The main reason people suffer from vitamin A deficiency is that their diets lack foods rich in vitamin A. From 2007 to 2009, HarvestPlus and its partners distributed vitamin A-rich orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) to 24,000 farming households in Uganda and Mozambique. Our goal was to encourage farming communities to grow and eat more of this nutritious food. We targeted women and children, who suffer the most from vitamin A deficiency.

Our Goal: Improve nutrition with vitamin A–rich orange sweet potato

Did farmers grow it? Yes! Farmers replaced more than half their fields of less nutritious white and yellow varieties with OFSP. Others grew sweet potato for the first time.

Did people eat it? Yes! Women and children in Mozambique and Uganda ate more OFSP—a lot more.

Did it improve nutrition? Yes! When women and children ate more OFSP, their vitamin A intake went up dramatically and risk of vitamin A deficiency went down.

Vitamin A deficiency in children can lower resistance to common childhood illnesses like diarrhea and measles, and lead to blindness and even death. Up to 500,000 children go blind every year due to vitamin A deficiency. 20 million pregnant women are vitamin A deficient.

Children 6–35 months 
Women

MOZAMBIQUE 
Uganda

Percentage of project households that adopted OFSP by 2009

MOZAMBIQUE
68% Adopted OFSP

UGANDA
61% Adopted OFSP

IN MOZAMBIQUE, OFSP was the third most important food in the diet for young children when the project ended.

Vitamin A deficiency in children can lower resistance to common childhood illnesses like diarrhea and measles, and lead to blindness and even death.

Children 6–35 months 
Women

MOZAMBIQUE 
Uganda

Partners:
- Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)
- Regional Potato and Sweetpotato Improvement Network in Eastern and Central Africa (PRAPACE)
- Uganda Farming for Food and Development Eastern Uganda (FADEP-EU)
- Helen Keller International, Mozambique
- International Food Policy Research Institute, USA
- International Potato Center (CIP), Peru
- Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, United Kingdom
- Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), Uganda
- World Vision International, Mozambique

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*OFSP expansion in Mozambique by CIP.