made on the Ground



- FRI has expanded its operations from 2 regions to 4 regions.
 - Previously, vines were given free of charge, however they have successfully sensitized farmers in the Central Region to buy the vines.
 - Introduction of community nurseries.
- Exhibition in the Volta region at Food Research and WAAPP investors' forum.
- Poster presentation at the ANEE VI conference.
- The successfully introduced OFSP at the NAME??? Refugee camp to enable them meet part of their own nutritional needs.
- Eighty two (82) listener groups formed in the following regions: Central, Volta, Northern and Upper East Regions. With over 2500 people listening weekly.
- Eighty two (82) free play radio sets distributed.
- Higher market for OFSP in the Northern Region or (Central??) as compared to the other types of Sweetpotatoes.
- Radio broadcasts on OFSP have increased knowledge about the benefits, production and consumption. Listen group discussions have ensured that learning continues even outside the radio stations and after programs broadcasts.
- Increased production of OFSP due to expansion into two (2) more regions.
- Farmers have also learnt about varieties of dishes that can be prepared from OFSP.

Challenges

- Having a constant supply of adequate vines for farmers is still a challenge
- Marketing of OFSP as increased production in especially the Volta Region created a glut. To address this challenge, farmers are being encouraged to share their contacts with radio presenters who would announce them on air to enable potential buyers contact them directly and purchase their crops.

The Way Forward

- Organizing cook shows in all the four (4) regions
- Contracting a local celebrity chef in all four (4) regions.
- Organizing Competitions to promote OFSP
- Weekly monitoring of PRSs and listener groups.

3.1 International Sweetpotato Centre - By Ted Carey



The Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative has a goal of reaching 456,000 in Sub-Saharan Africa. By the end of three years their target is to reach a thousand farmers in Ghana. Their theory of change is to get all our stake holders together to share ideas and debate on how to get better solutions and problem solving ideas.

- One of the key areas of support is a full breeding programme to ensure that the variety release of plant distribution.
- Projects include CIP-SASHA;GTSPI, CSIR-CRI-WAAP, CSIR-SARI, 3OFSP and One OSFP
- Useful lessons have been learnt from using indigenous methods for storing OFSP in Bawku to prolong availability of harvested crops and to reduce post harvest losses. Storage of Sweetpotato in sand seems promising which they developing instead of the pits that did not work.
- Commercial Sweetpotato planting material and OFSP producers including women have experienced increased income through participation in the OFSP project.
- Viable QDPM seed system in target areas capable of expansion in response to increase demand
- In the near future, an office will be established in Tamale (CSIR-SARI)

3.2 Women in Agriculture Development Programme (WIAD), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) – By Mildred Suglo.

- The Women in Agriculture Programme of MOFA has so far held two training of their staff across Ghana to share knowledge about OFSP and to train them on food processing using local recipes.
- They are also collaborating with a bakery to make pastries using OFSP Flour and to explore possibilities of helping promote this initiative
- Funding is still a challenge as this initiative is capital intensive at the beginning since it requires both extensive marketing with promotion as well as investments for processing the raw materials.
- There are concerns about the storage of the Sweetpotato puree since WIAD works with many women farmers in rural areas across Ghana who do not have access to the relevant storage facilities to process OFSP.
- They are also partnering with NAME?? to produce a recipe on OFSP dishes.
- They currently are fundraising to enable them do more trainings for their staff and would welcome any collaborations/partnerships in promoting OFSP.

3.3 Summary of General Discussions

- World Vision Ghana has sent 2 staff for the 10day OFSP training. OFSP promotion has now been included in their programmes. Stephen Matey to connect with Kwadwo Adofo CSIR in connection with this initiative for enhancing technical support to farmers
- To address the issue of storage, OFSP can be processed into flour and added to foods prepared with flour.
- OFSP flour could also be used as a sweetener and people in the north are already doing that.
- It could be added to maize to replace cassava (in “Banku” preparation)
- There is the need to be careful about how all these are done. As we need to have a look at our local foods to link with the OFSP for people in our villages.
- People at the local level need to be considered in the kinds of foods we use the OFSP to prepare. They must be foods they are familiar with.
- Packaging of OFSP products is a key to ensuring that it attracts consumers. Poor packaging could result in loss of markets for the products.

