



OFSP : Promoting OFSP Alongside Other Crops

CRS Experience

Everlyn Matiri and Valerie Rhoe Davis

faith. action. results.

Current CRS Projects with OFSP



Country	Project(s)	Donor
Rwanda	Gikuriro/Integrated Nutrition and WASH Activity (INWA)	USAID Mission Rwanda
Zambia	Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience	GIZ
Malawi	UBALE	Food for Peace
Togo	Programme Securite Alimentaire Et Renforcement De La Resilience	GIZ
Kenya	Mwendo Orphan's and Vulnerable Children	USAID Mission/ Kenya
Ethiopia	Livelihoods for Resilience – Oromia (LRO)	Feed the Future
Timor- leste	Community Driven Nutrition Improvement Project	

CRS' integrated programming

- Ag and nutrition benefits to address stunting:
 - Donor requirements for multisectoral programming e.g. USAID FFP projects;
 - objective of dissemination (e.g., commercialization, nutritional improvements, social protection, food security)
 - Demand for OFSP given its high vitamin A content, contributing to children's nutrition – Ag sensitive.
 - Targeting same beneficiaries members of the Village Nutrition Schools and the Farmer Field Schools for other crops

New CRS Products: Spreading the Word

- **Technical Brief 1**
 - Nutrition Attributes
 - Agriculture Attribute (climate change)
 - Value -added products
- **Technical Brief 2**
 - Tools/technologies for conserving planting material
 - Info on country-specific varieties/ breeders
 - State of seed systems
 - Scaling strategies

Orange-fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP)

INTRODUCTION

Orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP), a climate-smart and nutritious crop, has the potential to increase food security, improve nutrition, and increase resilience.

Because OFSP is a versatile crop, several CRS country programs have promoted OFSP to meet project objectives ranging from nutrition and food security to strengthening OFSP value chains. In addition to these individual projects, CRS is a member of the Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative (SPHI) steering committee. SPHI, a 10-year multi-donor, multi-partner effort being led by the International Potato Center (CIP) and the Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA), aims to reach 10 million sub-Saharan (SSA) households by 2020 with widespread uptake of improved varieties of sweet potato and their diversified uses to reduce malnutrition among children under 5 and improve livelihoods, especially of women.

This brief focuses on OFSP nutrition and agricultural attributes as well as value-added products. OFSP Technical Brief #2 will touch upon tools/technologies of tools, varieties and practices



Girls, age 5, beneficiary of OFSP education. Photo by AnneMarie Harty/CRS.

staff who want to learn more about how OFSP can contribute to achieving their sector or cross-cutting goals.

NUTRITION ATTRIBUTES

Distinct from all white and some yellow varieties, orange-fleshed sweet potato varieties are high in beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A. The deeper the orange, the higher the beta-carotene content and therefore vitamin A. OFSP roots are also high in vitamins C, E, K, and several B vitamins.

TECHNICAL BRIEF NO. 2
AUGUST 2018



Orange-fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP)

INTRODUCTION

The first of this series, OFSP Technical Brief #1, reviewed the nutrition attributes and agronomic characteristics of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP), as well as value-added products made from them. This brief, OFSP Technical Brief #2, will focus on tools/technologies for conserving planting material, country-specific varieties, the state of seed systems, and scaling strategies. This brief will support staff in incorporating OFSP into projects and require technical tools and resources on varieties/breeders by country.

TOOLS/TECHNOLOGIES: CONSERVING PLANTING MATERIAL

This section covers different ways to conserve planting material



Harvesting OFSP vines for planting material, Uganda. Photo by Eric Francis/CRS

2014) There are different methods available for addressing this constraint based on agro-ecological context as

CRS Value chain prioritization tools

Impact criteria

- Nutrition
- Profit potential
- Climate Smart / Resilience
- Youth Friendly
- Women Friendly
- Employment
- Influence (industry policy and practice)
- Food Security
- Scalability
- VC activities in line with livelihood condition (All-year, use of family labor, environmental friendly, rapid returns)

Feasibility criteria

- Presence of other Organizations supporting VC activities in target counties
- VC support services in target counties/strong private sector
- Defined/growing market demand
- Extent of Small-holder/vulnerable inclusion
- Upgrading potential/opportunities
- Strong implementing partner
- Existing organized Farmer groups
- CRS staff/local Knowledge of crop
- Enabling environment/align with County Govt policy
- Crop calendar in relation to lean period/does the crop close the gap

Togo Pilot and OFSP (GIZ)

- 4,245 female producers in 23 villages to diversify diets of WRA and CU2
- **Results:**
 - Some producers took own initiative to create community-level nurseries to conserve cuttings
 - After national health fair, increased interest in OFSP production & consumption
 - awareness of the nutritional benefits of OFSP increase likelihood of a farmer deciding to plant OFSP varieties
- **Producer Challenges**
 - Pest: worms attacking tubers
 - Storage: need techniques that are appropriate for wet soils
 - Marketing: difficult beyond project zone where OFSP isn't known
- **Barriers to adoption**
 - Culture: misconception consuming OFSP will make men less fertile
 - Storage: no national level practice on storage/ conservation so many producers do not carry out large-scale production
 - Food preparation: Even white-flesh SP is not heavily consumed –with cooking demonstration beginning to incorporate into local dishes



Other Projects

Mwendo Project –partnership with CIP

- CIP provides explicit support to MoA and MoH with OFSP planting materials, nutrition and production technical support
- Challenges
 - target population is spread across a wide geographical area, posing a challenge in terms of assembling them together for meeting, training or even demonstration.
 - Many varieties of OFSP in the community which could lead to OVC caregivers getting poor quality planting materials. Now relying on the CIP vine multipliers
 - Concerns on crop prioritization – income vs Nutrition

Emergency Response with Nutrition Awareness Creation

Timor-leste – Community Driven Nutrition Improvement Project 2014–2018

- With El Niño, a widespread drought occurred in Timor-Leste, but because OFSP becomes drought resistant shortly after being planted, blanket distribution of OFSP vines helped to provide food security when other traditional crops, such as maize, were failing (CDNIP).
- Mothers were able to harvest and cook young leaves within three weeks of planting, providing both food and nutrients to their children’s diet during the drought.

OFSP distribution – DiNER fairs beneficiaries.



- 6,858 were selected as CRS UBALE DINER Fairs beneficiaries.
- Each beneficiary receive a voucher used to access one bundle of OFSP vines.
- In addition, each DINER fair beneficiary also received vouchers to access 1 PICS Bag for grain storage, 2Kgs of maize seeds, 1 Kg of NUA 45 variety of beans and 10grams of vegetable seed of choice.
- The Diner Fair beneficiaries were selected considering as a mix of factors that include vulnerability, ability to utilize the planting materials and others .



Thoughts: Promoting OFSP Alongside Other Foods

- Under-nutrition/Hidden Hunger Vs Over-Nutrition/Obesity
 - Whole meal Vs Processed
- Dietary Diversity Vs Diet Quality/Variety/Optimal Feeding Practices
- Urban crop Systems Vs Rural Crop Systems



Thank You

