

**HarvestPlus Reaching End Users (REU)
Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) Project**
Report of Qualitative Findings from Uganda

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Report Background & Acknowledgements

In June 2010, a large team from the REU OFSP project in both Uganda and Mozambique completed a comprehensive donor report and impact evaluation report on the two year HarvestPlus OFSP project.¹ The report addressed a number of issues concerning the potential role of the gender of decision makers within the household in determining whether the OFSP crop was adopted or was consumed by young children and adult women in the household. Two members of the impact evaluation team, Scott McNiven and Dan Gilligan, received funding to conduct another survey round of households in the project and in diffusion communities in mid-2011 to further explore the role of gender in OFSP adoption and in the positive dietary intake outcomes. Prior to this follow up, a formative qualitative study was conducted in early 2011 to better understand perceptions of local communities regarding the gender dimensions of adoption and diffusion. The findings from this study are presented in this short informal report which was used to inform design of the quantitative follow up survey. Questions regarding this study can be directed to J.Behrman@cgiar.org

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¹ For the Impact Report, see: de Brauw, Alan, Patrick Eozenou, Daniel O. Gilligan, Christine Hotz, Neha Kumar, Cornelia Loechl, Scott McNiven, J.V. Meenakshi, and Mourad Moursi. June 2010. “The Impact of the HarvestPlus Reaching End Users Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato Project in Mozambique and Uganda.” Washington D.C.: The International Food Policy Research Institute. The impact evaluation team included researchers from IFPRI, HarvestPlus and CIP. The project implementation and operations research teams came from HarvestPlus, CIP, the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) at University of Greenwich, World Vision, and Helen Keller International (HKI).

Project Background

The HarvestPlus Reaching End Users (REU) orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) project introduced betacarotene-rich OFSP and related messages concerning agronomy, nutrition and marketing, in order to induce broad OFSP adoption, increase vitamin A intakes and reduce vitamin A deficiency for children and women in Uganda and Mozambique. The intervention worked through local farmers groups to disseminate information about OFSP and improved nutrition and to distribute OFSP vines for planting. In addition to the intervention, the project also included a rigorous evaluation component to test and document the most cost-effective method to disseminate OFSP and encourage its consumption, based on survey data collected in 2007 and 2009. A 2011 follow up study is planned in the Uganda sites.

An important component of the OFSP project is attention to gender dynamics and the different roles women and men play in adoption of crops, preparation of food for home consumption, marketing of crops and information dissemination. Within the farmers groups targeted for OFSP, women were a dominant presence (some farmers groups had all female members, while others had both genders represented. Overall, 60 percent of farmer group members in the sample were women). In addition, women in Uganda typically make decisions regarding the composition and quality of food served to children, so the project was designed to inform women about the nutritional benefits of consuming dietary-rich sources of vitamin A like OFSP. Although women have primary control over food choices, men and women have complex and shifting roles concerning crop choice and on-farm labor supply in smallholder agriculture in Uganda. Women also play a vital role in the diffusion of food-based agricultural technologies. Because the planting material for OFSP consists of propagable OFSP vines and not privately held seed technologies, person-to-person dissemination is essential to assuring that the technology spreads and reaches vulnerable groups.

Qualitative Study Methodology

The objectives of the qualitative study were to capture information on norms regarding gender-based division of labor in agriculture, how crop choice decisions are made, factors affecting female control over crops grown, factors affecting female control over the disposition of these crops for consumption or sale, as well as the role of gender in the decision to share OFSP vines and how social networks play a role in this diffusion. The qualitative study served the dual role of building on the existing quantitative work by providing additional contextual information and informing the next round of quantitative data collection.

Key questions included

- a. What are household dynamics governing control and management of land, a key household asset? What are the different preferences of men and women in the household that go into land management decisions?
- b. What are the different roles that men and women play in feeding of children and child nutrition? Do men and women have differential preferences or opinion about child feeding?
- c. From the perspectives of beneficiaries and others in the community, why might one gender be more likely than the other adopt OFSP in the first place? Why might one gender be more likely than the other to continue planting OFSP? What factors go into men and women's decisions whether or not to grow OFSP?
- d. What is the role of gender in affecting OFSP crop diffusion to other households? Are women more likely to share OFSP with other households than men? How do women and men make use of existing social capital in information diffusion?

Sampling strategy

The sample of the qualitative study was designed to correspond with the quantitative baseline which had been carried out in 1594 households clustered around 84 farmer groups across three districts (Kamuli, Bukedea and Mukono). Due to a number of timing and logistical constraints, only two of the three districts were able to be included in the qualitative study. Kamuli and Bukedea were chosen for inclusion because they were thought to have the most diversity in experiences of adoption and disadoption, and thus would shed light on the diversity of experiences of farmers groups. The field team visited a total four sites (2 in Kamuli and 2 in Bukedea). The four sites were strategically chosen with the assistance of local HarvestPlus extension workers to be roughly representative of the variety of experiences in the district. Thus in each district, fieldwork was conducted in one site where rates of continued adoption of OFSP remained high and one site where rates of disadoption of OFSP were high.

In each site, one semi-structured key informant interview (KII) was carried out in local languages with the leader of a local farmers group targeted for OFSP. Topics covered in the KII included group formation, group dynamics and group adoption of OFSP.

In each site four semi-structured focus group discussions (FGD) were carried out in local languages. Topics covered in the FGDs included household agricultural decision making, feeding and nutrition, adoption of OFSP and diffusion and of OFSP vines and information. In each site, there were four different types of FGDs:

1. One focus group discussion with female members of a farmers group that had been targeted for OFSP
2. One focus group discussion with male members of a farmers group that had been targeted for OFSP
3. One focus group discussion with female community members who were not members of a farmers group targeted for OFSP and who had never attended meetings of such a farmers group or received OFSP vines during the first season in which they were distributed.
4. One focus group discussion with male community members who were not members of a farmers group targeted for OFSP and who had never attended meetings of such a farmers group or received OFSP vines during the first season in which they were distributed.

The following table shows the various sub-counties where fieldwork was conducted.