- A suggestion was made to tease out how the farmers want to use the OFSP in their food preparations. Therefore we will need to have a look at improving on the existing products to work on them.
- There was a suggestion to work with Home Economies teachers in target schools and their students to promote OFSP.
- Bakeries in Tamale are promoting OFSP bread. E.g Vitaloaf by one of the bakeries
- There is an urgent need to get new markets for OFSP. For example, in Burkina Faso, where mango is produced, OFSP juice could be added for similar uses. Similarly Nigeria uses school feeding to promote OFSP; a similar initiative could be pursued in Ghana to introduce OFSP in our School Feeding Programme.
- Naming of OFSP varieties by communities based on their culture was also discussed extensively. In as much as names could be translated in local dialects, it was discouraged since it is important to maintain their original names for identification purposes.

We will take a broader look at the names people are giving to them in the near future in order to avoid confusion.

3.4 General Remarks by Julia Tagweriyi, Regional Advocacy Manager – Helen Keller International

There has been a regional end of project review, which has identifies lessons that other countries have learnt that could help Ghana although it's situation is unique.



capacity building of the entire value chain)

i. Advocacy

- Advocacy in nutrition is not encouraging at the moment. There is the need for an advocacy strategy to pull the idea on the high level. It needs to be integrated.
 - Need to associate with NAT's policies and other institutions. (NAT will be activated)
 - Focus on systems to provide vines.
 - The need of pilots
 - The need to strategize everything (

ii. Capacity building

- Need build and work with the critical mass of people who know what is being done on OFSP
- We also need to bring together a critical mass of technically competent people.

- People who have been trained on OFSP must be entered into a database to enable easy access to information about how has undergone the ten day comprehensive OFSP course for skill and knowledge transfer in Ghana
- Universities are a key avenue for training as a strategy for reaching out to large numbers of especially young people
(Ghana is big enough to carry our sustainable capacity)
- We must have a sustainable seed distribution system (thus quality seed to improve the value of vines)
- We cannot rely on the rains due to the climate change. It is therefore necessary to look at the issue of linking irrigation.

iii. Monitoring and Evaluation

- There is the need to be in the business of providing evidence. We must have a systematic way of collecting what we are doing. This does not have to be very complicated. It can be very simple. Most countries are addressing VAD, just like Ghana.
- We must have a holistic view about everything including health issues. Some people fall sick due to the way they use the OFSP. We have to prevent some of these Issues by how we promote the OFSP.
- We need advocates in all the food sectors. (High level and at the local level).
- It is not required that everyone must be based in the capital (Accra). In raising awareness for OFSP, advocates should be considered everywhere in the country. The communication barrier must also be worked on.
- By this advocacy strategy, there is the need to be mindful of not playing down the white fleshed Sweetpotato. The focus should be promoting Sweetpotato and not just the OFSP.

4.0 Key Lessons and the Way Forward

There is an eagerness to run with the OFSP but communicating as a team has failed as members have not been responsive. We therefore need to reflect on that and forge a formidable and pragmatic way forward to ensure an active and engaging community.

It was also discovered that there were different levels of capacity and experience with online communications, hence very simple tools which are easily accessible should be considered.

4.1 Practical Ways to Make the Online Platform Work

- Create a simple, friendly and colourful Google Workspace to share information, contacts and key documents.
- The rules of engagement that were developed during the consultation workshop must be revisited to ensure that there is uniform understanding and appreciation with all community members. To this effect, a summary should be shared with all platform members in the invite for joining the online platform.
- An OFSP Profile should be developed for all members and shared for people to know who to specifically contact on what. This will facilitate communications at the various aspects of the OFSP value chain as it is not practical for everyone to be communicating with every one regularly. The first draft is attached in Appendix 2 (It still requires updating to ensure that those who were not at the review meeting are included)
- Resend invites to all members. Google email accounts are ideal but not mandatory.
- Everyone must join the platform. Hence, a follow up email will be sent to participants who have not joined the platform within 24 hours of receiving the invite. (Non- Action Takers or “NAT”)
- A reminder email with the link for joining the platform to be sent if they have still not joined
- There is the need for a second look at the functioning of the steering committee. Ben and Ted were tasked to lead the process.
- To ensure that the platform is interesting and active, all reports will be posted on the platform. Emails sharing reports or other documents will only contain the link to the platform.

