



# Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato Project



## Nkhata Bay District

Research Conducted July/August 2017

Malawi: P O Box 75 · Chintheche · Nkhata Bay District · Northern Region  
England: Whiteleaf Business Centre · 11 Little Balmer · Buckingham · MK18 1TF · England

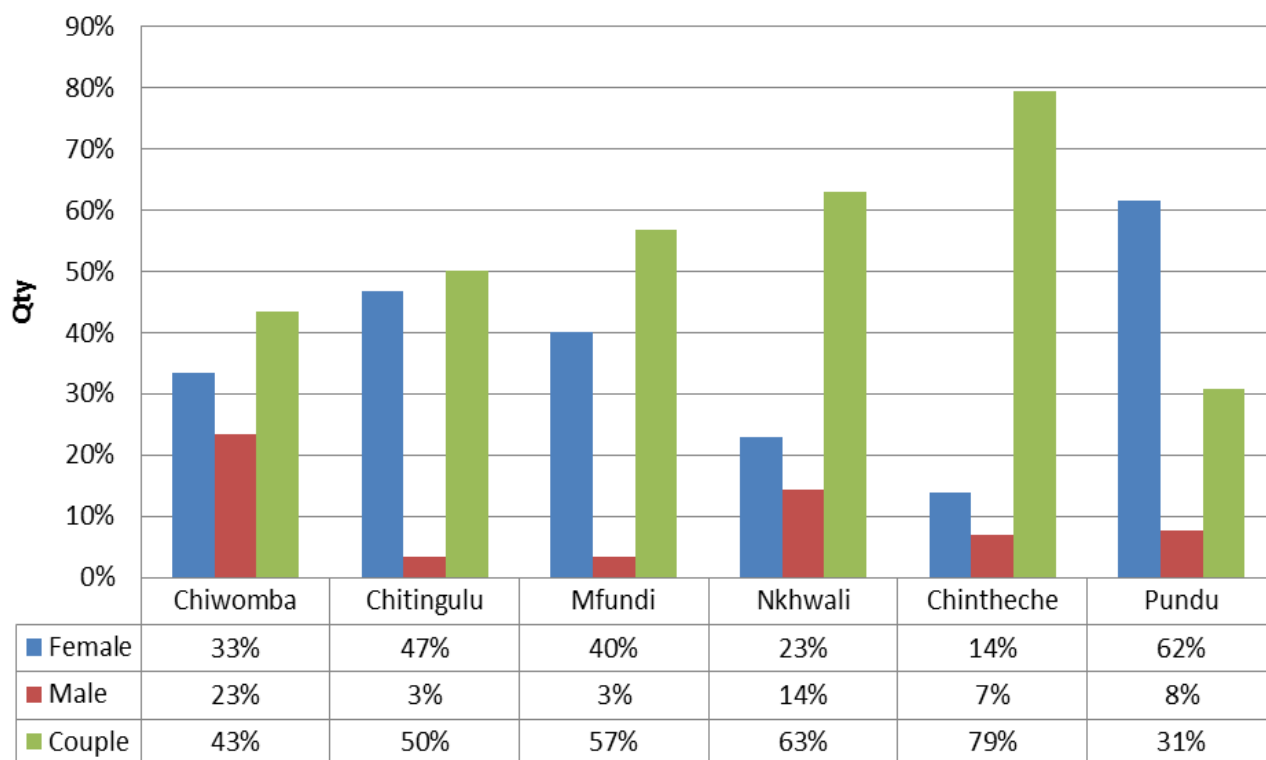
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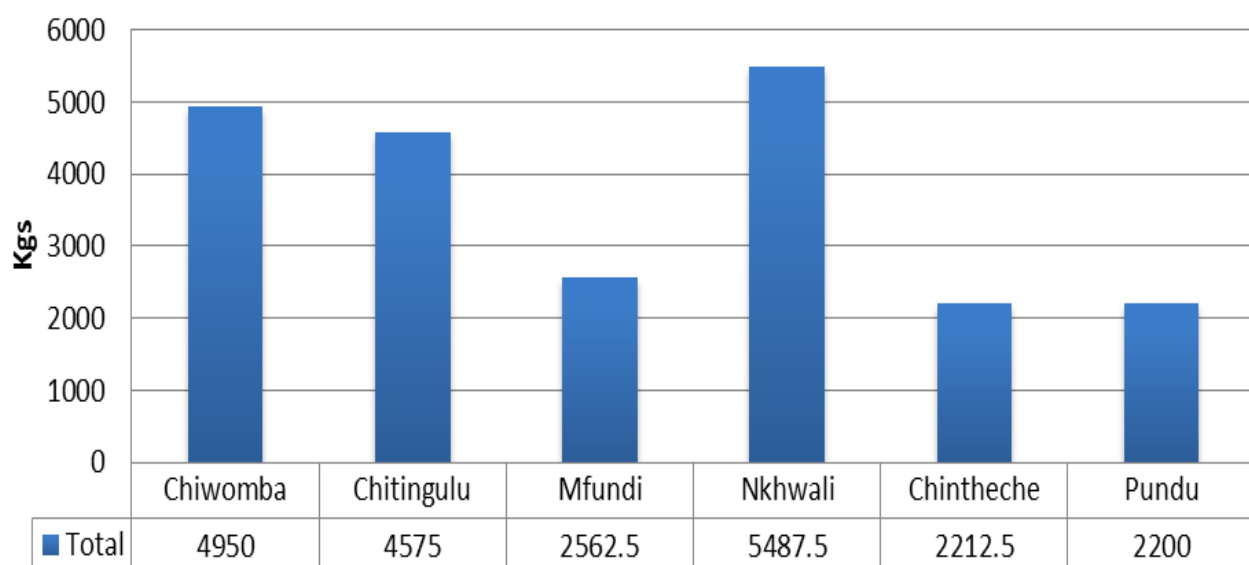
## Research

