

The Reaching Agents of Change (RAC)

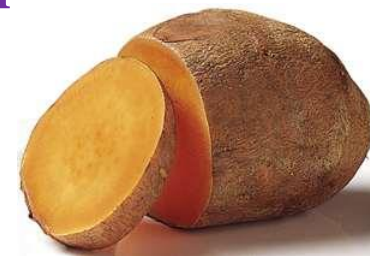
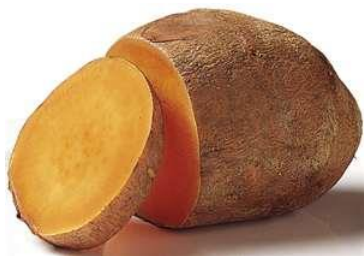
Lessons Learned & Reflections on the RAC Experience

Adiel Mbabu

Director, CIP-SSA & RAC Project Manager

SPHI Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya

10th September 2014

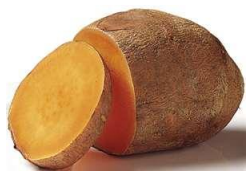


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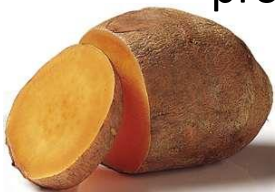
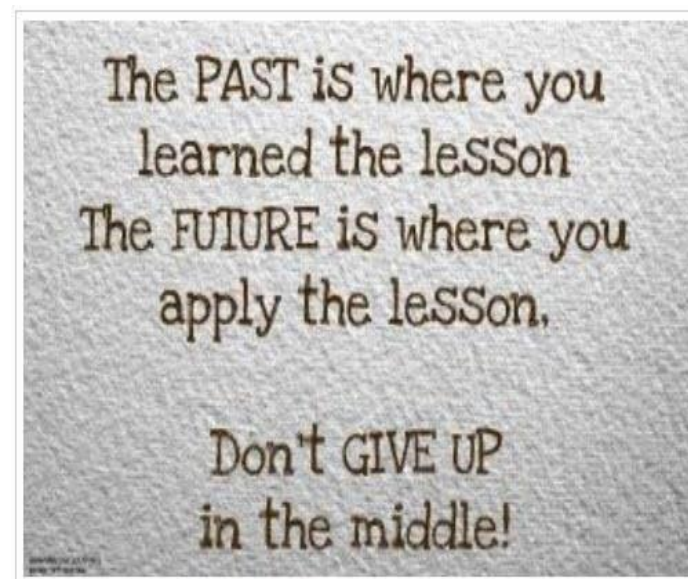
**Director, CIP-SSA & RAC
Project Manager**

SPHI Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya
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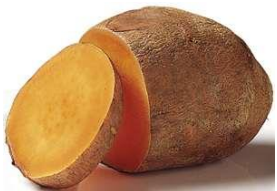
... Introduction

- The RAC design was innovative in many respects e.g.:
 - Funded to raise funds!
 - Linking three innovation areas critical to upscaling technology:
 - policy change
 - capacity development (individual & organizational) and
 - access to technology (OFSP)
- **The design was also risky!**
 - Relying on unpaid advocates and partner organizations to deliver project objectives
- In retrospect, having successfully managed the risks and delivered expected results – we now can share lessons learned



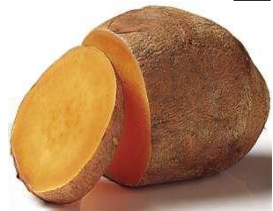
Introduction

- ▶ Given ambitious RAC objectives and an elusive delivery process, RAC had to consciously integrate learning processes to decision making at all levels
 - ▶ Biweekly reports – activities
 - ▶ Quarterly reports – outputs
 - ▶ Six-monthly reports – objectives
 - ▶ Annual reports – contribution to goal



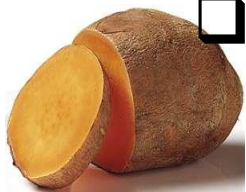
Project Design: Observations and Key Lessons

- **Observation 1** – RAC design tended to combine policy engagement and programming (resource allocation) – tending to confuse two related but different processes
- ❑ **Lesson 1** – Need to separate policy engagement e.g. support to biofortified crops for nutritional impact from programming decisions e.g. resource allocation to specific crops (e.g. OFSP)
 - ❑ Policy to national governments and programming to regional governments and donor projects
 - ❑ This has staffing implications – two different competencies.



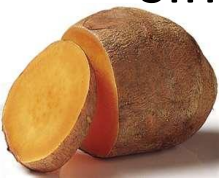
... Project Design: Observations and Key Lessons

- **Observation 2** – RAC design anticipated creation of a web-based database to document advocacy processes.
 - First attempt failed because the promotion experts (PEs) did not appear to need it
 - Second attempt had modest success
- ❑ **Lesson 2** – databases should be designed to respond to specific user needs
 - ❑ The need changes with context & experience



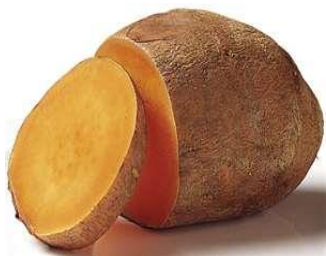
... Project Design: **Observations and Key Lessons**

- **Observation 3** - RAC design anticipated a Small Grants Scheme to tap **innovative advocacy approaches** from cutting edge innovators
- ❑ **Lesson 3a** – The design should have anticipated both **promotional and advocacy innovations** – depending on how widely exposed OFSP was in the respective contexts
- ❑ **Lesson 3b** – Given that advocacy is a relatively new area of specialization, need to **embed capacity building** in similar designs in the future



