



**Sweetpotato experience in Burkina Faso: *Creating and meeting
demande for the orange fleshed varieties***

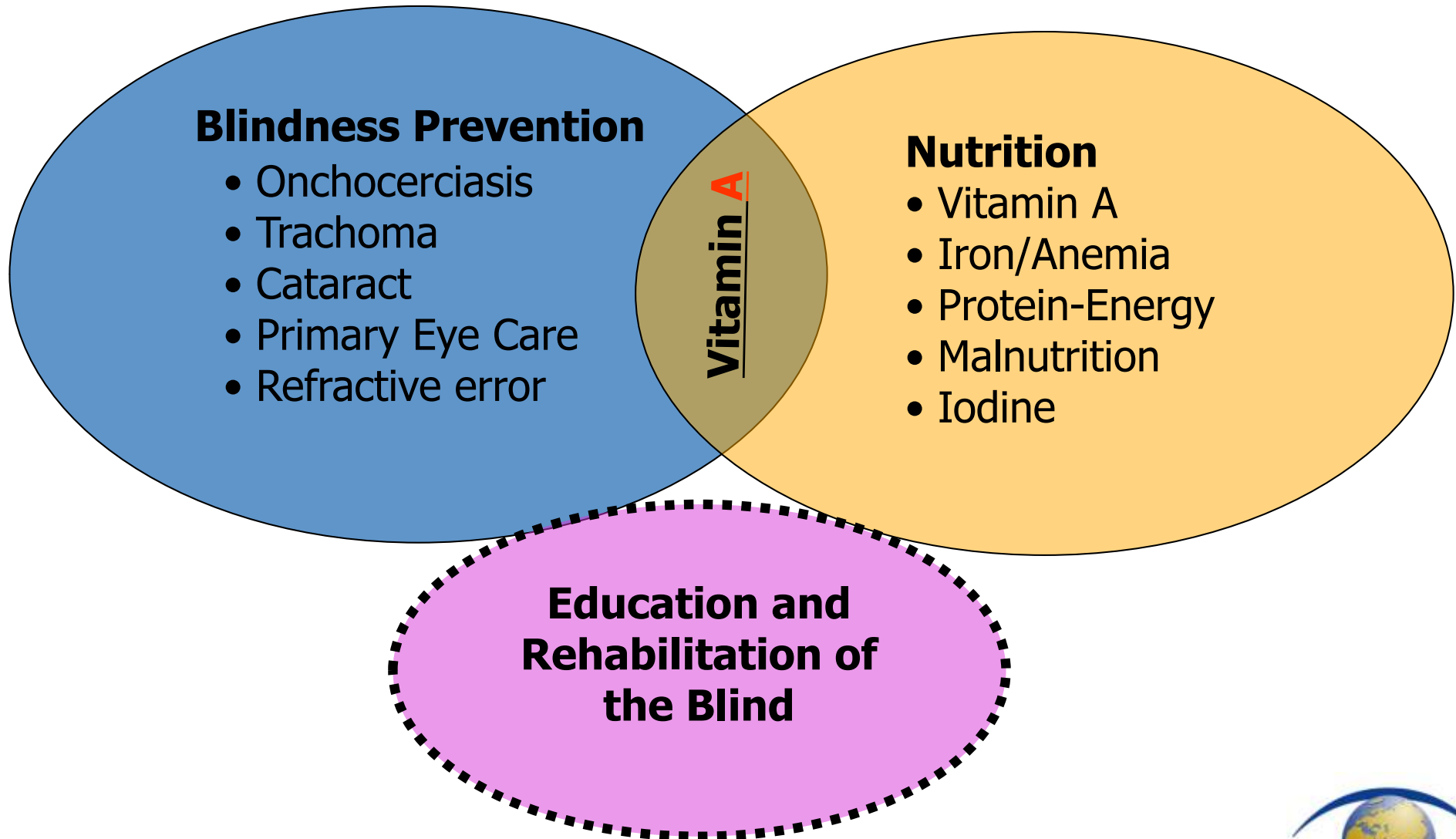
Ann Tarini
Country Director HKI Burkina

HKI Mission

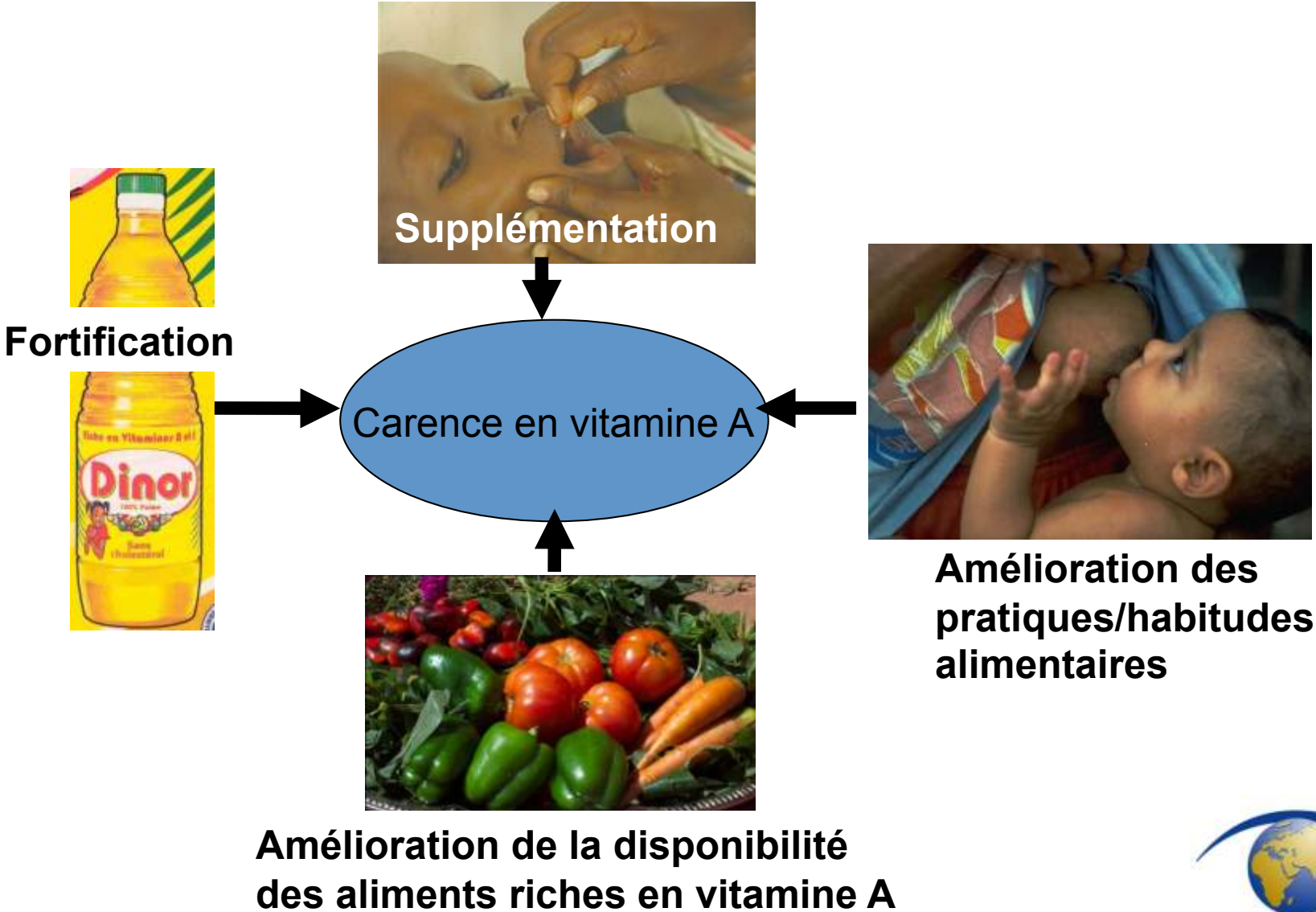
“To save the sight and lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. We combat the causes and consequences of blindness and malnutrition by establishing programs based on evidence and research in vision, health and nutrition.”