Research was carried out by a RIPPLE Africa volunteer with 167 farmers across the six distribution locations in the Nkhata Bay District, Chitingulu (30), Chiwomba (30), Pundu (13), Nkhwali (35), Mfundu (30) and Chintheche (29) to learn how the introduction of the new and improved orange fleshed sweet potato project was working. A questionnaire was created; see annex 1, and the graphs and comments below represent some of the information collected.

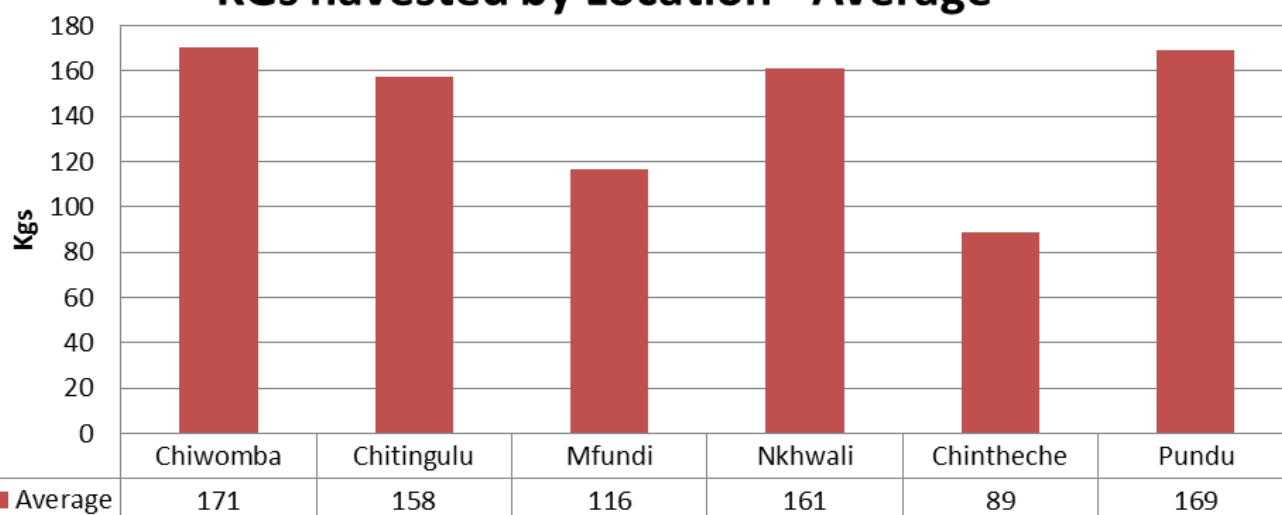
### Farmer status - Female, Male, Couples



### KGs harvested by Location - Total



## KGs harvested by Location - Average



### Challenges

A few farmers said they were either too old or ill to farm whilst others said they had a lack of time to farm because of other commitments such as looking after children. Some individuals expressed concern that there wasn't enough demand for the excess sweet potato so whilst they could store it for future consumption, there wasn't demand to sell it for a good price. In some locations like Pundu there were not enough vines delivered so farmers were unable to harvest as much and felt they couldn't share as many vines. In Nkhwali some farmers planted in water logged areas so lost some of their crop; others were worried about pests.

### Comments from farmers:

#### Chiwomba

"We want to grow maize too so we have to look at time management as the two crops are cultivated in the same season."

"I feel there is a lack of market to sell the excess to. We used to sell it in Tukombo but it is too expensive to travel there now."