- Announcements on workshops, training, meetings and fundraising opportunities must all be done on the platform. However, email notifications will still be sent with only the headlines so as to motivate people to visit the platform to read further details.
- There was a unanimous decision **to change the name of the Community of Practice (CoP) to Community of OFSP Advocates (COA)**

5.0 Closing

After a summary of the key issues discussed during the day, and comparing the outcome of discussions to the main objective of the workshop, participants concluded that, the workshop objective had been met. Ben Fiafor made closing remarks by thanking all participants for their active participation and passion about OFSP, which had contributed to the success of the meeting. She particularly thanked Julia for adding “a push” to ensure that OFSP is promoted in Ghana and remains strongly advocated for.

FRI reiterated their commitment to the success of the community. The facilitator then closed the meeting at about 1.30pm.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Workshop Programme

Introduction:

On February 14, 2014, a group of twenty-four professionals from different organizations convene at Erata Hotel in Accra to design a roadmap that will guide them as a Community of Learning in sharing information and advocating for the use of orange fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP) in addressing vitamin A deficiency in Ghana. Representatives from Hellen Keller International, International Potato Centre (CIP), MEDA, World Vision International-Ghana, WIAD-MoFA, SNV, Ghana 4-H and selected universities (UDS, KNUST and UCC) among others were present for this meeting. After several presentations and discussions on the use of OFSP to address vitamin A deficiency in Ghana, participants came out with a roadmap to guide the functioning of the community of learning in advocating for the use of OFSP in addressing vitamin A deficiency in Ghana.

Workshop objectives: This half day review session will

1. Review progress made in advocacy through the Community of Practice.
2. Discuss mechanisms for sustaining OFSP advocacy in Ghana.

Expected Outcome:

We look forward to sustaining advocacy for increasing awareness on the role of OFSP in reducing VAD in Ghana.

PROGRAMME

Half Day Review Workshop Activities of the Community of Learning on Orange Flesh Sweetpotato in Ghana

Date: Tuesday, 2nd August, 2014

Venue: FRI Office

Time: 8.30am – 12:00pm

Time	Session	Lead
08.30 - 9.00am	Arrival and Registration of Participants	Secretariat
09.00 -9.30am	Opening Session Welcome Self-Introduction of participants Setting the stage- Workshop context, objectives, expectations and format	Benjamin Fiafor, Facilitator
09.30 – 11.30am 8 Minutes per presentation	Facilitator leads the review followed by open discussion 1. Presentation 1 – Rosemond and Emmanuel, Farm Radio International 2. Presentation 2 - Edward (Ted) Carey International Potato Center 3. Presentation 3 - EsiAmoafu, Ghana Health Service 4. Presentation 4 – WIAD Representation 5. Remarks 5 – Julia Representing HKI Open Discussion for Comments, Questions and contributions (30 Minutes)	
11.30am -12.00pm	Conclusion and the way forward- Facilitator 12.00-1.00pm: Lunch	

Appendix 2 – OFSP COP Membership Profile

Profile of Member	Area of Specialty
 <p>Prof. Ibok Oduro (KNUST) Email: ibok.oduro@gmail.com</p>	<p>1. Capacity building: Root and tuber crops, fruits and vegetables 2. Post-harvest management (handling and processing) 3. Value addition: Product development with focus on cassava, yam, Sweetpotato and cocoyam.</p>
 <p>Ted Carey (CIP) Email: e.carey@cgiar.org tcarey54@gmail.com</p>	<p>1. Sweetpotato breeding 2. Sweetpotato seed supply 3. Sweetpotato value chain-market linkages Generally: Sweetpotato production and post-harvest handling and processing</p>
 <p>Kwadwo Adofo (CRI) Email: kinfodda@yahoo.com</p>	<p>1. Sweetpotato varietal breeding and development 2. Production and distribution of Sweetpotato planting material 3. Technical backstopping on Sweetpotato production 4. Training of extension agents, farmers, NGOs, media personnel on Sweetpotato</p>

