

### BACKGROUND

Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) remains a public health problem in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Eastern Africa, at least 4 in every 10 children under 5 years (>39%) have VAD, which is way above the WHO threshold point of 15%. Main reason is the consumption of monotonous diets mainly based on starchy staples with little or no animal source foods and yellow/orange/green vegetables and fruits.

### WHY FOCUS ON BANANAS

- Important crop to the livelihoods of millions of both rural and urban people in Eastern Africa
- Food security crop (perennial, mixed / intercropped)
- Consumption in eastern Africa between 3-11 fingers/person/day and 0.70 kg/day/person in Uganda alone
- There is an affordable banana-based dish for any social-economic group
- Great banana germplasm biodiversity, managed by Bioversity (ITC Belgium)

### CULTIVARS INTRODUCED IN EAST AFRICA

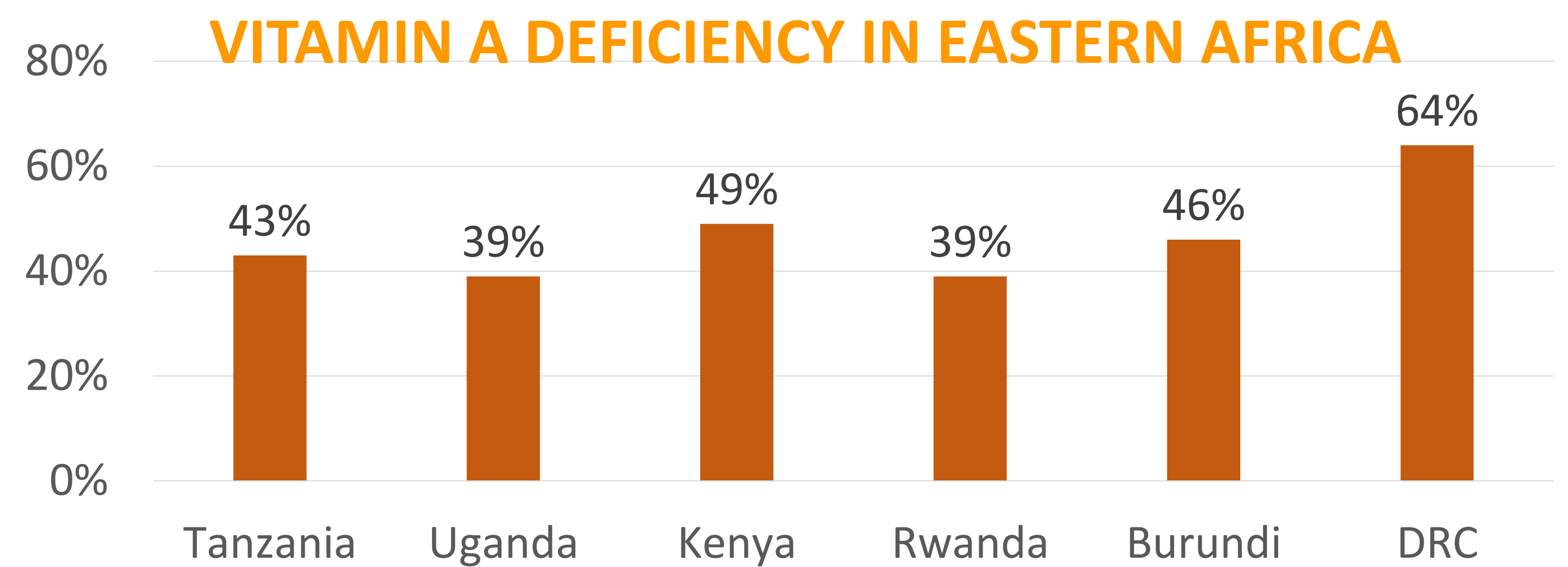
Cultivar name	Country of origin	Bunch weight (kg)	Genome-Subgroup	Fruit ripening Stage	% contribution to Vitamin A daily need of <5yrs
Apantu	Ghana	25	AAB-Plantain	Unripe	80.42
				Ripe	171.63
Bira	Papua New Guinea	22	AAB-Pacific plantain	Unripe	74.08
				Ripe	177.42
Sepi	Papua New Guinea	28	AA-nd	Unripe	34.5
				Ripe	165.8
Lahi	Hawaii	30	AAB-Pacific Plantain	Unripe	57.3
				Ripe	178.3
To'ò	Papua New Guinea	13	AA-Dessert	Unripe	9.67
				Ripe	136.03