#### Mfundu

"There was an insufficient supply of vines to plant, and they were shared late in the season which was not such a good time to cultivate the crop."

"I have experienced theft of my crop."

#### Chintheche

"I would like more advice on how to care for this variety of sweet potato."

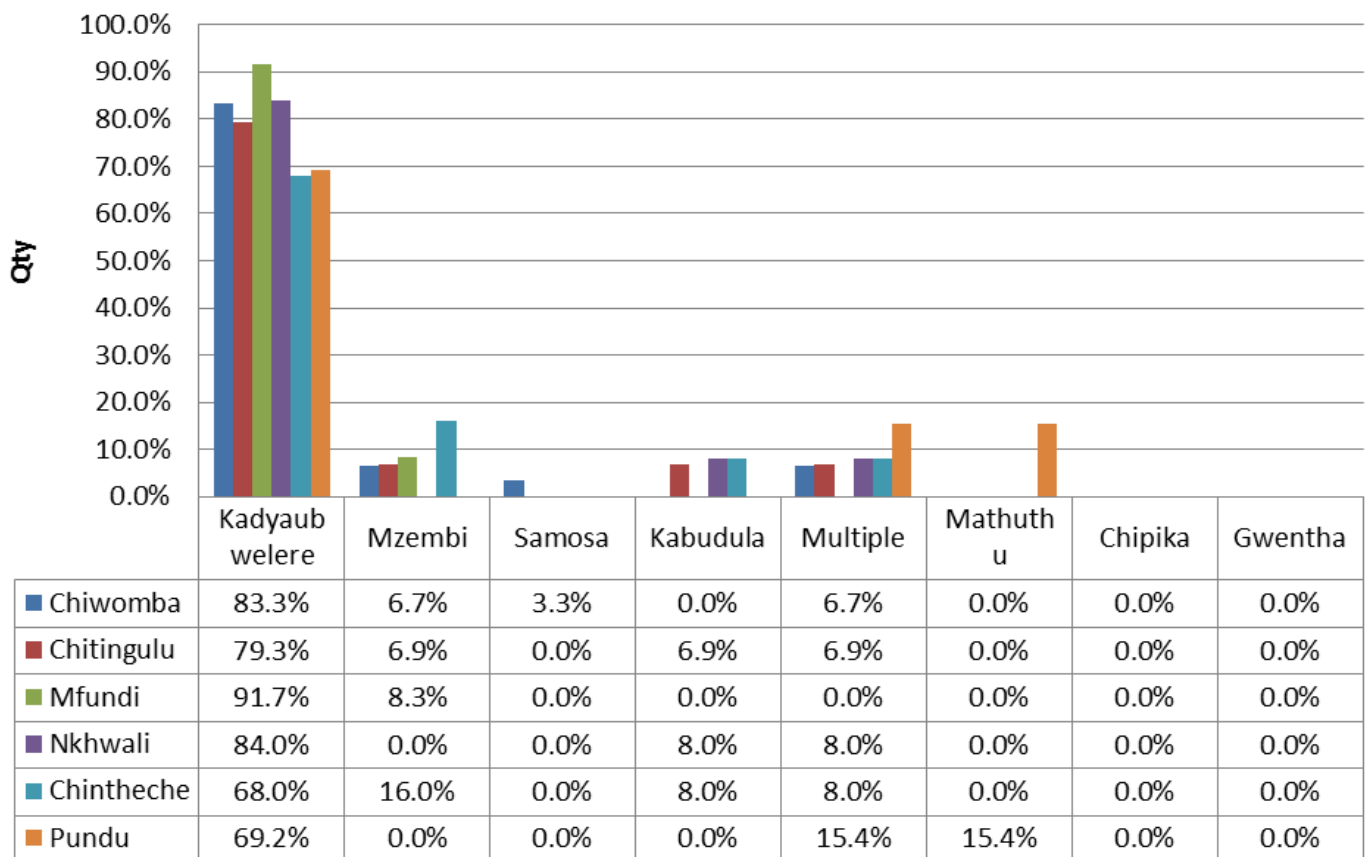
"I am concerned that there may not be enough custom due to excess supply from many growers of this new variety."