Profile of Member	Area of Specialty
 <p>Victoria Abankwa (Radio Central)</p> <p>Email: dansoa71@yahoo.com</p>	<p>1. OFSP advocate: production to consumption 2. Vine distributor 3. Providing assistance to interested farmers</p>
 <p>Mildred Suglo (WIAD) Email: mildredsuglo@gmail.com</p>	<p>1. Processing OFSP root and leaves into different food forms. 2. Advocacy on nutritional benefits of OFSP 3. Nutrition education.</p>
 <p>Ben Fiafo (Farm Radio Int.) Email: bfiafor@farmradio.org</p>	<p>1. Designing radio programs on OFSP (Advocacy) 2. Supporting community farmers with vines and education on OFSP</p>

Profile of Member	Area of Specialty
 <p>Julia Tagwireyi (HKI)</p> <p>Email: jtagwireyi@hki.org</p>	<p>International OFSP advocate.</p>
 <p>Rosanna Agble (RAC)</p> <p>Email: rosagble@yahoo.co.uk</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of programmes 2. Advocacy at National, Regional and District levels.
 <p>Stephen Matey (World Vision-Ghana)</p> <p>Email: Stephen_Martey@wvi.org</p>	<p>Future events WV-Ghana is about to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensitizing stakeholders 2. Training agric extension agents 3. Training farmers on OFSP 4. Multiplying OFSP vines 5. Supporting farmers on production, marketing and utilization.

Profile of Member	
 <p>Euphemia Dzathor (AWANICH) Email: eudzath@gmail.com</p>	<p>Community development advocate</p>
 <p>Sonia Kwami (Advocacy Consultant/Facilitator) Email: Sonia.kwami@gmail.com</p>	<p>Development practitioner and international advocate.</p>
 <p>Samuel Hinneh (Spyghana Media) Email: hinnehgh@gmail.com</p>	<p>Full time and freelance journalist</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reporting on agricultural issues

Profile of Member	Area of Specialty
 Albert AdjeiMensah (4-H Ghana) Email: dadkof1@yahoo.com or adjeiamparbeng@gmail.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breeding of vines for project schools. 2. Promoting the use of OFSP for school feeding program. 3. Promoting the distribution of OFSP recipes to project schools. 4. Encouraging schools to cultivate OFSP.
 RichardAddo (4-H Ghana) Email: richardadd86@yahoo.com	Promoting cultivation and consumption of OFSP in project schools supported by 4-H Ghana.
 Peter Aboagye (WIAD) Email: pkfaboagye@yahoo.com	Promoting OFSP recipes. Nutrition advocate.

Appendix 3 - Contact list of Participants

Name	Organization	Email Address	Telephone Number
1. Edward Carey	International Potato Center (CIP) /NGO	e.carey@cgiar.org	0546938599
2. Kwadwo Adofo	Crop Research Institute	kinfodda@yahoo.com	0208198214
3. Rosanna Agble	Retired Nutritionist / RAC Member	rosagble@yahoo.co.uk	
4. Prof. Ibok Oduru	KNUST	ibok.oduro@gmail.com	0244288415
5. Euphemia Zathor	AWANICH	eudzath@gmail.com	
6. Stephen Martey	World Vision Ghana	Stephen_Martey@wvi.org	
7. Mildred Suglo	MoFA/WIAD	Mildredsuglo@yahoo.com	0205968053
8. Albert Adjei Mensah	4-H Ghana	dadkof1@yahoo.com or adjeiamparbeng@gmail.com	
9. Richard Addo	4-H Ghana	richardadd86@yahoo.com	
10. Victoria Dansoa Abankwa	MOFA /Radio Central, Cape Coast	dansoa71@yahoo.com	0577471818 / 0246823400
11. Samuel Hinneh	Spyghana Media Limited	hinnehgħ@gmail.com	0267778788
12. Peter Aboagye	MoFA/WIAD	pkfaboagye@yahoo.com	
13. Pearl	Insight Newspaper	Pearlabs6@yahoo.com	0243483351
14. Angelo Agbodzie	MoFA / WIAD	norkplima@yahoo.com	0247233723
15. Julia Twagireyi	Helen Keller International	Jtagwireyi@hki.org	
16. Sonia Kwami	Facilitator	sonia.kwami@gmail.com	0244733909
17. Emmanuel Appiah	Farm Radio International	eappiah@farmradiogh.org	0246787538
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23. Steven Sarkwah	Farm Radio International		
24. Linda Sae	Farm Radio International	office@farmradiogh.org	0541031913
25. Kumah Drah	Farm Radio International	Kdräh30@yahoo.com	0208183151z