District	Sub-county	Farmers group name	Adoption trend
Bukedea	Kidongole	Kachul	High continued use/ adoption
Bukedea	Kachumbala	Akunyuko	High disadoption
Kamuli	Bugulumbya	Basooka Kwavula	High continued use/ adoption
Kamuli	Nawanyago	Itukulu Kyebajja Tobonna	High disadoption

A trained field team of six local interviewers led all village level focus group discussions and key informant interviews in local languages. Factors that went into the final selection of the interview team included gender balance, ethno-linguistic background demonstrated skill and past experience with qualitative work.

Profiles of the farmers groups in the qualitative study

Kachul Agricultural Promoters Group (Bukedea)	Group History	Formed in 2004 by local farmers from a number of different enterprises (cotton growers, tomato growers, and groundnut growers) who all wanted to form one group to market their produce as a group and form a savings and credit association.
	Leadership	The chairperson of the group is selected by vote. In addition, the group elects a social accountability committee to oversee accountability of group funds and a disciplinary committee to deal with any disagreements within the group.
	Membership	In 2004 the group started with 20 members. When the OFSP was initiated in 2007, the organization running the trainings required that there be at least 30 members per group thus 10 additional members joined the group. To become a new member one must pay a registration fee (2000 UGS) a membership fee (3000 UGS) and regularly attend group meetings. In recent years about five members have quit the group for a variety of reasons including i) failure to pay membership fees, ii) failure to attend group meetings, iii) disappointment about allocation of OFSP vines, iv) disappointment with OFSP vine sales and perceived corruption.
Akunyuko Farmers Group (Bukedea)	Group History	Formed in 2004 after a group of local farmers learned from the sub-county that organized groups of farmers were receiving agricultural service support from the governmental. To this end, the group registered at the sub-county as a National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS) group.
	Leadership	The chairperson of the group is selected by vote.
	Membership	Since its inception about 10 men have joined the group. They were added because there was a perceived need for male labor to assist with arduous tasks. New members must pay a registration fee to join the group. Thus far no one has quit the group.
Itukulu Kyebajja Tobonna Group (Kamuli)	Group History	Formed in 1993 by five local women all interested in improving the welfare of their households (namely payment of school fees) through formation of a savings and loan group. By 2004, other people became interested and joined the group and the role of the group expanded to include promotion of hygiene in the village largely through digging of pit latrines. The group created a plan to systematically monitor the hygiene conditions of households in the village and reward those who performed well with a small cash prize.

	Leadership	The chairperson of the group is selected by vote on a yearly basis (same group chair re-elected since 2004). A new council is elected on a yearly basis to run the savings and credit group.
	Membership	Very few new members have joined since 2004 due to the strict rules and regulations of the group. New members must pay an entry fee (2000 UGS). The group does not accept unmarried members because one of the aims of the group is to improve relationships between men and women. Five members quit the group last year because they moved to Western Uganda where there is better land access.

Transcription and translation

All interviews and focus group discussions were digitally recorded with the permission of the respondent(s). Following a KII/FGD, the interviewer simultaneously translated from local languages to English and transcribed the KII/FGD into the word processor. Throughout the translation active discussion between the field team took place to ensure that the English translation accurately captured the sentiment expressed in local languages. To ensure accuracy and prevent translation bias, all final transcripts were literal.

Fieldwork difficulties

During the fieldwork interviewers encountered a number of difficulties. For example, in some areas, the popularity of OFSP meant that it was difficult to get non members of farmers groups who had not been to at least a few OFSP trainings. Nonetheless, the interviewers strived to the best of their abilities to insure that those people who attended the non farmers group FGDs had truly not been to OFSP trainings or farmers group meetings before. In addition, due to the fact that many more women than men were members of farmers groups, focus group discussions with men tender to be smaller than those held with women. Another difficulty encountered by the field team was that interviewers sometimes had trouble getting FGD participants to conceptually understand questions that involved ranking of OFSP traits. A final difficulty was the fact that in some cases there did not appear to be major differences in adoption rates between the areas designated as “high adopters” and those designated as “low adopters” by the extension agents who were involved in sample selection.

Analysis

Focus group and interview guides and/or checklists were developed on parallel themes for all informants. All data from transcripts and field notes were coded using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. A hierarchical coding scheme was developed to reflect the key research questions and shaped further by themes that emerged from the data, and used a range of advance coding queries to analyze patterns in the data.

Qualitative findings

I. Agricultural decision making

Household access to land

Households in Bukedea and Kamuli report accessing land in a number of fashions including 1) **inheriting** family land from ancestors; 2) **buying** land from others in the area; 3) **renting** (or “**hiring**”) land in exchange for collateral or payment; 4) **borrowing** land without payment. Although, particularly in Kamuli, the practice of borrowing is said to have “died out.”

In general, the consensus among FGD participants in Kamuli and Bukedea is that in most households in the area men and women jointly use the same plots for agricultural activities. However, respondents in Kamuli and Bukedea also report that it is not uncommon for men and women to use separate plots for agricultural activities in some households in these same areas. Additionally it is reported that in some instances, within the same household, men and women jointly farm some plots and separately farm others. Respondents assert that this is particularly the case for crops perceived to be gender specific; women are reported to “like planting” millet, beans, peas, groundnuts and sweet potatoes while men are reported to “like planting” rice, maize and cash crops. According to participants, the prime determinant of whether a couple farms jointly or separately is availability of land. Land shortages are a serious concern among FGD participants and it is reported that there is often not adequate space for separate plots. In addition to land shortages there may be other social reasons men and women farm jointly rather than separately. In the words of one male FGD participant in Kamuli separate plots “are not always good for the well being and unity of the family. A family can only progress if there’s cooperation between husband and wife.”

Agricultural decision making

In discussions on who makes decisions regarding what to grow on a given plot there is a dominant perception among both men and women that men, in their capacity as household heads, have the final say on crop type and crop quantity for a given plot. However participants emphasize that in most cases men make this decision in discussion and consultation with their wives. The noted exception to this trend is on plots controlled and managed by women, where—according to female respondents—women make decisions about what type and quantity of crops to grow. To the contrary, many male respondents report that even in female managed plots, it is the man who makes final decisions regarding type and quantity of crops to grow.

