



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Nyanza Farmer Turns into an Entrepreneur through Value-Added Processing of Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potatoes

Romanos Opato, a farmer in his late 30s and father of two, splits his time between the farm and the kitchen.

This is since he discovered a creative way of converting one of his new food crops to delicious pastries and other locally popular dishes. The orange-fleshed sweet potato, which he started growing in early 2011 through his farmer group, is his secret ingredient for the nutritious dishes described as 'superior tasting' by his customers.

Despite being an orphan from a poor background, Opato now runs a small restaurant where he works with his wife and two other employees. Together they make and sell dishes such as chapatis, mandazis, cakes, and porridge using mashed sweet potato as the main ingredient. Their popularity has driven his earnings through the roof.

"Since August 2011 when I started using the new sweet potatoes in my recipes, I began making a profit of Ksh 640 a bale up from the Ksh 190 I used to make before," he says. "The meals are also very nutritious because the new orange-fleshed sweet potatoes contain vitamin A plus they also give the pastries a rich, appealing color."

Opato was introduced to the new, vitamin-rich variety of sweet potato as part of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative that is working with the Government of Kenya to improve food security and nutrition in rural Kenya.

"The kids really like the meals we give them," says his wife, as their 4-year-old son happily nibbles on freshly prepared *mandazis* outside the restaurant.

Indeed his new business is not just affording him a better lifestyle but Opato believes that it has also positively impacted his family. "We are now much happier and healthier, and my wife and I never lack food for our two children," he shares.

The initiative will help build the capacity of 7,800 smallholder farmers in Nyanza to grow the nutritious sweet potatoes that can help rural communities become more resilient and better able to survive common childhood diseases or during times of drought.

This story originally [appeared](#) on the USAID Mission Kenya website.