



Reaching Agents of Change to Spread the Benefits of Orange-Fleshed Sweetpotato Across Africa

The orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) is an important source of energy and beta-carotene, which is converted into vitamin A in the body and can prevent childhood blindness and diseases. One medium-size sweetpotato provides enough beta-carotene to meet the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A for children and non-lactating women. Because it matures quickly and can be farmed on marginal lands, OFSP has great potential for reducing hunger and vitamin A deficiency (VAD) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Yet there is inadequate awareness of that potential – or even the extent of the health threat posed by VAD – among government officials in the region.

To raise awareness of OFSP's potential in SSA and generate new investments and policy changes to get OFSP into national, regional and sub-regional agendas, CIP teamed up with Helen Keller International (HKI) to implement the Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) project, in partnership with national research, education, and extension institutions. From 2011 to 2014, RAC advocated for

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increased investment in orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) to combat VAD among young children and women of reproductive age in targeted beneficiary countries. RAC also built institutional capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive projects to ensure wide access to and utilization of OFSP in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Nigeria, and to a lesser extent in Ghana and Burkina Faso. This work was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

RAC built the capacity of national advocates and regional champions to influence key decision makers to invest in promoting OFSP. At the same time, the project trained change agents on technical aspects of OFSP, who in turn conducted step-down courses to reach tertiary trainers and farmers. The following five-minute video highlights the key results achieved under RAC. A second short documentary called 'The Wonder Root' features RAC's impact on the lives of beneficiaries and the extent to which the project achieved its intended outcomes.

Link to video 1 <https://youtu.be/memtliywon8>

Link to video 2 <https://youtu.be/42vZvcae9Eg>

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