Among focus group participants there is a perception that men and women take different factors into consideration when deciding on what to grow. The following is a list of **factors men are reported to take into consideration** when deciding what type and quantity of crop to grow on a plot (the list is presented roughly in order of the frequency each factor was mentioned):

1. Characteristics of the land, including soil type, soil fertility and size of plot
2. Profitability and marketability of crops
3. Household food security needs--particularly yield and crop maturity
4. Appropriate season for planting
5. Security of crops/land from animals and thieves
6. Labor needs of crops given labor availability
7. Prestige of crop

The following is a list of **factors women are reported to take into consideration** when deciding what type and quantity of crop to grow on a plot (the list is presented roughly in order of the frequency each factor was mentioned):

1. Household food security needs, in particular short crop maturity, durability of crop for storage, consumption preferences of household members (particularly children)
2. Ease of accessibility of the plot and crop for both food preparation and personal security reasons
3. Marketability of a crop
4. Soil fertility and other land characteristics
5. Information received in trainings

When probed on why men and women have different preferences when it comes to planting crops, both male and female participants consistently opine that men consider monetary factors when making these decisions and women consider family food security needs.

“The men consider the monetary while women the food consumption value. The men consider the crops that fetch more money because woman may only think about food for home consumption.” --Male FGD participant in Kamuli

However, contrary to this straightforward dichotomy about male and female preferences, men did mention household food security as a key factor they consider and women commonly mention marketability as a key factor they consider. Both men and women point out that profitability of crops is very important for overall household well being because cash income is important for payment of school fees, medical treatments, clothing and other important material goods. Thus interest in crop marketability does not necessarily mean men (or women) are not concerned with the household wellbeing. However, women focus group participants do express concern about how their husbands spend money used from sale of crops and whether that money will actually benefit the family or be used on frivolous personal expenses.

“When we grow crops which are majorly for cash, we won’t know where the proceeds

from there sale will go. That is why we decide to grow food crops on most of our plots, with those, I will go get it from the garden, prepare it, and at least be sure that it has been consumed by my children and the household at large.”—Female FGD participant in Kamuli

With respect to decision making regarding use of produce, —i.e. whether crops will be sold, consumed, given away and so on—respondents report that this is typically a decision that is discussed among family members, although the male household head will typically have the final say on what happens. However, there is a caveat that there are certain crops (such as rice, maize, coffee, sugar cane) that are “owned” by men and other crops (such as peas, millet, groundnuts, sweet potatoes) that are “owned” by women and in these cases the “owner” has ultimate control over how the crop will be used. In addition, there is a perception that decisions pertaining directly to consumption of food crops (i.e. how much will be consumed immediately, stored, or given away) are the “business” of women.

II. Feeding and nutrition

Knowledge about child nutrition

When asked about what types of food are good for children male and female respondents from both farm groups and non-farm groups came up with fairly similar lists of “good foods.” The following is a list of foods that are perceived to be good for children accompanied by respondent’s explanations for why these foods are good:

Food	Benefit
Millet:	Provides energy
Orange Flesh Sweet Potato	Improves vision; children enjoy them
Eggs	Has protein
Milk (cow or breast)	Builds the body
Greens	Food for blood; good for vitamin A
Groundnuts:	Food source of natural fats; good for the skin
Soya	Builds the bodies
Beans	Enriches the quantity of blood; improves vision
Papayas:	Helps avoid constipation
Assorted fruits (jackfruit, mangos, avocado):	Fights diseases

Both male and female respondents maintain that they strive to feed their children these “good foods” when possible, although some participants note that during the dry season it is considerably harder to do so. They report that when children consume these foods they become, “happier,” “healthier,” “more intelligent” and “more alert” when studying. The boost to intelligence of good foods was commonly mentioned and some respondents

discussed the fact that feeding children good foods was akin to a kind of “prestige” for parents.

The general consensus among men and women is that women are more knowledgeable and child nutrition. There are two main reasons given for this. The first is a perception that women spend more time with their children, are actively involved in preparation of children’s food and—as a result—are more attuned to children’s needs. Some respondents went as far to say that women care more about their children. In the words of a FGD participant from Kamuli “women have greater love towards their children than the men.” Many of the men also agreed with this assessment about the different roles and priorities of men and women when it comes to childcare. The second reason given by respondents for why women are more knowledge about nutrition issues is that women—in both farm groups and non farm groups—regularly attend more trainings on related topics. These trainings are reported to take place at a variety of sources including local health centers, antenatal clinics (during pregnancies), pre-maternal house visits, vaccination visits or with community groups, farmers groups, or government extension agents.

“[Feeding children] is our responsibility as women. We spend the most time with our children while the men are away; they therefore cannot even know what the children enjoy eating, or even what they have eaten for the day. They do not care to get involved with these issues.”—Female FGD participant in Kamuli

“Men have too much greed for money. You find that men in most cases sell all the produce from their plots without caring about what children will eat. But women have very caring hearts in that whenever they harvest their crops they first consider what their children will eat.”—Male FGD participant in Kamuli

Women’s and men’s roles in child feeding and nutrition

From the point of view of male and female FGD participants, **the role women play in child feeding and nutrition** involves cooking food, serving food and making sure that children eat appropriately. Women in particular are keen to point out the many nuanced dimensions of these tasks including having a specialized knowledge of the taste preferences of their children, making food appropriately appetizing, edible, balanced and nutritious, practicing breast feeding with infants, ensuring that children follow hygiene practices before eating and ensuring children eat an adequate quantity of food. Both men and women report that the woman must be “innovative” particularly in instances when husbands “fail to provide.” Additionally, women are said to play an important role ensuring that their children have a balanced diet by planting vegetables for sauces and reminding men what to buy.

Respondents concur **men’s primary role in child feeding and nutrition** is buying foods that are necessary for a balanced diet and cannot be produced at home. This task is usually performed in consultation with the mother or children. Additional roles for men include growing an appropriate variety of plants, processing foodstuff and confirming that the children have eaten.

