

VITAMIN A FOR AFRICA (VITAA)

SSP-WA MEETING, ACCRA, GHANA
Presentation by
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BACKGROUND

- ❖ In May 2001, Nairobi meeting of 70 experts from agric, health and nutrition, representing 40 partner agencies launched VITAA
- ❖ First crop-based initiative to combat VAD in SSA
- ❖ Partner Countries as at 2006 – Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Ghana, Rwanda, Zambia, Nigeria
- ❖ VITAA Partners – National Agric Research Institutes, NGOs, Health and Nutrition Agencies, CBOs, Private Businesses, Networks working in eastern, central and southern Africa.

BACKGROUND (cont)

- ❖ A partnership promoting the increased production and utilization of OFSP to combat VAD in SSA
- ❖ **AIM** – To make OFSP available on a large scale, demonstrating the potential of crop-based approaches in alleviating micronutrient deficiency
- ❖ **GOAL** – Healthy rural populations through food-based approaches to nutrition, focused on Vit.A
- ❖ **PURPOSE** – Children and adults consume OFSP in levels that lead to reduced VAD

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Impact assessment before interventions (ex-ante)
- Participatory testing of OFSP varieties for adaptation and acceptability
- Community-based multiplication of planting materials
- Nutrition Education
- Post-harvest processing for marketing and home consumption
- Promotion through social marketing
- Monitoring of impact on nutrition and health
- Capacity building

VITAA WORKPLAN PRINCIPLES

- ❑ **OFSP acceptable** by African consumers, ready for full-scale development, effective as an entry point for other food-based strategies aimed at reducing VAD in SSA
- ❑ **Local communities empowered** to help mothers and young children prevent VAD through their own labour and industry. Also increase their income through value addition
- ❑ **Providing highly effective tool** to address VAD among rural poor communities, especially: children, pregnant women and lactating mothers
- ❑ **May help reduce the impact** of anaemia, measles and malaria, ?? Limit MTCT of HIV virus
- ❑ **Implementation strategies concentrate on women** because of their central role in production and marketing of SP and other food crops used in the family

PROGRESS / MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ **Impact Assessments, Monitoring and Evaluation** – Sufficient per capita production and diffusion of OFSP to warrant positive optimism of the nutritional benefits of OFSP to combat VAD
- ❖ **Planning and Constituency Building** – Support for the use of OFSP to combat VAD, among national policy makers, NGOs and development agencies working in agric, health and nutrition
- ❖ **Adaptive Research** – 10 to 20 OFSP cultivars with high dry matter accepted by consumers
- ❖ **Training** – Priority given to TOT in impact assessment, seed multiplication, postharvest processing and marketing, micro-enterprise and micro-credit
- ❖ **Social Marketing** – Target mothers and school-age children with messages to create demand; encouraged Governments, NGOs, CBOs to take responsibility for the distribution of OFSP materials and micro-enterprise development
- ❖ Provision of **Small Planning Grants** to partners to complete national action plan
- ❖ Completion of **efficacy and bioavailability studies** for OFSP

FUNDING

Initial VITAA Activities supported by contributions from:

- CIDA
- CIP
- DFID
- GTZ
- OPEC Fund for International Development
- Senior Family Fund
- MI
- USAID – Africa Bureau
- PRAPACE
- SARRNET

GOVERNANCE

- **VITAA Steering Committee** – membership represented different sectors and interests (agric, health, nutrition , gender
- **Country Teams** – coordinate national VITAA planned activities amongst stakeholders: Farmers, Local communities, NGOs, NARIs, Doctors, Nutritionists, Media, Private sector, Policy Makers

CHALLENGES

- ❖ Providing enough OFSP planting materials to all major SP producing and consuming countries in Africa
- ❖ Developing improved post-harvest handling techniques at community level to ensure high retention of beta-carotene contents
- ❖ Research on nutritional component to assess the impact of introducing OFSP into HIV/AIDS communities
- ❖ Broaden membership
- ❖ Funding

AWARENESS AND DEMAND CREATION

- **Sensitization seminars** – sensitize both civil and political decision makers
- **Electronic and print media** – due to inadequacy of funds, media involvement was more random than deliberate. Media involved in open campaigns, seminars, exhibitions, documentaries, talk shows, publication of specialized articles, news bulletins
- **Tapping good will** of opinion, civic and political leaders and celebrities
- **Open promotional campaigns** – involve a chain of activities
- **Processed products** based on OFSP varieties and micro-enterprise developed
- **Scientific symposium** on VITAA
- **School children as vehicles of disseminating** OFSP technologies
- **Information and knowledge dissemination materials** on OFSP and its benefits – common messages on the dissemination materials

VITAA / RAC NEXUS

Key roles by different partners in multiplication and distribution of OFSP planting materials

1) National Research Institutes

- Establish primary nursery sites accross the country
- Inspect the primary nurseries for pests and diseases
- Conduct training for farmers and farmer advisors
- Offer technical backstopping to the grass root partners

2) Individual farmers / farmers groups

- Learn new techniques of selecting and multiplying planting materials
- Practice new techniques of rapid multiplication of planting materials

VITAA / RAC NEXCUS (cont)

3) NGOs / CBOs

- Establish secondary multiplication sites
- Identify and mobilize farmers groups
- Facilitate practical trainings to farmers
- Regularly monitor the pest and disease status of both secondary and tertiary nurseries
- Conduct follow up visits to farmers

VITAA / RAC NEXCUS (cont)

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- **Large-scale dissemination** of OFSP varieties to all major SP producing and consuming countries in Africa
- **Studies on the improvement of traditional processing (value chain)** for beta-carotene retention
- **Expand VITAA partnership** to include more countries and sectors
- **Institutional and capacity building** in linking farmers to markets
- **Document and provide site specific information** on seasonal availability of OFSP and contribution of OFSP to VIT A intake throughout the year
- **Conduct community level interventions** to assess the impact of OFSP
- **Develop nutritional and agric training programmes** for household decision- makers, community leaders, local educators and children. Also develop training tools and materials in local languages

VITAA / RAC COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

MAJOR THRUSTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS
Breeding and Agronomy studies, seed systems	Field assessments, acceptability centers	NARIs, Farmers Groups, NGOs, RAC, VITAA
Post-harvest, product development and commercialization	Products, processing and handling, nutrition composition, identifying market opportunities and micro-enterprise development	NARIs, Universities, NGOs, Private sector, VITAA
Health and Nutrition	Community and household based action plans, growth monitoring, feeding programmes, operationalization of behavioral change	Nutrition and Health Care Centers, Care givers (mothers), VITAA, RAC
Awareness and demand creation	Information systems and data bases, community mobilization, public education (agric, health and nutrition) website, nutritional forums, social marketing	Nutrition and Health Centers, Local community, NGOs, NARIs, Local media, VITAA, RAC
Monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment	Efficacy studies, household surveys, ex-ante case studies, monitoring and evaluation	Medical doctors, Universities, nutrition centers, NARIs, farmers, VITAA, RAC
VITAA Partnership and Coordination	Broaden membership, steering committee, inter-sectoral working groups, other initiatives	National teams and Regional Networks, VITAA, RAC