

How OFSP communication strategies impact knowledge and consumption among Rwandan households

Background

The theory of change guiding Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP) links project interventions with the increased consumption of OFSP and improvements in other nutrition indicators. Nutrition related interventions are (1) Nutrition awareness at mass vine dissemination, (2) OFSP nutrition messaging for behavior change, (3) trainings and counseling with community health workers on MIYCN, and (4) mass media and marketing campaigns (i.e. print, radio, and television). Project components are being implemented in phases. Due to the scale in terms of beneficiaries to be reached per season the Feed the Future Rwanda OFSP project, in-depth interventions like small group trainings and CHW counseling are not accessible to the all the beneficiaries. Because of this, the behavior change communication materials and the brief training at vine distribution are essential for creating impact.

This research seeks to determine if these communication methods (brochure and short awareness training) are effective in changing knowledge and practices of beneficiaries.

Methods

A household survey was conducted across 10 districts where the Feed the Future OFSP project is implemented in Rwanda. The survey instrument using the Open Data Kit (ODK) platform was administered with tablets. Survey respondents were classified into three groups:

- (1) Beneficiary recipients of OFSP vine delivery and communication materials by CIP in sectors where CIP implemented interventions in 2015-2016 growing seasons (short period contact);
- (2) Similar profiled farmers in sectors that will (a) receive OFSP vines and project interventions in future seasons or (b) not receive OFSP vines as a part of this CIP project (control).

The data from these survey respondent groups were used to analyze the effects of interventions related to OFSP-related nutrition topics and nutrition behavior. Data was analyzed using linear models in R.