There was some debate within FGDs over who it is in the household that determines the variety of foods children eat. On one hand, women are said to know and care more about ensuring the children get a balanced diet. However, it is men who are ultimately the ones to purchase important “good” ingredients that enhance the variety of the diet and provide balance. In addition, both men and women are said to make important decisions about planting in the garden (see section I).

III. OFSP adoption

Knowledge of OFSP

In the focus groups conducted in Kamuli and Bukedea there was an overall good knowledge about OFSP among male and female FGD participants from farmers groups and non-farmers groups. When asked a general question about what people know about OFSP, participants from farmers groups and non farmers groups highlighted many of the same traits and benefits of OFSP, including:

Cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSP is tasty, very sweet flavor, particularly amenable to children • OFSP can be used to make a variety of other products (chapatti, doughnuts, cake, bread, sauce juice, flour)
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSP is very good for children, has important nutrients that fight diseases in children. Many respondents describe OFSP as “medicine” for children. • OFSP leads to improvements in vision
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSP has a short maturity and high yield
Marketability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSP is profitable

In general, those FGD members who are part of a farmers group were more knowledgeable about OFSP and provided additional or more detailed answers regarding their knowledge of OFSP. Additional information discussed by in these conversations including:

Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSP leads to good skin • OFSP contains Vitamin A • OFSP enhances white blood cells • OFSP provides strength and energy
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSP improves the “confidence” of those who grow it
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three varieties of OFSP

Initial adoption of OFSP

When asked about why people decided to adopt OFSP in the first place, members of farmers groups emphasize the importance of **trainings** in shaping their initial decision to adopt OFSP. In many cases, they emphasize that the information shared in trainings about the health/nutrition benefits and high yields of OFSP was one of the prime reason they adopted in the first place. In particular respondents report that they liked the hands on nature of trainings, for example OFSP cooking demonstrations.

“Initial adoption was mainly due to the training that the farmers received in the farmer group where we learnt that OFSP had health benefits like having vitamin A and acting as immunization for children” Male farmers group member in Bukedea

In focus group discussions, participants were asked to **rank** a number of factors in order of importance with respect to their decision to adopt OFSP. These factors included, i) health nutrition benefits; ii) yield; iii) short maturity; iv) access to vines. From the perspectives of those in farmers groups, the health and nutrition benefits were on the whole ranked as the most important factor in initial adoption of OFSP. Respondents referred to OFSP as a “medicine” that assisted in “fighting illness and poverty.” In addition to health and nutrition benefits, yield was also ranked as a very important factor in people’s decision to adopt particularly because yield is directly associated with food security. An additional factor that was frequently mentioned as a key factor in adoption was the fact that farmers group members report being told in trainings that there would be a good market both for OFSP vines and potatoes.

Members of farmers groups emphasize that the main reason why farmers group members did not adopt OFSP in the first place was access to vines. Several farmers group members describe problems with the initial distribution of vines. These included that there were not enough vines brought to the group in the first place, that the vines were “not in good condition” and they were distributed at a time of the year where the sun was at its climax and many of the vines easily dried out. Additional reasons given for those who did not adopt was generally “laziness” or lack of openness to “experimental and new things.”

Among non-members of farmers groups access to vines emerged as the prime factor in whether or not people were able to adopt OFSP in the first place. From the perspective of non members, those who have access to vines are often “selfish” and do not share the vines or sell them at exorbitantly high rates. Additional reasons for not adopting OFSP included land limitations, poor quality of vines introduced, dislike of the taste, lack of information about OFSP and the fact that OFSP were introduced in the dry season. All of this being said, members of non-farmers group focus groups who had not adopted expressed a strong interest in adopting in the future if they were to be given access to vines and appropriate information.

When asked **whether men or women were more likely to initially** adopt, there was a clear consensus among the female FGDs in Kamuli and Bukedea and male FGDs in Kamuli that women were more likely to adopt. Reasons given included:

- Women are responsible for ensuring that there is food security at the household level and thus are more amenable to adopting a staple crop.
- Women are particularly charged with taking care of children and infants and more readily see the benefits of the improved nutritional content of OFSP.
- Women attend more trainings and meetings on OFSP and other issues related to child health and well-being and thus are more knowledgeable about OFSP and its benefits.
- Women are very “swift” when it comes to adopting new things and are more willing to experiment; men are more interested in adopting only when a product has already proved that it can show a profit.
- Men are lazy and often drunk and are less concerned the family food security.
- Women are often at home, whereas men are less frequently at home and thus miss out on information dissemination that occurs at the household level.
- Sweet potatoes are a “woman’s crop” and perceived to be largely for home consumption thus the crop falls under the domain and management of women.

“Sweet potato is mainly a women’s crop and a woman is sure that when she plants OFSP she has full authority about how to use the produce i.e. whether to sell all the vines or not. Hence this becomes an incentive because she would be sure that she can sell OFSP to get some money to solve her problems.” Female farmers group member in Kamuli

“Naturally women easily jump on to new things very fast whether it is anew fashion of clothes or anything. For instance there are even other sweet potato varieties rather than OFSP that women are aware of when men do even have an idea about them.” Male non farmers group member in Kamuli

On the other hand, male FGD participants in Bukedea stated that men were more likely to adopt in the first place for the following reasons:

- Women are already overcommitted with household chores and thus are not able to “concentrate” on a new crop, whereas men are better able to “concentrate.”
- Men are the planners in the household and more readily see benefits associated with marketability and profitability of new crops.

Continued growing of OFSP

When asked to rank factors that influenced people’s decision to continue growing OFSP many men and women in both farmers groups and non farmers groups ranked the health and nutrition benefits of OFSP as a very important factor in their decision making. In discussions, people emphasize that they have seen tangible improvements in the health of family members, particularly children, which they attribute to OFSP. Also of great importance to people’s decision to continue growing OFSP is the reported profitability and marketability of OFSP vines and potatoes. Though the market may vary from location to location, respondents in Kamuli report that potatoes fetch a higher price than vines, but vines have more of a market than the potatoes themselves. Among participants, high yields are also ranked quite highly and are typically associated with food security.