PROGRAMS



Stratégies mises en œuvre pour lutter contre la carence en vitamine A





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OFSP Experience in Burkina

Background

- ✓ Vitamin A deficiency is a public health problem in Burkina Faso
- ✓ Vitamin a rich foods are seasonal and often expensive food
- ✓ We first introduce OFSP in an existing school health and gardening project (2001)
- ✓ We decided to do a specific project on promotion of OFSP because of its particularity (harvest season, special interest of population)
- ✓ In addition to its high vitamin A and energy content OFSP is interesting for Burkina for other reasons :
 - ✓ Usually available during hungry season (before harvest of cereals) and during low availability of other sources of vitamin A.
 - ✓ Growing sweetpotatoes (mainly white fleshed) is a common practice in some region of Burkina Faso.
 - ✓ Children and adults like the taste of orange fleshed sweetpotato.
 - ✓ Sweetpotato leaves are eaten in many of the regions.
 - ✓ Feasible to grow almost in all regions of Burkina Faso.

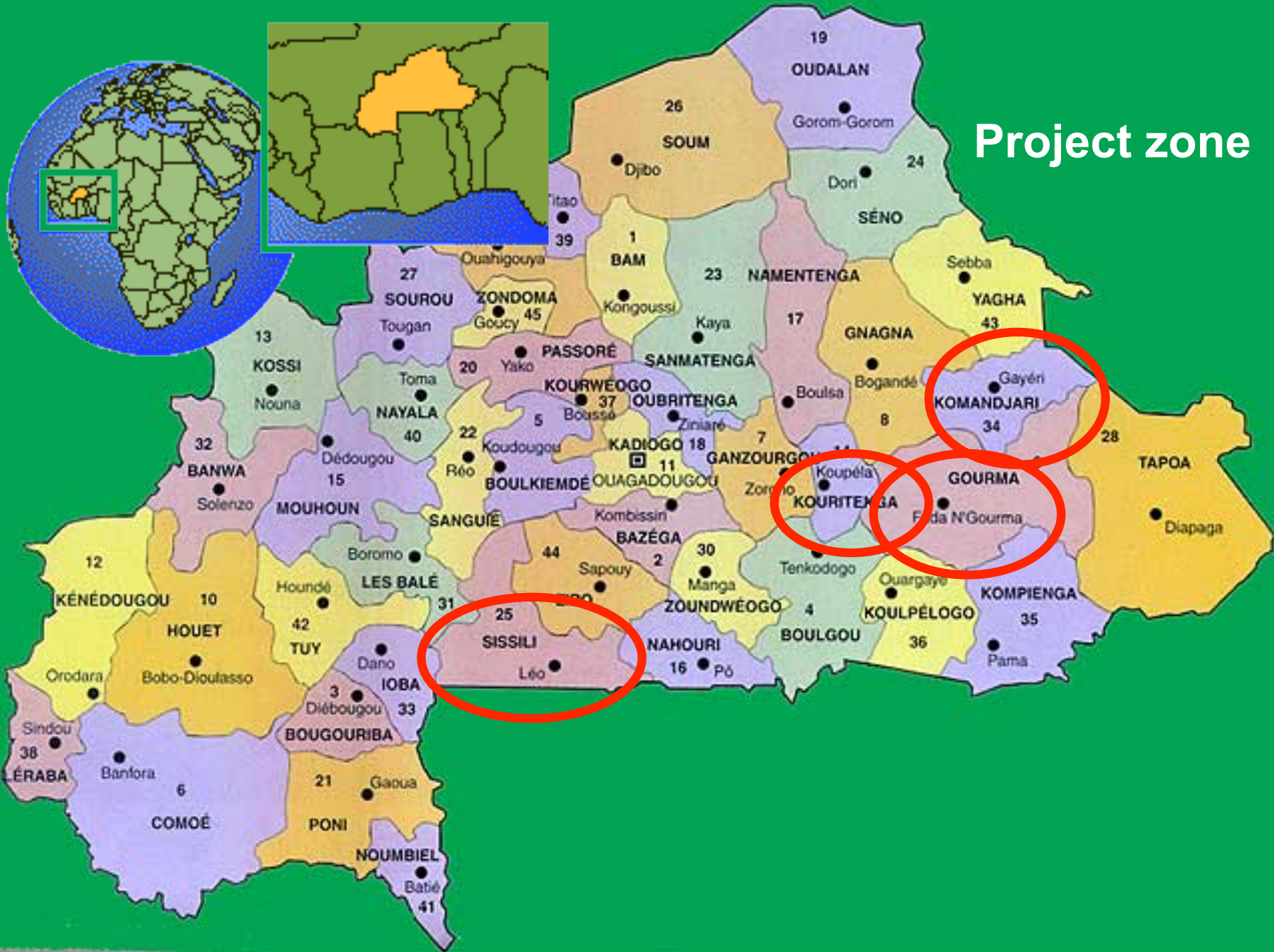
OFSP Experience in Burkina

Background

- McKnight-funded 4-year project started in 2005
- Overall Goal: To increase the production and consumption of OFSP with high content of dry matter in two areas of Burkina Faso