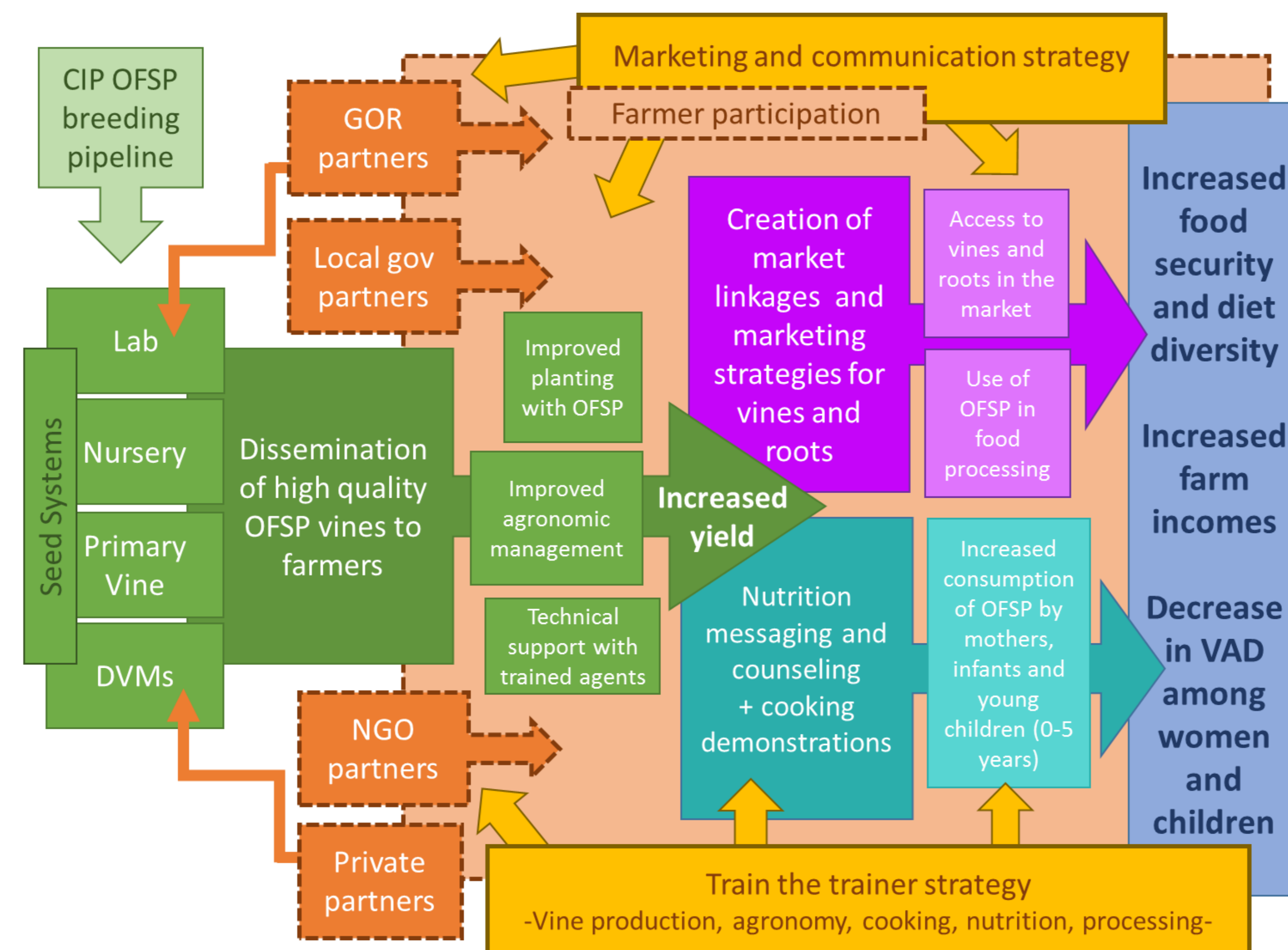


Figure 1. The graphical description of the theory of change for the Rwanda Feed the Future OFSP project shows the connections between interventions and results.

Results

Project areas where farmers had reported receiving brochures were clearly distinct from areas not yet reached by CIP interventions or not covered in terms of nutritional knowledge.

Impact of Brochure Delivery

- Of the beneficiaries surveyed, 74% said that they received a brochure.
- There is a clear relationship between receipt of brochures and the ability to recall more information about the benefits of OFSP for nutrition ($p < 0.001$) in intervention areas.
- On average 1.4 benefits were recalled by people without a brochure and 1.9 with those who received a brochure.