“OFSP acted like medicine... people including children who fed on OFSP were looking good health wise”—Female farmers group member in Bukedea

Additional reasons given why people continued to grow OFSP included:

- Prestige associated with growing it. In the words of one farmer group leader from Bukedea: “people just loved to associate with it because it was something new in the area and was prestigious to grow.”
- OFSP is reported to be “easy” to grow because it is not very labor intensive
- Ability to make other products out of OFSP, such as Mandanzi, breads, juices and so on. This trait is frequently mentioned as an important and exciting factor of OFSP, particularly for women who are cooks in the household.

Among members of farmers groups there is a very strong perception that people make their decision to continue adopting or to stop adopting independently of other members of the farmers group. When probed on why this is the case, in the words of a female respondent in a focus group in Kamuli “everybody has their own responsibility and pressing needs. Be it money, or feeding, or sickness. When one’s family gets a problem, they have to solve it alone as a family.”

Among those initially adopted OFSP and later stopped planting, the main reasons for this included

Profitability concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or lack of market for OFSP vines or for sweet potatoes is a prime reason given for why people became negligent with their vines. • Land shortages mean people want to focus on growing crops that they are sure will be profitable, i.e. sugar cane, whereas OFSP cannot be readily counted on to be profitable.
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Adequate or poor quality vines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough vines were initially delivered • Vines delivered were of “poor quality” • Vines came at the wrong time of year during the dry season
Weather related problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor weather made planting • OFSP fails badly in diverse weather conditions. OFSP are “not tolerant to drought,” “fear” a lot of sunshine, yet “rot easily” when it rains.
Dissatisfaction with yield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor yield in the first growing season caused people to easily give up and not bother to plant again to see if the situation would improve.

When asked **whether men or women are more likely to continue to plant OFSP**, women and men agreed that in general women are more likely to continue planting because sweet potato is considered a “women’s crop” and because women are pre-occupied with household food security. However, men and women also concur that in instances where there is a strong market for OFSP vines or potatoes, men may be more likely to continue planting and may in fact become the primary planter in the household.

When asked about **benefits** to the community from growing OFSP, respondents report OFSP has brought the following general improvements

Improvements in human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides families with necessary income to pay school fees • Improves children’s alertness and ability to concentrate and excel in school • Improved hygiene and cooking knowledge from trainings
Improvements in health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves health of children and adults by providing important nutrients • Improves hygiene practices of families through trainings • Reducing hunger by improving food security and disposable income to buy supplemental food products
Improvements in social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving relationships and friendships between members of the farmer’s group

When asked about **challenges** to the community from growing OFSP, respondents report the following

Increases in community level tensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding as selection of groups to participate in the OFSP project. • Disagreement over access to OFSP vines, particularly between those in farmers groups and those not in farmers groups.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of increases in theft of vines, particularly from farmers group members. • Reports that it is increasingly difficult to “protect” OFSP under cultivation due to external threats such as theft or grazing animals.
Market difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some instances, there is reported to be a lack of market for OFSP potatoes due to surplus production • In some instances there is reported to be a lack of market for OFSP vines/potatoes due to lack of demand • In some instances, there is reported to be a lack of market for OFSP vines/potatoes due to difficulties with transport • In some instances, people had difficulty coming up with prices for OFSP potatoes because they are larger than regular potatoes
Over dependence on OFSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are reported to have placed too many expectations—and correspondingly time and capital—into OFSP production with problematic results for household income and food security. In the words of one farmers group leader in Bukedea “this sweet potato diverted people’s minds from other crops to the extent that at some point we had a short term scarcity of cassava which was and is still a strong food security crop in most households.” • Land constraints meant there was constant competition on limited land between growing OFSP and other food/cash crops

“The people who never received vines started hating those who got thinking that they deliberately blocked them from getting vines and they reached an extent of pulling vine from the gardens of the members.” –Male non-farmers group FGD participant in Bukedea

IV. Diffusion of vines and information

Access to information about OFPS

Members of farmers groups who want additional information on OFSP report that they can go to project extension agents, group leaders or other group members in order to access information. On the other hand, non-members report considerably less sources of information. Non-members of farmers groups report that if they want information on OFSP they would go to farmers group members who grow OFSP. Some non group members also report getting information or hearing advice from the radio.

Access to vines

Members of farmers groups report that if they require access to new vines they will go to other members of the farmers group. From their perspective, non members can come to them to arrange to barter/purchase OFSP. Non members also report that if they want access to OFSP they can go to farmers group members who are currently growing. However they express consistent frustration with farmers group members who are reported to be “selfish” and unwilling to give, sell or trade OFSP vines. There is also a pervasive frustration with the fact that they do not know any other ways to access vines and are thus dependant on farmers group members.

Sharing vines for free

The issue of whether it is common for vines to be shared for free was contentious among FGD participants. In general, members of farmers groups maintain that they do share vines for free, particularly with relatives and close friends. However, there is often a caveat that they will only share a few vines for free and the other party wishes to gain access to more vines they will have to purchase the rest. From the perspective of non farmers group members, it is much less common for vines to be shared for free, particularly in contexts where there is a viable market for OFSP. There is reported resentment on the part of both non members—who maintain that group members are “selfish” for keeping the vines or selling them at expensive rates—and members—who report that non members “mocked” them for “wasting time” on OFSP trainings at the onset and have only recently come to realize the benefits of OFSP.

Selling vines for profit

According to many respondents, vines are commonly sold for profit by farmers group members to a variety of sources including neighbors, NGOs or strangers. There is consensus that vines are not taken to the market (although potatoes are taken to the market). Respondents report that in most instances vines are sold directly from the garden because the interested party will come to the homestead and the owner will cut the vines fresh from the garden. Alternatively in cases of group sales the owner of the vines will cut the vines and bring them to a designated spot (such as the group leader’s home) for group pick up. Often, sales are reported to be organized by the OFSP group leader or the OFSP extension agent. Some participants—particularly in Bukedea—report that sales of OFSP vines are not common because the vines are few and in high demand.