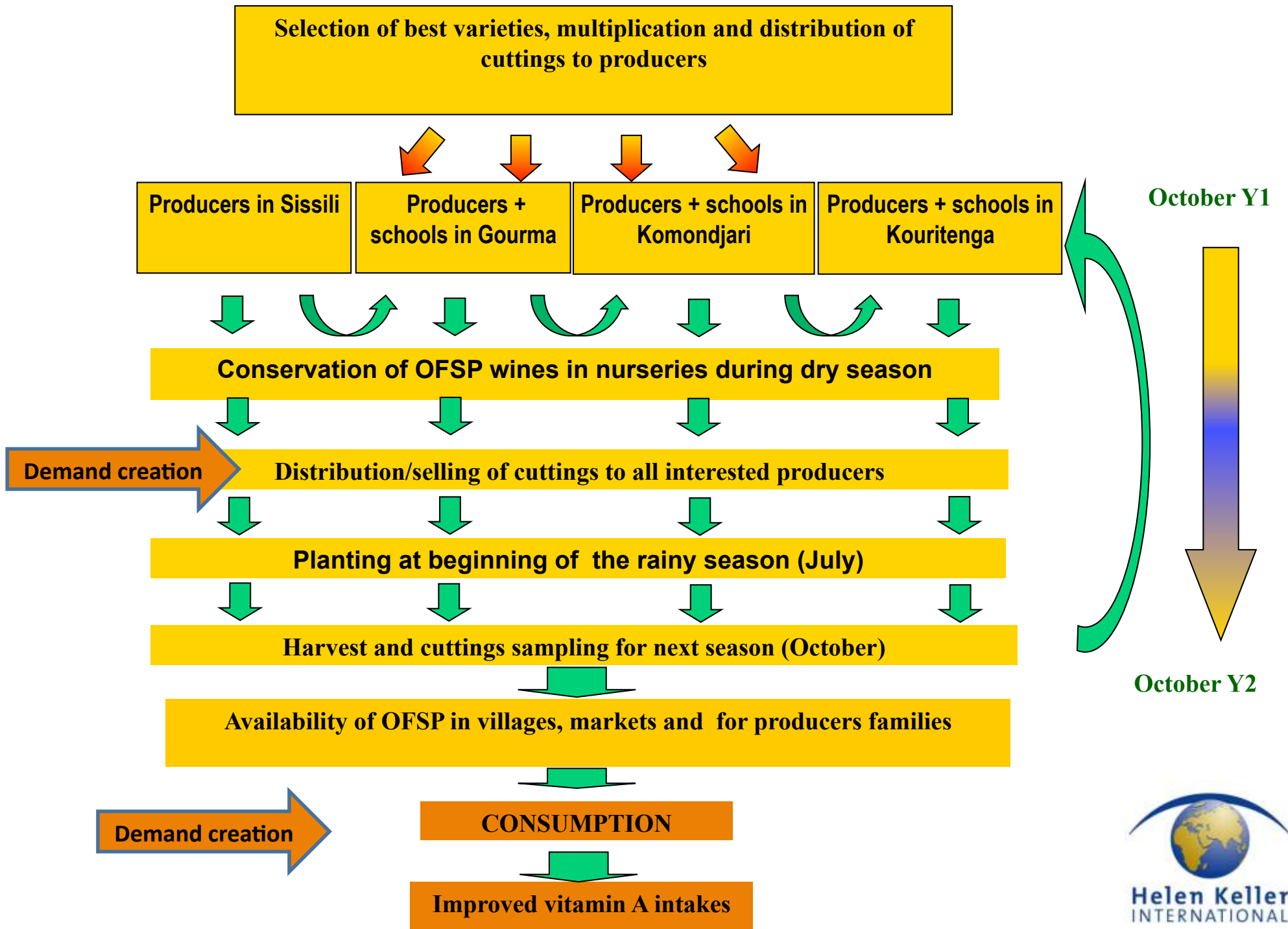


Project zone



Major components of the Project

- Introduction and field testing of a new high-yielding, high dry matter OFSP varieties
- Dissemination of the new varieties to
 - Traditional sweet potato producers
 - Cereal producers
 - Women's gardening groups
 - School gardening groups



Partnership

- **INERA** was in charge of the agronomic tests
- **HKI** was in charge of promotion of the OFSP among farmers and consumers

Capacity building

- Capacity building of local agricultural extension agents, farmers, school pupils, parents, women's gardening groups and producers on:
 - Production/farming techniques
 - Pest and virus control
 - Vine Conservation techniques
- Exchange visits within projects and within the region

Demand creation

- Promotion of production and consumption of OFSP and leaves through advocacy and nutrition education on the nutritional benefits to:
 - Farmers
 - School pupils and their parents
 - Women's gardening groups
 - Governmental structures (agriculture, health, education) at central level and in area of intervention

Strategy for demand creation

Farmers

- Ask for volunteers to become test farmer
- Field test
- Field visits for discussions between farmers
- Volunteers among test farmers to become cuttings producers
- Tasting of OFSP for farmers family and other producers

Community level

- Tasting of the OFSP varieties in schools and communities (markets)
- School lessons on nutritional interest of OFSP
- Group discussions with women
- OFSP included in the nutrition education material of all projects (school health and gardening, project for prevention and treatment of malnutrition, homestead food production projects etc.)

Achievements

- ▶ Agronomical test were done on 22 varieties (20 CIP + 2 local) and 4 varieties were selected for their agronomic performance.
- ▶ A network of cutting producers is in place in 4 provinces
- ▶ At least 500 families were producing orange-fleshed sweet potato at the end of the project in 2009.