#### Pundu

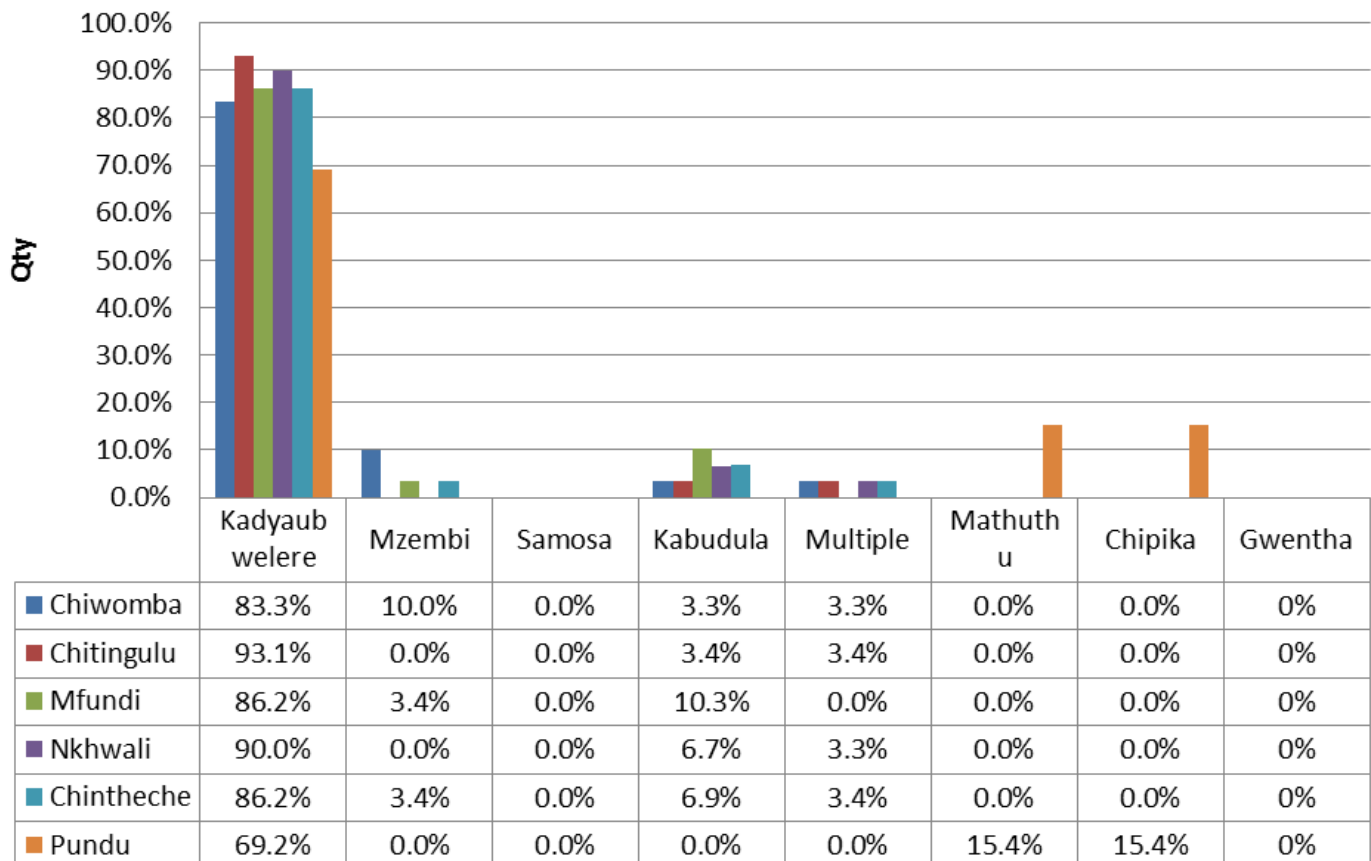
"I am HIV positive and not physically fit so sometimes I am too weak to farm."