Potato consumption and sale

Most men and women who report growing OFSP maintain that most of the OFSP they grow is kept for home consumption rather than sold at the market. One reason given for this is that OFSP’s widely recognized health and nutrition benefits mean it is ideal for consumption. In addition, people report that the culinary qualities of OFSP—namely that is very tasty, can be consumed without sauce when food is scarce and can be used to make a variety of other food products such as breads and juices—make it an ideal product for the household to eat. Another reason why home consumption is reported is

the lack of adequate land to grow enough OFSP for both home consumption and sale. Finally, lack of a viable market for OFSP potatoes is another reason given for the dominance of home consumption.

In cases where OFSP is taken to the market to be sold there appears to be some variation on who it is that brings it. In male and female FGDs in Kamuli, it was reported that men take it to be sold because they are the household head and are responsible for finances. On the other hand, in Bukedea men and women concur that it is the women who bring OFSP to the market because sweet potato is a “women’s crop.”

Conclusions

Throughout focus group discussion and key informant interviews in Kamuli and Bukedea, participants emphasize the complex and varied roles that men's and women's access to a number of key assets—including physical assets, human capital and social capital—play in influencing men's and women's likelihoods to adopt OFSP and to continue growing OFSP once adopted. The following is a brief recap of the main themes that arose throughout the various discussions with respect to each of the three types of assets.

Physical assets: Secure access to key physical assets—namely OFSP vines and adequate land—emerge as a key factor in both men and women's decisions to adopt OFSP in the first place. Pervasive land shortages are a real concern for both men and women who often have to make difficult growing choices given land constraints whether they are planting on jointly managed or individually managed plots. In many respects, the picture of growing preferences that emerges from the qualitative study is in line with the existing literature on men's and women's different priorities and preferences in agriculture, with women having greater responsibility for family food production and processing and men having greater involvement in market-oriented production. However, these boundaries are not rigid and there are some overlaps between domains that are perceived to be male or female, with men expressing interest in food crops and women expressing interest in cash crops. Interestingly, in the focus group discussions sweet potatoes were reported to be a “women's crop” (and therefore under the control of women) in Bukedea, but not in Kamuli, thus there may be regional variations on crop preferences shaped by market conditions or a variety of other factors.

Human capital: One theme that emerges from the qualitative study is that trainings are perceived to be enormously important mechanisms for conveying information about nutrition, planting techniques, hygiene and other topics of relevance for adopting and growing OFSP. Respondents report that many trainings have been conducted in the area by the OFSP team as well as by a variety of other sources, including government agencies or local NGOs. The perception is that these trainings have been targeted predominantly at women. On one hand, this targeting may be effective given that both women and men identify women as the prime caregivers of children particularly with respect to child feeding and nutrition. However, exclusive targeting of women may be problematic given the important roles men are said to play in determining which crops to plant, which crops to sell and which crops or foods to purchase.

Social capital: Members of farmers groups report that the fact that OFSP was disseminated through farmers groups was quite important to promoting a group sense of camaraderie and creating a community where members could share knowledge, assist each other and sell vines as a group in some cases. While the project may have improved social capital of group members, there is a clear tension between group members and non-group members that is reported to have arisen as a byproduct of the project. On one hand, OFSP appears to have been successfully branded as a “prestige” crop in the fieldwork communities and members of farmers groups and non-farmers groups alike

report that it is associated with healthiness, profitability in some cases, intelligence and improved academic performance of children. However, members of non-farmers groups report continued difficulty in accessing vines, potatoes and access to information about how to grow OFSP. Farmers group members are reported by non-members to be “selfish” and unwilling to share their knowledge or vines beyond the confines of their groups. Further investigation is necessary to better understand the extent to which OFSP has truly extended beyond the original farmers groups.

Appendix 1: Qualitative Instruments

Focus Group Discussion Guide—Farmers groups group members

Instructions: This FGD will be conducted with 6 to 12 participants who are members of a farmers group targeted for OFSP.

Introduction: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. We are a research team interested in learning more about agriculture in this area. We assure you that all the information that you provide to us will be used exclusively for our research and analysis. We will record the session but all responses will appear anonymously. This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. The most important thing is that you should feel comfortable and contribute as much as you can. You can express opinions and discuss issues freely.

Background information on participants

For each participant of the FGD, please take down the following information in your notebook

1. Name
2. Age
3. How long member of farmers group
4. Ever grown OFSP [Y or N]
5. Grew OFSP in the last cropping season OR currently preparing OFSP [Y or N]
6. If growing OFSP, for how long?
7. Household head [Y or N]

Module 1: Agricultural decision making

1. Generally speaking, how do households in this community access land for agricultural purposes?
2. For most of the households in this community, is it common for men and women to use the same plots for agricultural activities or separate plots?
3. For a given plot used by a household for agricultural activities, who makes decisions regarding what type of crop to grow on a plot?
4. Generally speaking, what factors do men take into consideration when deciding what type of crop to grow on a plot? [*for example, marketability of crop, soil type, yield, maturity, security, taste preference, size of plot in relation to quantity and so on*]
5. Generally speaking, what factors do women take into consideration when deciding what type of crop to grow on a plot? [*for example, marketability of crop, soil type, maturity, security, taste preference, size of plot in relation to quantity and so on*]
6. In a household, for crops mainly operated by men who makes the decision regarding what quantity of crops to grow on a household plot.
7. In a household, for crops mainly operated by women who makes the decision regarding what quantity of crops to grow on a household plot.
8. In a household, for crops jointly operated by men and women who makes the decision regarding what quantity of crops to grow on a household plot.
9. What factors do men take into consideration when deciding what quantity of a crop to grow on a plot?
10. What factors do women take into consideration when deciding what quantity of a crop to grow on a plot?
11. For a given crop, who in the household makes the decision regarding how the produce will be used? [*For example, will the crop be sold for profit, consumed, stored, given away and so on.*]
12. For a given crop, what factors do men consider when deciding how produce will be used?
13. For a given crop, what factors do women consider when deciding how produce will be used?