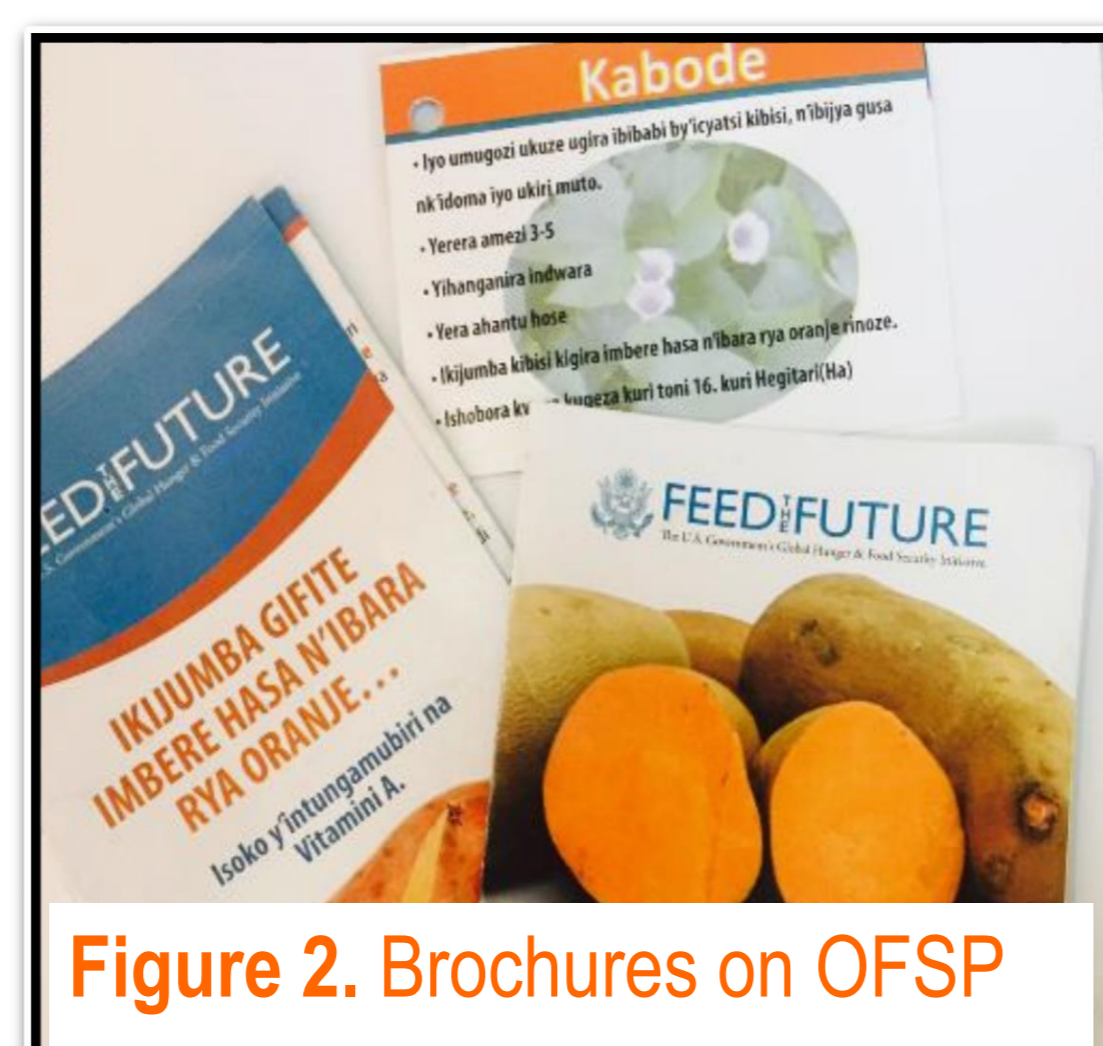


Figure 2. Brochures on OFSP

Impact of Nutrition Awareness Training at Dissemination



Figure 3. Farmers participate in training at vine distribution

- Those who received a nutrition awareness message about OFSP at vine distribution were able to provide more benefits of OFSP when asked ($p < 0.001$).
- On average, the group receiving the messages could provide 2.3 benefits of OFSP for nutrition compared to 0.5 by those who did not receive a message.
- Further analysis investigating associations between CIP interventions and household OFSP consumption using a 7-day food recall was significant if OFSP nutrition awareness training was provided during vine distribution to household ($p = 0.03$).

Impact between beneficiaries and control population.

- In sectors without CIP intervention, less than 2% of people surveyed had received any written materials or trainings on OFSP, and 5.8% had previous knowledge of OFSP. Analyzing the full survey group, knowledge of the nutritional benefits of OFSP were significantly linked to whether or not beneficiaries had received vines ($p < 0.001$) but not to brochures or training interventions.



Figure 4. A beneficiary shows off her OFSP

Discussion

This initial analysis will be critical in guiding further project implementation, especially to ensure higher success rates by CIP and partners to deliver brochures and training on nutritional benefits of OFSP at vine dissemination.

- We find that messaging contribute to a better understanding of the importance of OFSP.
- The study also shows that there is a value of both behavior change communication materials and short group awareness and trainings during vine dissemination.

Conclusion

- ❖ Delivering brochures at dissemination helps increase knowledge about the benefits of OFSP
- ❖ Nutrition awareness trainings provided to big groups at vine dissemination, though brief, still contribute to increased knowledge about the benefits of OFSP.
- ❖ OFSP messaging at vine distribution is linked to increased consumption of OFSP at the household level but more detailed and frequent food frequency data needs to be collected to better understand the trends.

Next Steps

To better understand how each different intervention (the four mentioned in introduction) affects knowledge and consumption of OFSP, full implementation in the 2017 seasons, will include CHW training in MIYCN nutrition counseling, and small group nutrition trainings. Future surveys will study the impact of each of those interventions.