



# Final Evaluation of the Unwrapped Project in the Lakes State, Sudan

Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

The implementation of the Unwrapped Project, which is the object of this evaluation, was planned to start on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 and end on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008. Its aim was to contribute towards building sustainable and sufficient livelihoods in the Counties of Rumbek East, Rumbek North, Rumbek Central, Cueibet and Wullu in Lakes State of Southern Sudan, whereas the purpose was to improve access to food and income through the promotion of viable indigenous livelihoods activities in both pastoralist and agriculturalist communities. The project had six objectives; (1) to increase demand of quality livestock extension services, (2) to improve quality of extension services, (3) to increase income generated from honey production in Wullu County, (4) to promote gender mainstreaming for increased income and improved dietary intake of women, female-headed and vulnerable households, (5) to contribute towards food security and livelihood monitoring and preparedness (6) to increase gender awareness within partner agencies, local authorities and traditional community leaders.

The project document lists the activities that were to be implemented according to the seven core results they were targeted to yield. The activities aligned to these core results, can be summarised in the following key activity caucuses; capacity building with the development of supporting tools - e.g. developing curricula and messages for livestock extension and for training of women in honey, poultry and vegetable production and marketing), gender mainstreaming, campaigns and meetings, drilling boreholes, provision of basic tools, construction and equipping of four extension offices, participating in food security and livelihoods monitoring and preparedness forums.

## Findings

The evaluation unearthed the following:

- The project's interventions and activities were not only highly relevant but also consultations with various partners in the period preceding the initiation of implementation, ensured that they were a priority to the communities.
- The project, having implemented activities in the livestock sector over a number of project phases, was moving towards becoming sustainable but its effort to create a critical mass of extension workers, especially at the community animal health workers level, was being frustrated by attrition. It had facilitated the formation of Lakes Livestock Development Organization (with a full executive committee) which had already assumed some responsibilities (e.g., purchasing of drugs and running a bank account) and in collaboration with the organization, progress is being made in putting management systems in place. Two extension offices out the planned four had been constructed at county levels of Wullu and Rumbek Central.
- Although activities had been initiated, the levels of implementation for vegetable, poultry and honey production were not adequate to yield the expected results.
- Activities on gender mainstreaming had just been initiated and therefore, were also not at a level that could have yielded expected results.
- The project funds were released about four months late. This is a reflection of inefficiency in utilization of both time and funds (albeit during the months 'authority to spend' was awaited staff were on salary) that contributed to incompleteness in implementation of activities.
- The implementation process reflected coordination between the project and partners, including communities, but there was over reliance on project in terms of staff time input due to inadequate capacity at the partner levels.
- It was evident that the project had made efforts to empower local civil organization in planning and implementing but it had not achieved a threshold that can be considered sustainable or adequate to yield results at a satisfactory level.
- The project mostly applied cost-effective strategies as manifested in utilization of available opportunities in the implementation. Some notable examples include the coordination between the project and FAO in vaccine supply and with *Veterinaires Sans Frontieres* Belgium in training of livestock extension supervisors.
- The integration of conflict sensitive programming into the project has been achieved at a satisfactory level but its outputs and achievements have yet to be manifested in the project's monitoring systems.
- The project put in place activities that were highly appropriate vis-à-vis the needs that were being addressed but their shortcomings are captured under challenges. The plan to have

generator-powered water pumps for the boreholes that have been drilled in sustenance of vegetable gardens may place a special challenge/burden on the women.

- The stated indicators are relevant as they were designed according to the different sectors of activities that are being implemented. Nonetheless, the definition of these indicators need to be articulated, tightened and correctly classified into input, output, outcome (short and long-term) and impact as the current classification uses only impact and outcome; which means some are miss-classified.
- Apart from the livestock communities for whom the project can claim influence over socio-economic aspects of the beneficiary's lives, the other sectors were at such infant level of implementation to have had any noticeable impact.

## Challenges

The project faced the following key challenges:

- Late release of initial funds and monthly allocations, which undermined timely implementation of activities and whose impact was aggravated by few core staff.
- Factors external to the project, such as, demand for sitting allowances (which is against Oxfam's policy), employment expectations, under-development of self-help group formation processes, unavailability of soft wood for timely beehive construction, stealing of honey, conflict between livestock and crop cultivators, inter and intra ethnic conflicts, unfavourable weather conditions (flooding) and dry seasons (heighten insecurity over grazing land) are challenges faced during the project implementation. Lack of livestock policies, and clear division of roles between government and Lakes Livestock Development organization, lack of viable human capacities at payam level also present unique current or potential challenges with considerable implications on the attainment of project's results.

## Lessons learnt

A number of lessons were learnt and the following represent the key ones:

- Introducing labour intensive interventions can become a challenge for partners especially where beneficiaries are not accustomed to hard work.
- Location of demonstration units away from homesteads of the owners creates additional need for security hence is not an optimal cost efficient strategy.
- Planning early for activities and likewise submitting work-plans is a good strategy for achieving efficiency in time use.
- Prior assessment of capacity of partners is a worthwhile effort that can curtail frustrations in the implementation process.
- Implementing activities in an environment devoid of appropriate government policies is quite challenging.
- Newly introduced activities (such as gender mainstreaming and awareness creation) need to be allowed adequate space to get well grounded.
- In turbulent times, identification of both core issues and source of problem is an effective strategy in mitigating imminent conflicts.