Module 2: Feeding and nutrition

1. In your opinion, what types of food are good for children to eat?

2. For each type of food mentioned, why is this type of food good for children?
3. Do you make any special efforts to feed your children any of the good foods you just mentioned? *[Probe to find out why or why not].*
4. In your opinion, who in the household is most knowledgeable about what foods are good for children? *[Probe to find out why]*
5. What role do women play in determining what children eat?
6. What role do men play in determining what children eat?
7. Who in a household makes decisions about what quantity of food children eat? *[Probe to find out why people mentioned make these decisions]*
8. Who in a household makes decisions about the variety of food children eat? *[Probe to find out why people mentioned make these decisions]*
9. In your opinion, do men and women have different opinions about what type of food children should eat? *[probe to find out why or why not]*

Module 3: Adoption of OFSP

1. What do you know about OFSP?
2. In this farmers group, why did people initially decide to adopt OFSP?
3. Are there people in your farmers group who did not initially adopt OFSP? If yes, why did people decide NOT to adopt OFSP?
4. In your experience, generally speaking are men or women more likely to adopt OFSP if it is introduced to their community? *[Probe to find out why]*
5. Please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to members of the farmer's group's decision to adopt OFSP in the first place. *[Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others].*
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
6. For those members of your farmers group who continue to plant OFSP, please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to people's decision to continue planting OFSP. *[Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others].*
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
 - Profitability
 - Weather
 - Pests and diseases
7. Are there any additional traits of OFSP that influenced people to continue planting OFSP?
8. For those members of your farmer's groups who stopped planting OFSP, please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to people's decision to stop planting OFSP. *[Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others].*
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
 - Profitability
 - Weather
 - Pests and diseases
9. Are there any additional traits of OFSP that influenced people to stop planting OFSP?
10. In your opinion, generally speaking are men or women more likely to continue to plant OFSP? *[Probe to find out why].*

11. From your experience, do members of this farmer's group make their decision about continuing to grow OFSP based on what other members of the farmers group do or do they make their decision independent of others? [*Probe to find out why*].
12. In your opinion, what benefits has OFSP brought to this community?
13. In your opinion, what challenges has OFSP brought to this community?

Module 4: Diffusion of vines and information

1. What information is available about planting OFSP?
2. To whom in this community can farmers go to for information on OFSP? [*For example, an extension agent, community leader, NGO, friend, family member and so on*]
3. If someone from this farmers group loses OFSP vines, who can they go to in order to gain access to new vines? [*For example, an extension agent, community leader, NGO, friend, family member and so on*]
4. If someone outside of this farmer's group wants access to OFSP vines, who can they go to in order to gain access to vines? [*For example, an extension agent, community leader, NGO, friend, family member and so on*]
5. Is it common for members from this farmer's group to share OFSP vines with other members of the community **for free**? [*Probe to find out why or why not*].
6. When members from this farmer's group share OFSP vines, what types of people do they distribute vines to for **free**? [*for example friends, neighbors, relatives, strangers, men, women and so on*]
7. Is it common for members from this farmer's group to sell OFSP vines to other members of the community **for profit**? [*Probe to find out why or why not*].
8. When members from this farmer's group sell OFSP vines **for profit**, who do they sell to? [*for example, to NGOs, organizations, individuals, strangers, friends or so on*]
9. If they sell OFSP vines **for profit**, do they do so in the market or elsewhere? [*Probe to find out where*].
10. In general, do people in this farmer's group keep OFSP for home consumption or do they bring it to market for sale? [*Probe to find out why*]
11. In those households where OFSP is sold for profit, who in the household takes the initiative to sell OFSP? [*Probe to find out why it's that person*]

Focus Group Discussion [FGD] Guide—Non members of farmers groups

Instructions: This FGD will be conducted with 6 to 12 participants who are NOT members of a farmers group targeted for OFSP. We want to exclude people who have *ever* attended a meeting of a farmers group targeted for OFSP or who were not part of a farmers group targeted for OFSP but who received vines in the season in which they were first distributed (second season 2007).

Introduction: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. We are a research team interested in learning more about agriculture in this area. We assure you that all the information that you provide to us will be use exclusively for our research and analysis. We will record the session but all responses will appear anonymously. This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. The most important thing is that you should feel comfortable and contribute as much as you can. You can express opinions and discuss issues freely.

Background information on FGD participants

For each participant of the FGD, please take down the following information in your notebook

1. Name
2. Age
3. Ever grown OFSP [Y or N]
4. Grew OFSP in the last cropping season OR currently preparing OFSP [Y or N]
5. If growing OFSP, for how long?
6. Household head [Y or N]

Module 1: Agricultural decision making

1. Generally speaking, how do households in this community access land for agricultural purposes?
2. For most of the households in this community, is it common for men and women to use the same plots for agricultural activities or separate plots?
3. For a given plot used by a household for agricultural activities, who makes decisions regarding what type of crop to grow on a plot?
4. Generally speaking, what factors do men take into consideration when deciding what type of crop to grow on a plot?
5. Generally speaking, what factors do women take into consideration when deciding what type of crop to grow on a plot?
6. In a household, for crops mainly operated by men who makes the decision regarding what quantity of crops to grow on a household plot.
7. In a household, for crops mainly operated by women who makes the decision regarding what quantity of crops to grow on a household plot.
8. In a household, for crops jointly operated by men and women who makes the decision regarding what quantity of crops to grow on a household plot.
9. What factors do men take into consideration when deciding what quantity of a crop to grow on a plot?
10. What factors do women take into consideration when deciding what quantity of a crop to grow on a plot?
11. For a given crop, who in the household makes the decision regarding how the produce will be used? *[For example, will the crop be sold for profit, consumed, given away and so on.]*
12. For a given crop, what factors do men consider when deciding how produce will be used?
13. For a given crop, what factors do women consider when deciding how produce will be used?