## Highest yield by potato and area

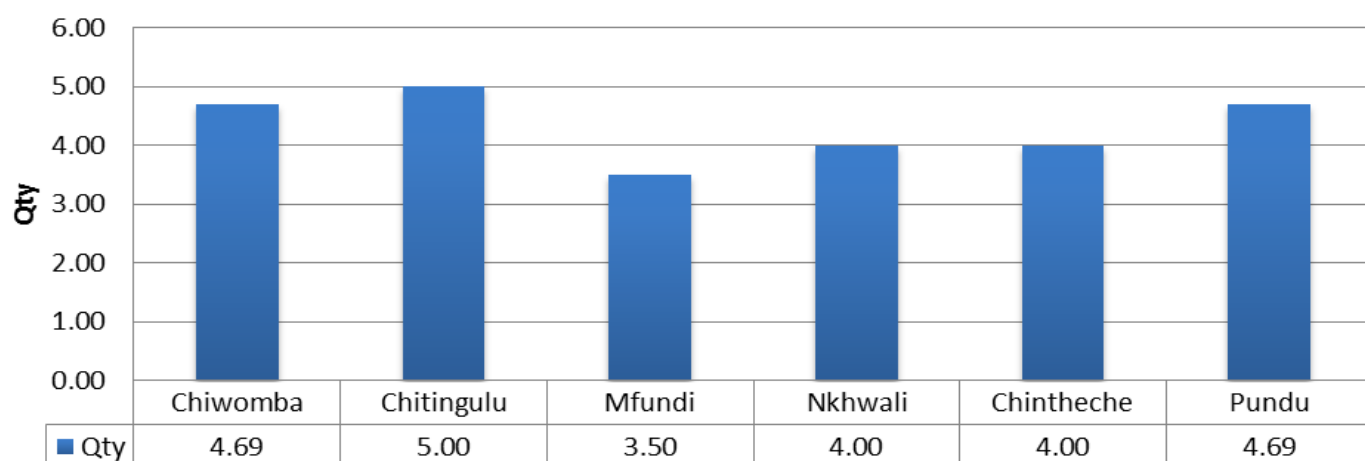


## Best tasting sweet potato by potato and area

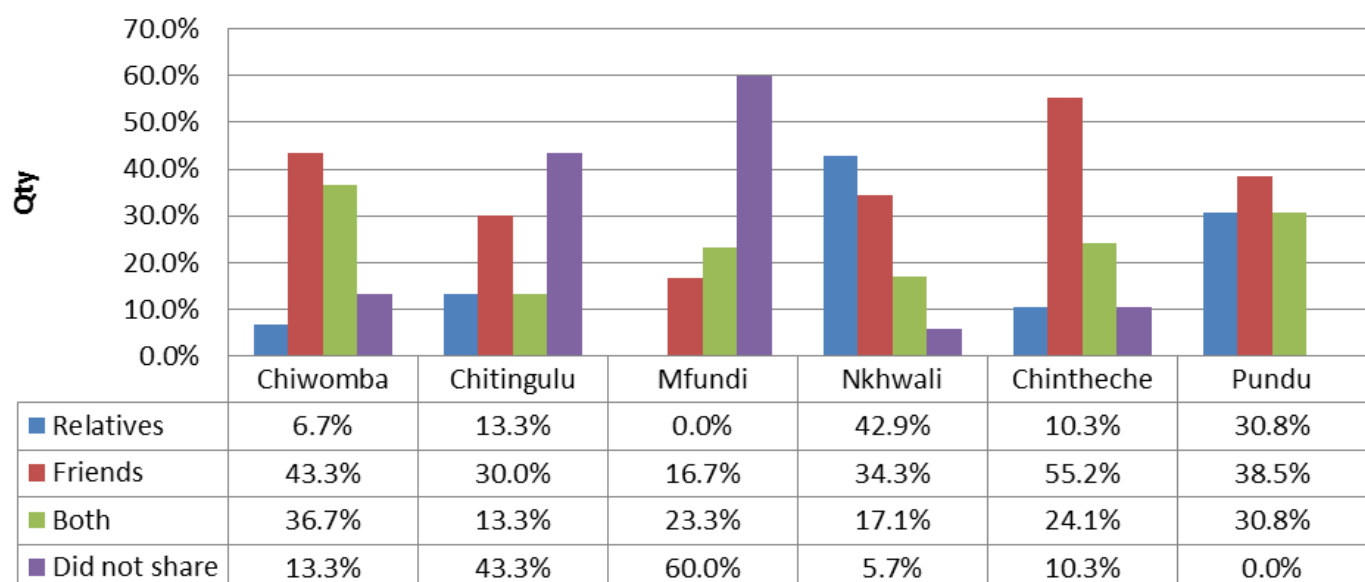




## Average Qty of farmers shared with by area



## Who did they share vines with



### Benefits

Across the six locations most farmers said the benefits included access to more food, opportunity to earn an additional income and also that they tasted much better than the current local variety. Others claimed that they felt healthier and had more energy. Some used the leaves for relish whilst others fed the leaves to livestock.

### Comments from farmers:

Chintheche

"It is good because I can harvest this variety two times per year since it can be cultivated on different types of soil."

"As chief of this community, I hope more vines will be distributed by RIPPLE Africa as more than 800 people would like to have access to the vine."

Nkhwali

"I feel good that I am enabling others to benefit (in this project) by sharing the vines."

"It is a highly productive vine so produces a high yield from just a small amount of vine."

"We now have extra food for lunch and it is a good replacement for nsima."

Mfundu

"It is good because it does not require a lot of capital to grow the orange variety."