### END USERS AND BENEFITS

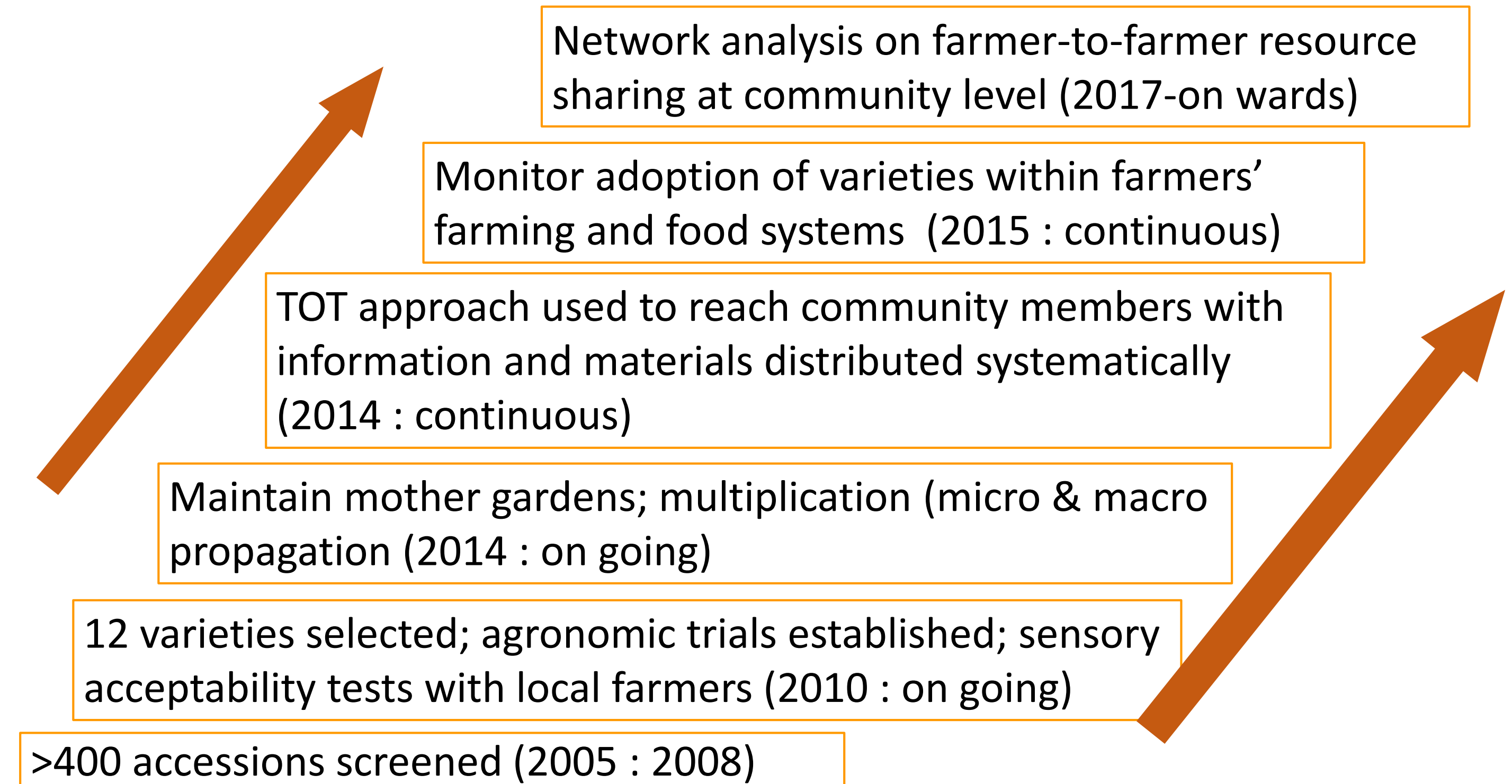
- Small-holder communities dependent on banana for both food and income and vulnerable to vitamin A deficiency within East and Central Africa
- Target community actively involved in varietal testing and selection through participatory agronomic evaluation, sensory evaluation and knowledge sharing and transfer
- Enhanced access to appropriate knowledge and techniques regarding production, postharvest handling and dietary use of the vitamin A-rich bananas
- Enhanced access to diverse banana varieties to not only meet their calorie and income needs but also provide substantial levels of vitamin A

### KEY PARTNERS FOR SCALING

Harvestplus, RTB & A4NH (additional funding to enable more research & scaling), NARs, Ministry of Agriculture & Ministry of Health (scaling in Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya)



### FAST-TRACKING PATHWAY



Vitamin A-rich bananas on trial in Cibitoke, Burundi | Field data collection, Burundi

### LEVEL OF ADOPTION OR USE

- 5 cultivars (Apantu, Bira, Lai, Lahi, Pelipita) selected by farmers following agronomic and sensory evaluation
- >11000 plantlets of the materials distributed to farmers in Burundi and DRC
- 9565 households directly reached with information on the utilization of vitamin A-rich bananas in the diet
- Intensified macropropagation in progress to reach more farmers with materials

### CRITICAL GAPS AND NEXT STEPS

- Proof of concept with regards to effect on serum retinal level following human feeding (needs funds)
- Scaling out to reach more regions in Burundi and DRC and additional farmers in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda

### SCALING STRATEGY

- Continued capacity building through TOT approach and inclusion of both male and female community members
- Decentralization of macropropagation to community level through trained TOTs to ensure more materials are accessible to more farmers within short time
- Strengthening the work in Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and initiating the same work in banana consuming regions of Kenya