...Project Design: Observations and Lessons

- **Observation 4** – RAC design focuses on advocacy for policy change, resource allocation and capacity building for OFSP multiplication and distribution to combat VAD.
- ❑ **Lesson 4** – To address sustainability, the design needed to link these two objectives with **access to markets and agro-processing** to drive demand for OFSP



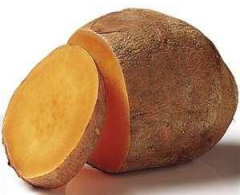
... Project Design: Observations and Lessons

- **Observation 5** – RAC advocacy assumes active involvement of unpaid high level specialists, supported by lower level PEs
- ❑ **Lesson 5a** – High level professionals are highly committed, with little time to spare for unpaid activities
- ❑ **Lesson 5b** – Presumption to expect that lower level PEs can manage high level professionals to deliver expected results
- ❑ **Lesson 5c** – Need for full time high level advocates



... Project Design: **Observations and Lessons**

- **Observation 6** – Advocacy for policy change and resource allocation was expected to be carried out without an investment guideline
- ❑ **Lesson 6a** – Need for carefully targeted investment guidelines to help investors (e.g. governments/donors) to visualize what it takes to turn ideas into programs and projects
- ❑ **Lesson 6b** – Like other learning manuals, requires specialized inputs, time and resources



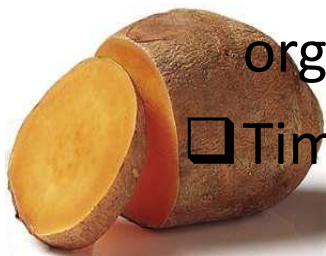
... Project Design: Observations and Lessons

- **Observation 7** – The design assumed availability of water for dry season seed multiplication
- ❑ **Lesson 7a** – with the prevailing climate change conditions, where short rains are increasingly unpredictable, irrigation is necessary to produce clean planting materials at the on-set of rains
- ❑ **Lesson 7b** – This has resource implications

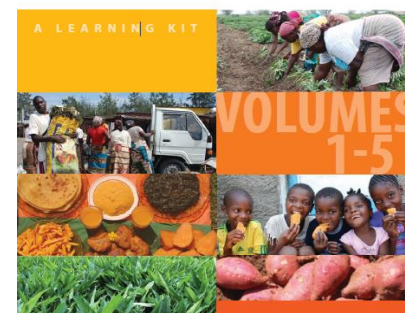


... Project Design: Observations and Lessons

- **Observation 8** – The design anticipated a relatively **easy and short term preparation** of learning modules (TOT & Project Management)
- ❑ **Lesson 8** – developing & delivering effective learning modules **in multiple languages** is a complex process requiring:
 - ❑ Multidisciplinary & multi-organizational involvement
 - ❑ Time and adequate resources

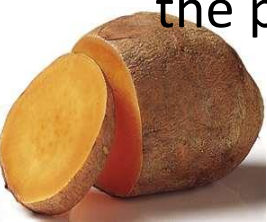


Engendered Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Project
Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation



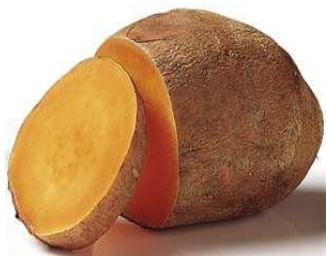
... Project Design: Observations and Lessons

- **Observation 9** – The design anticipated that trained trainers would mobilize resources for step-down courses within their organizations and partner organizations
- ❑ **Lesson 9a** – Resource mobilization within participating and partner organizations is a time consuming and unpredictable process
- ❑ **Lesson 9b** – In the context of short-term projects (e.g. RAC) & considering the significance of step-down courses – seed money should have been incorporated into the project design



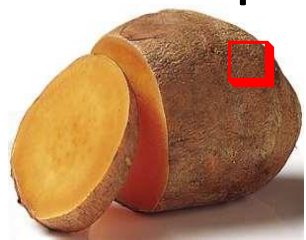
... Project Design: **Observations and Lessons**

- **Observations 10** – The design assumes active involvement of partner organizations to deliver key objectives – e.g. step-down training; decentralized seed multiplication; high level advocacy
- ❑ **Lesson 10** – Complex partnerships assumed in the design require **time and resources** to organize, develop and maintain



... Host institutions and Implementing Partners: **Observations and Key Lessons**

- **Observation 11** – Advocacy appeared to work better where RAC activities were co-hosted by a legitimate national policy forum. e.g. in Mozambique, OFSP was adopted by SETSAN as an example of how to roll out a food based approach to combat Vitamin A deficiency
- ❑ **Lesson 11** – Need to focus on legitimate policy forums at national level – to facilitate both effective policy advocacy and programming decisions
- ❑ Where they don't exist, need for capacity building



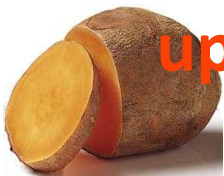
Implementing Partners: **Observations and Key Lessons**

- **Observations 12** – RAC design was based on regional coordination/backstopping and country level implementation structure.
- ❑ **Lesson 12a** – In reality, country management structures tend to be relatively independent
(consider competing bilateral country programs)
- ❑ **Lesson 12b** - Need to involve country level leadership in the design of regionally coordinated programs to ensure buy-in and support



Reflections on the RAC Experience

- As assumed in the design, RAC was a complex innovative initiative – focusing on **policy and institutional innovations** necessary for **widespread adoption** of OFSP technology
- With the increased focus on **up-scaling** of promising innovations, the need for policy and institutional innovations will become increasingly important
- Thus, lessons learned in this pioneering initiative (RAC) could be valuable in **future designs addressing upscaling issues**



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



**Invest in Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato
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