



Mid-term Evaluation of the Unwrapped Project in the Lakes States, Sudan

Executive Summary

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

April 2007

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Evaluators: MICRODE Consult

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Achievements of the Unwrapped Project

The Unwrapped Project is a livelihoods promotion initiative focusing on four components thus; provision of veterinary Services, restocking of vulnerable women headed households with goats, promotion of ox-plough farming technology through partnership arrangements with indigenous institutions, and promotion of honey production by traditionally beekeeping communities. The project started in May 2005 and was designed to build the community livelihoods financial and human capital. By the time of the evaluation in April 2007 the project had accomplished the following key achievements:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managed to implement many of the planned activities and achieved the desired outputs with variances (plus or minus) in the set performance targets. (For details see the section on findings) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The veterinary services component has managed to internalise the concept of services cost recovery with so much success that no herder expects free animal drug or vaccines; they are always ready to pay what it costs to treat their livestock and indeed are affording to pay drugs at cost.• Lack of drugs and prevalence of animal diseases which ranked as top problems to herders three years ago are no longer considered as problems by the same herders after Oxfam perfected the delivery of veterinary services through community based structures namely RULIDO and CULIDO. (See List of Acronyms)• There exists a crop of reasonably competent animal health workers committed to providing veterinary services in association with the project yet they are not on anybody's regular employment including the Government or the NGOs; they have been trained to provide services for irregular and unpredictable commissions on service fees that are paid by livestock keepers.• The project has contained livestock diseases to a manageable level that compares well with the neighbouring countries. Suspected livestock disease outbreaks are usually reported by the network of community-based animal health workers and preliminary investigations conducted within 12-36 hours against a set target of between 24-48 hours.• The project has also developed beneficial collaboration relationships with the Government, the like-minded NGOs in livestock sector and community level herders' institutions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project has provided 1,800 goats to 180 widowed women who are heads of livelihood vulnerable households to enable them to revive their lives and it is apparent that this intervention has given hope and renewed optimism to the beneficiaries.• Poor widows who had no chance to own livestock now do through the goat restocking project component; this has upgraded their social status and observably bolstered their self-esteem and the necessary confidence to soldier-on with life.• The milk from the goats though too little (the particular goat variety normally yields little milk), has however added nutrition value into their household diets particularly to the children. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project has directed attention to improving honey production, a highly potential livelihood resource that had not received significant attention in the past from either humanitarian or development agencies. This has ignited palpable community enthusiasm and anticipation of better living standards resulting from improved returns of their indigenous honey resource. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In partnership with an indigenous organisation, the project has made a commendable contribution towards increased food production using ox-plough tillage technology. Increase |

in food production through use of ox-ploughs was vividly evident during the evaluation.

- Ox-ploughing has been commercialised by a few people who till land for others at a fee. This development is reducing the need for every household to own a plough or Oxen.

Key Project Results

1. All the four project components were ranked as high priority by community respondents during the evaluation and are viewed by Government officials as addressing livelihood issues that are core to the people of the Lakes State.
2. The community has fully accepted the cost recovery concept in the treatment and vaccination of the livestock, which is seen by the collaborating development agencies as the route to sustainability of the service.
3. The project has contributed heavily in assuring existence of healthy livestock in the Lakes State through its veterinary services component.
4. However, the project gender empowerment initiative through the goats re-stocking component did not achieve the intended results key in introducing equity concerns to the mainly patriarchal community of the Lakes State.

The Main Project Weakness

The project formulation and implementation is heavy on the veterinary component and consequently the achievements of the other project components, which are equally important in achieving the project goal of improving community livelihood bases, have not matched the veterinary component.

This has not made the other project components irrelevant though, but the next project formulation process need to analyse a lot deeper project quality aspects such as the value of KTB hives vis-à-vis the difficulties that will be faced by the community importing the basic raw material until such a time that it will be possible to produce soft wood locally, the attendant costs, and sustainability; and also the provision of ox-ploughs which can easily be provided by the emerging private sector.

The Project Socio-political Operating Environment

The socio-political environment prevailing in the Lakes State particular to the weak structures of the nascent Government and its being in transition from debilitating civil war to recovery have led to:

- The project choice of interventions that have the potential to fast track recovery and rehabilitation of the community livelihood bases.
- The project working directly with community based institutions to establish systems mechanisms to deliver project benefits to the households.
- Limited engagement with the Government in the project implementation processes.

Key Recommendations

The key recommendations by the evaluation consultant for further consideration if the project will continue are:

- » Oxfam should encourage entry of private practitioners in the delivery of veterinary services even if it calls for establishment of a short-term working capital

credit scheme to the local veterinarians who have demonstrated capacity and willingness to enter into private practice.

- » The next phase of the unwrapped project should consider developing a poultry-keeping component particularly targeting women beneficiaries.
- » The unwrapped project should re-evaluate to what extent in terms of value addition are the KTB hives in increasing incomes of Beekeepers vis-à-vis an organised honey marketing system.
- » Oxfam should always have a clear Cooperation Agreement with its programmes implementation partners spelling out roles and responsibilities of each partner and what each party is accountable for, to reinforce responsibility and clarity of limits.
- » Oxfam should consider investing in mentoring county level Government staff in its programme sectors through supportive guardianship for the ongoing initiatives to be sustainable with pre-agreed outputs for each party.

Lessons Learnt

1. It is difficult for the beneficiaries of the goat restocking scheme to pass over the second generation off springs to other deserving members of their community as initially expected. Perhaps this is the consequence of protracted relief syndrome that can be addressed partially through development of human capital.
2. The community based institutions managing veterinary services (RULIDO and CULIDO) are slowly losing their clout with the existing community based animal health workers in favour of the Government and sooner than later may not withstand the Government pressure for the control of the delivery of veterinary services and the associated cost recovery funds.

Conclusion

Through the activities of the Unwrapped Project, Oxfam has proactively participated and has internalised to the communities the OLS initiated cost recovery system on veterinary drugs provided by NGOs. The positive development impact of effectively managing the cost recovery initiative in the veterinary sector within a relief-oriented environment is massive and difficult to quantitatively quantify. In this process, Oxfam has established itself as an excellent facilitator of sustainable development in the Lakes State.

The project formulation and implementation is heavy on the veterinary component and consequently the achievements of the other project components though equally important in the achievement of the project goal which is to contribute to improving household food and income security, have not matched the veterinary component.

In whole, the implementation shortcomings noted by the evaluation are largely inherent in the projects design than implementation lapses. (*See component findings*)

If there will be an immediate unwrapped project phase, it will be necessary to review the present programming priorities; particularly in regard to the effectiveness and efficiencies of goat restocking, provision of ox-ploughs, and the developmental value of KTB hive whose principal raw material until now is to be imported.

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