Module 2: Feeding and nutrition

1. In your opinion, what types of food are good for children to eat?
2. For each type of food mentioned, why is this type of food good for children?
3. Do you make any special efforts to feed your children any of the good foods you just mentioned? *[Probe to find out why or why not].*

4. In your opinion, who in the household is most knowledgeable about what foods are good for children? *[Probe to find out why]*
5. What role do women play in determining what children eat?
6. What role do men play in determining what children eat?
7. Who in a household makes decisions about what quantity of food children eat? *[Probe to find out why people mentioned make these decisions]*
8. Who in a household makes decisions about the variety of food children eat? *[Probe to find out why people mentioned make these decisions]*
In your opinion, do men and women have different opinions about what type of food children should eat? *[probe to find out why or why not]*

Module 3: Adoption of OFSP

1. What do you know about OFSP?
2. How did you first hear about OFSP?
3. When did you first hear about OFSP?
4. In general, why do some people in this area decide to adopt OFSP?
5. In general, why do some people in this area decide NOT to adopt OFSP?
6. In your experience, generally speaking are men or women more likely to adopt OFSP if it is introduced to their community? *[Probe to find out why]*
7. Have any of you adopted OFSP? *[Probe to find out why or why not].*
8. For those of you who have not adopted, would you like to adopt? *[Probe to find out why or why not].*
9. Please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to people's decision to adopt OFSP in the first place. *[Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others].*
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
10. From your experience, once people start planting OFSP do they continue to plant it or not? *[Probe to find out why].*
11. In your opinion, are men or women more likely to continue to planting OFSP? *[Probe to find out why].*
12. In your opinion, what benefits has OFSP brought to this community?
13. In your opinion, what challenges has OFSP brought to this community?

Module 4: Diffusion of vines and information

1. What information is available about planting OFSP?
2. Who in the community can farmers go to for information on OFSP?
3. If a farmer wants access to OFPS vines for the first time, who can he/she go to in order to gain access to vines?
4. If someone who has grown OFSP in the past loses OFSP vines, who can he/she go to in order to gain access to new vines?
5. Is it common for people within your community to share OFSP vines with other members of the community **for free**? *[Probe to find out why or why not].*
6. When people within your community share OFPS vines, what types of people do they distribute vines to for **free**? *[for example friends, neighbors, relatives, strangers, men, women and so on]*
7. Is it common for people within your community to sell OFSP vines **for profit**? *[Probe to find out why or why not].*
8. When people within your community sell OFPS vines **for profit**, what types of people do they sell to? *[for example friends, neighbors, relatives, strangers, men, women and so on]*
9. If they sell OFSP vines **for profit**, do they do so in the market or elsewhere? *[Probe to find out where].*

10. In general, do people in this farmer's group keep OFSP for home consumption or do they bring it to market for sale? *[Probe to find out why]*
11. In those households where OFSP is sold for profit, who in the household takes the initiative to sell OFSP? *[Probe to find out why it's that person]*

Key Information Interview (KII) Guide

Instructions: This KII will be conducted with a chairperson of a farmer's group.

Introduction: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. We are a research team interested in learning more about agriculture in this area. We assure you that all the information that you provide to us will be use exclusively for our research and analysis. We will record the session but all responses will appear anonymously. This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. The most important thing is that you should feel comfortable and contribute as much as you can. You can express opinions and discuss issues freely.

Background Information

Please take down the following information about the KII in your notebook

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Name of group
4. How long have you been chairperson?
5. How many female members are in the group at present?
6. How many male members are in the group at present?
7. When was the group first introduced to OFSP?
8. Have you personally ever grown OFSP?
9. Did you grow OFSP in last cropping season OR are you currently preparing OFSP? [Y N]

Module 1: Group background and dynamics

1. When was your group formed?
2. How was your group formed? [*for example, how did groups members initially mobilize or organize themselves?*]
3. Why was your group formed?*[for example, was there a particular problem or issue group members wanted to address].*
4. When first formed, what was the primary function(s) of the group?
5. Has the primary function(s) of the group changed since its formation?
6. How was the chairperson of the group selected?
7. Roughly how many new members have joined your group in the last two years? [*Probe to find out why new members want to join*].
8. What is the procedure for letting new members join the group?
9. Roughly how many existing members quit the group in the last two years? [*Probe to find out why people quit*].
10. How does decision making within the group work?
11. What are common types of disagreements within the group?
12. If there is a disagreement within the group how is it resolved?
13. What are the benefits of being in a farmers group?
14. Are there any negative aspects of being in a farmers group?

Module 2: Adoption of OFSP

14. How did you first hear about OFSP?
15. When did you first hear about OFSP?
16. When did the farmers group first adopt OFSP?
17. Was adoption of OFSP among group members uniform? [*for example, did all members adopt or only some? Probe to find out why*]
18. In general, why did members of this farmers group decide to adopt OFSP?
19. In general, why did members of this farmers group decide NOT to adopt OFSP?
20. In your experience, generally speaking are men or women more likely to adopt OFSP if it is introduced to their community? [*Probe to find out why*]

21. Please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to members of the farmer's group's decision to adopt OFSP in the first place. *Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others*.
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
22. For those members of your farmers group who continue to plant OFSP, please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to people's decision to continue planting OFSP. *[Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others]*.
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
 - Profitability
 - Weather
 - Pests and diseases
23. Are there any additional traits of OFSP that influenced people to continue planting OFSP?
24. For those members of your farmer's groups who stopped planting OFSP, please rank the following traits in order of importance with respect to people's decision to stop planting OFSP. *[Probe to find out why certain traits are ranked as more important than others]*.
 - Yield
 - Shorter maturity
 - Health/nutrition benefits
 - Access to vines (planting materials)
 - Profitability
 - Weather
 - Pests and diseases
25. Are there any additional traits of OFSP that influenced people to stop planting OFSP?
26. In your opinion, generally speaking are men or women more likely to continue to plant OFSP? *[Probe to find out why]*.
27. From your experience, do members of this farmer's group make their decision about continuing to grow OFSP based on what other members of the farmers group do or do they make their decision independent of others? *[Probe to find out why]*.
28. In your opinion, what benefits has OFSP brought to this community?
29. In your opinion, what challenges has OFSP brought to this community?