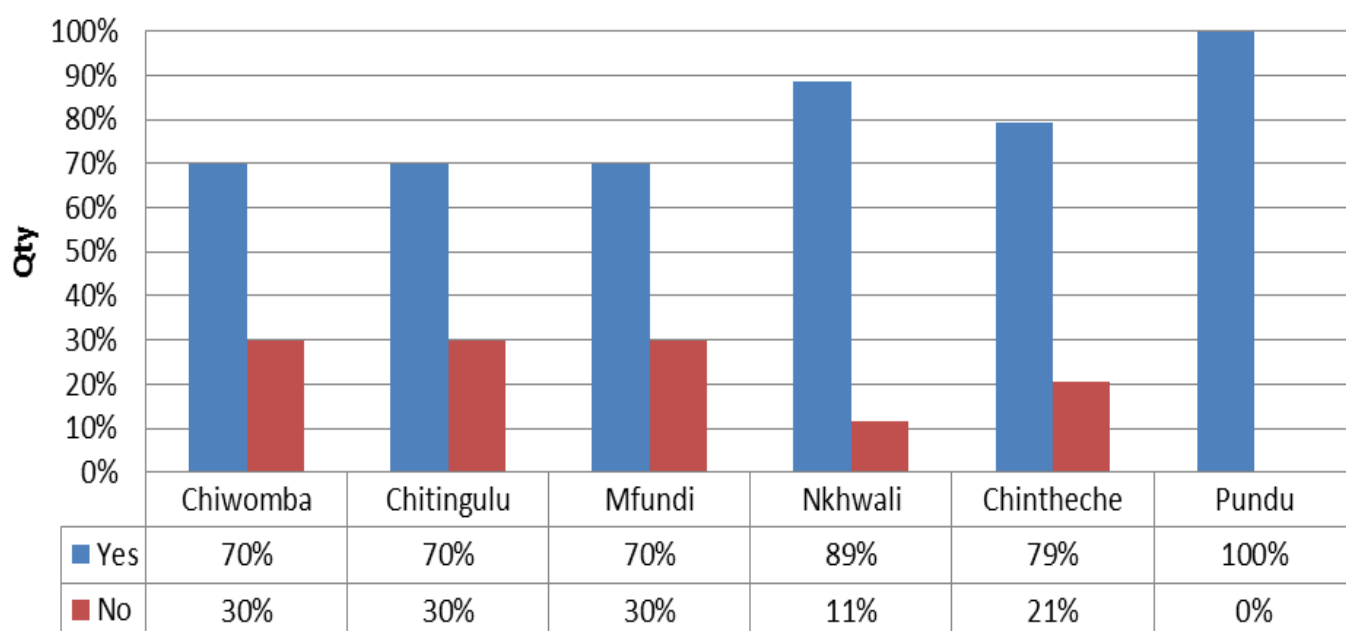
"We are able to use the sweet potato as a food supplement when other foods are in short supply."

Pundu

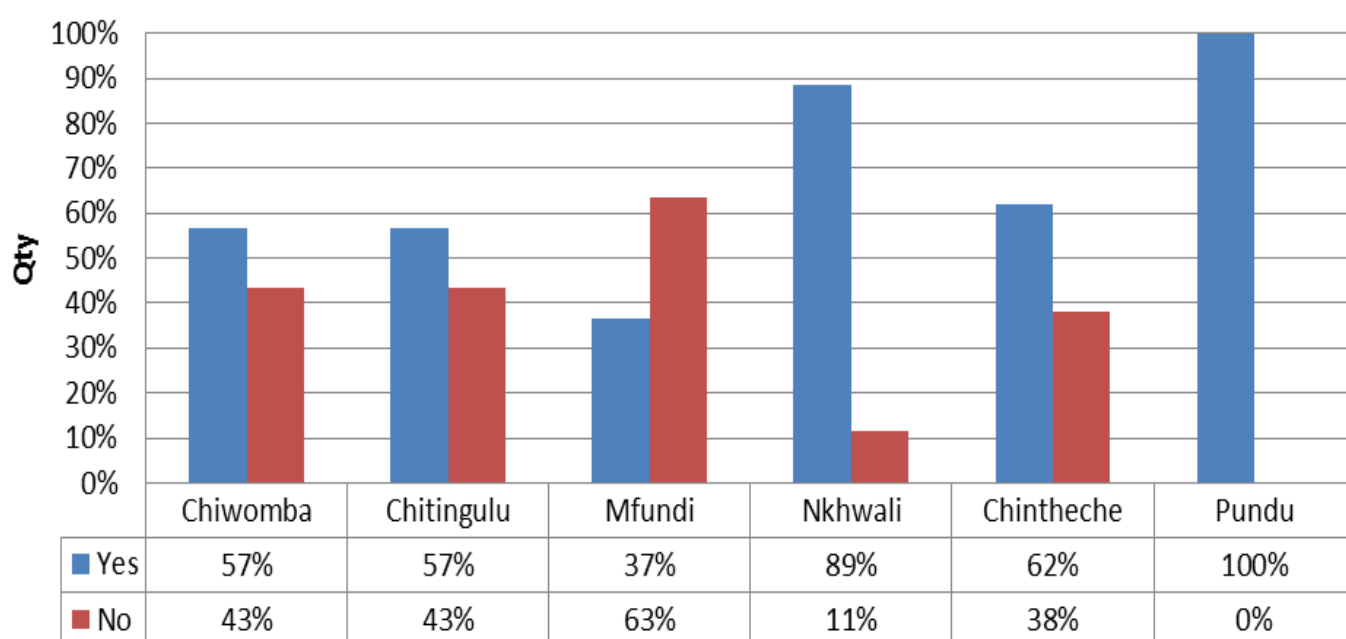
"We are able to feed the children now before they go to school. I have also noticed an improvement in my health and feel my eyesight is better."