- ▶ Market value of OFSP cuttings and storage roots is higher than white fleshed.
- ▶ Many education tools include OFSP
- ▶ Strong interest of population for this crop (production and consumption).
- ▶ Many NGOs and individuals are demanding OFSP cuttings (FDC, Tdh, CRS....)

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Work done by CRS

- **Agro-entreprise project started in January 2009 in Nahouri province of Burkina.**
- **Main activities :**
 - ✓ **Financial support for OFSP production ;**
 - ✓ **Distribution of OFSP cuttings**
 - ✓ **Train on large scale production ;**
 - ✓ **Capacity building for marketing et la commercialization of OFSP.**
 - **Transformation of OFSP will be explored later**

Main challenges

▶ Challenges

- ▶ Scarcity of water , yield really depend on the length of the rainy season and weevil attacks are high if rain stops early
- ▶ Control weevil attacks
- ▶ Keeping the planting material during the long dry season
- ▶ Need more funding to have full time NGO staff on the project (project implemented with research funding not allowing salaries and little operating cost).
- ▶ Low availability and capacity of local partners
- ▶ There is a need to develop a system to track OFSP production of other partners.
- ▶ OFSP viral attack and their management. We need a permanent source of clean cuttings.

Lessons learnt

- Need to have selected adapted OFSP before starting promotion.
- Need for building the capacity of the project team
- Need close monitoring when farmers try for the first time.
- Need a permanent source of clean wines
- Need varieties with short duration between planting and harvesting for the driest provinces.

Opportunities

- ▶ Growing interest of local partners for integrated food security and nutrition approach like in this project.
- ▶ Demand of other partners for OFSP cuttings is high
- ▶ Possibility to use lessons learnt in this project in a new projects
- ▶ New partnership with national structures interested in developing post-harvest activities.





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