"I am able to sell excess sweet potato to buy notebooks, pens and clothes."

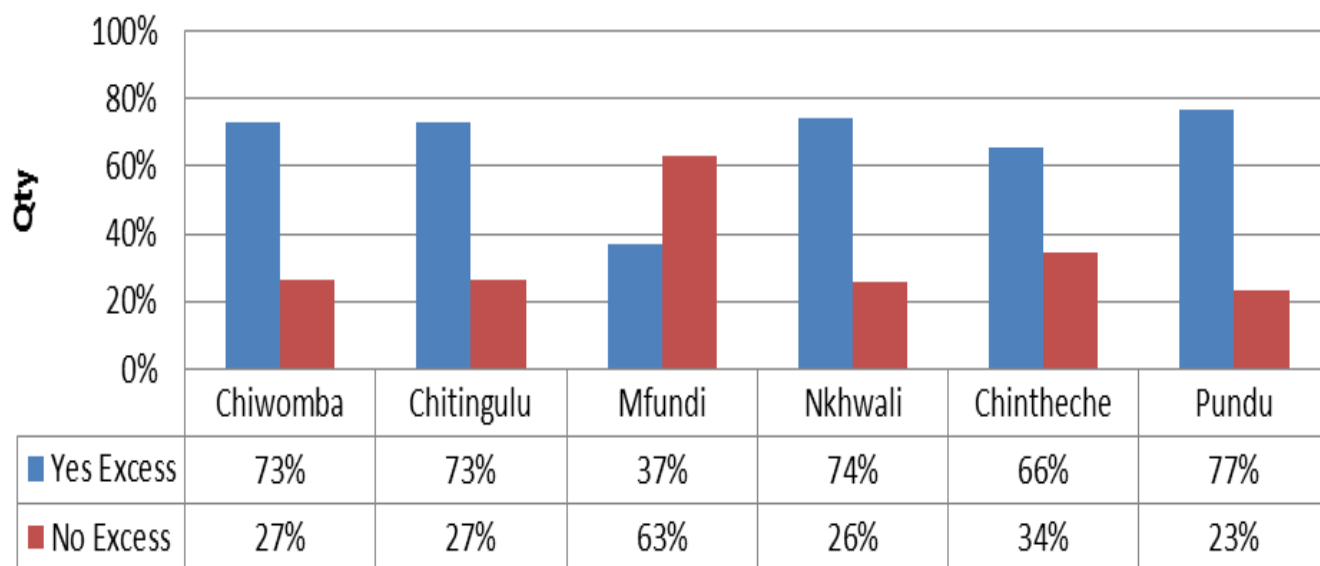
## Aware of nutritional benefits



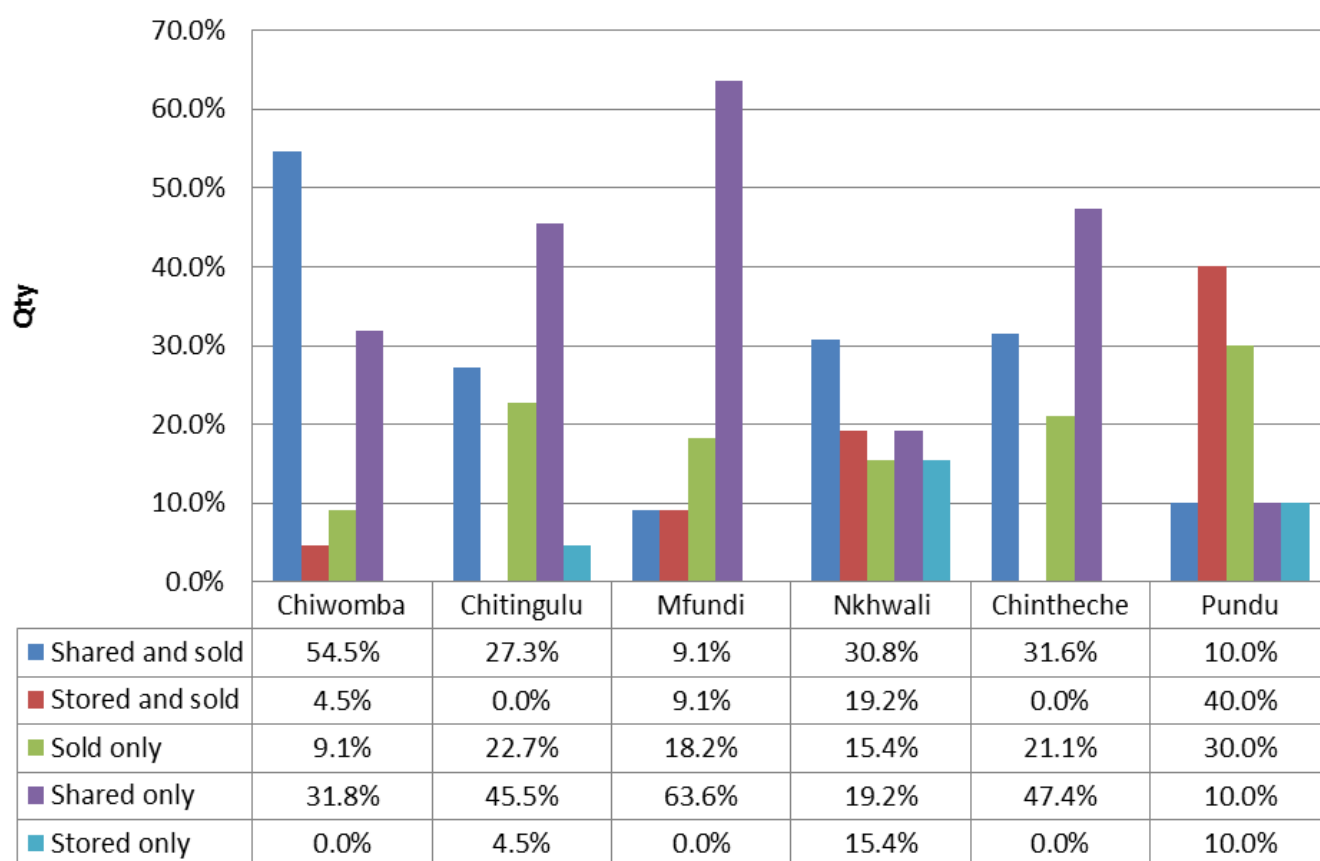
## Were nutritional benefits shared



## Did they have an excess of sweet potato



## What did they do with excess harvest



### Suggestions

From the research and comments it appears more training is needed with those distributing the vines to ensure the same message is being shared. It would be beneficial to spend more time with farmers to ensure they understand the concept of sharing vines with new farmers and that they share the information on the nutritional benefits. Whilst it is beneficial to give vines to those that are elderly and/or ill, it would be advised to make sure that they're able to plant and harvest the sweet potato – or that they have family support to do so.







## Annex 1: Sweet potato survey

These were the questions asked to the 167 farmers with regards to the introduction of the new and improved orange-fleshed sweet potato. We aimed to interview 30 in each location however we were only able to interview 13 farmers in Pundu because of the availability of farmers. The above graphs show information on the highest yielding varieties, best tasting, whether farmers shared the vines, whether farmers had an excess of sweet potato after harvesting etc., however if you'd like any additional data based on the other questions below, we can provide these.

Name of farmer

Married?

How many children?

Are you native to this village? If no, where are they from?

1. What is the yield of your sweet potato crop (bags/kgs)?
2. What variety(s) do you grow?
3. If you grow more than one variety, which variety produces the highest yield?
4. Which variety tastes the best?
5. What is your soil type (eg. loam dambo, sandy)?
6. What are the common diseases or pests that you need to protect your crop from?
7. Do you use manure to fertilise your crop?
8. Do you use any other chemical fertilisers?
9. Do you use any chemical pesticides?
10. Have you shared your vines with 5 other farmers?
11. Are the farmers that you shared with relatives?
12. How far away was the furthest farmer that you have shared with (name of location)?
13. Are you aware of the nutritional benefits of the orange sweet potato variety (eg higher vitamin A content)?
14. Do you share this nutritional information with the other farmers?
15. Do you intend to rotate your crops in the future?
16. If Y, what alternative crop would you rotate sweet potato with?
17. Do you have any excess sweet potato from your harvest?
18. If Y, what do you do with it (eg. give away to relatives, the church, store for future or sell)?
19. If you store it, how is this done?
20. Please give 3 examples of ways in which this project has benefited you
21. Please give 3 examples of challenges that you have encountered during this project