## Best Practices

The following emerged as practices that enhanced implementation of activities and hence achievement of its objectives:

- Working with and through development partners and being flexible to accommodate requests from partners.
- Switching to role profiles from job-description approach at project level, which allows multi-tasking and minimization of gaps when the line manager is away from office.
- Working with women due to their receptiveness is viewed by the project as a best practice.
- Provision of apiculture protective clothing was recognised as a best practice
- Having CAHWs located at cattle camp which makes immediate treatment and close follow-up during treatment feasible, is acknowledged as a best practice.
- Placing reference manuals that are appropriate for literacy level at the county level for borrowing by extension workers.
- Integrating monitoring with performance processes for extension services levels.

## Conclusions

Overall, the project addressed pertinent issues that were of high priority to the target communities and the level of coordination and involvement of local development partners (that is both Government of Southern Sudan) and community based organization) was high and to a lesser extent with Sudanese Indigenous Non-Government Organizations. The following are conclusions specific to the six project objectives that define its scope:

- The project, building on the achievement of previous phases, increased demand for extension services particularly in the livestock sector. The behaviour of livestock keepers, as was the aim of the project, has been positively modified.
- The quality of services being offered by livestock extension workers, according to service users, has improved.
- Given the level of implementation of activities in vegetable, honey and poultry production, the project could not have been able to significantly increase income through production and marketing.
- The base that will lead to positive impact on women's income has been initiated but more needs to be done, allowing time for consolidation before the impact can be felt.
- The project has been successful in contributing towards food security and livelihoods monitoring and preparedness.
- The project has been successful in laying foundation from which increased gender awareness, in coordination and collaboration with partner agencies, some traditional leaders and local authorities can be built but the expected outcomes and impact have not yet been achieved. This means that continuation of activities is required to consolidate what has just started.

## Recommendations

Among the recommendations documented at the end of this report and those of communities, the latter of which are displayed in Annex 4, the following are critical in ensuring the successful implementation of activities and hence the subsequent expected results:

1. For project activities to be fully implemented and as per workplan, ensure release of funds simultaneously with written supporting instructions/documents within the first month (May) of project life and maintain an efficient system that ensures timely acquisition and purchasing of materials for the project.
2. The project M&E system should be strengthened to systematically capture details of modifications vis-à-vis project documents or proposal, that is, tracking of both changes in implementation strategies and achievements. The latter implies need for better articulation of indicators and hence a sound monitoring and evaluation plan that keeps the project well informed and updated. Ensure that monthly and quarterly reporting is compatible with M&E indicators to facilitate tracking of implementation and achievements and to yield a summary of costs of activities that can be used in gauging cost effectiveness. Improve the quality of indicators; conceiving them in a logical manner that classifies them into input, process, outputs, outcome and impact.
3. Scale-up and transfer poultry keeping to household level. Two models of scaling-up could be applied on trial basis- (1) specific trained group members would be requested to serve as role models in chicken production and are matched with a non-member who they would develop on mentorship basis. (2) the other model would be the type that is being used, that is, away on a women's group plot. The two can be compared to offer the best model in expansion phases to other regions.
4. Consider expanding the range of scope of women appropriate income generating sources by supporting bases for activities, such as grinding mills, sewing machines (demand for clothes is increasing) even on revolving fund basis.
5. Harmonize terms of partnerships that would include sitting allowance and pay for facilitation in training.
6. More people be trained to ensure fast scaling-up in gender awareness related outcomes while strategies for ensuring sustenance of continuous message dissemination are integrated into project's activities on cross-cutting issue basis while considering introduction of human rights based approach to programming as a way of elevating gender issues and specifically those relevant to gender equity.
7. Oxfam needs to review its attitude and hence policy on HIV/AIDS with a view to scaling-up activities beyond workplace, this could be as simple as developing a few key messages

that are cited at the beginning of meetings, workshops and other forums with members of community and partners.

8. Due to lack of rivers, consider increasing number of water sources, probably in form of boreholes, to address problem of water for domestic use and food production at household level (kitchen gardens).
9. Introduce affirmative measures to boost opportunities for women (a case in point, recruitment and training at AHA level).
10. In developing workplan, put seasons into context and specifically consider the implications of rains.

## **Way Forward**

The following is a proposed way forward for livelihood programming in Lake State now that Unwrapped Project 2007/8 has come to an end.

- A number of project activities were incomplete hence Oxfam's priority should be to ensure that their implementation is complete. Thus completion of poultry keeping, vegetable gardening, and honey production and marketing related activities must be completed and given time to allow participants build experience and confidence bringing them to a level where they can continue on their own.
- The capacity of partners is not yet solid enough for them to operate successfully on their own hence Oxfam must continue coordinating and working with them to ensure they acquire sustainable status in performance.
- The GOSS structures and policies are in an incomplete/underdeveloped state thus the need for continued support from Oxfam is obvious. Oxfam has to continue strengthening and consolidating capacity of GOSS.
- Livestock vaccination- the government will eventually have to take-over acquisition of livestock vaccines. As a way forward, initiate dialogue and indepth discussion, that would involve exploring types of agreements that would be needed to prevent gaps in vaccine supply should Oxfam phase-out.
- Increasingly phase-out/reduce involvement in livestock aspects but continue strengthening local management systems to ensure that they attain sustainability and focus more on women income improvement activities, thus continue focusing on activities that women control and hence have the potential of improving their income status.
- Retain a project support officer at Nairobi level to be responsible for timely acquisition of and purchasing of materials for Southern Sudan until reliable supplies are established in Juba.
- Recruit an additional project officer as the programme area is vast and the current staff is over-stretched.
- Continue developing capacities of partners and civil societies.
- A marketing system for vegetables is being developed and due to its interest in improving marketing for its partners, Oxfam should work in partnership with the Italian organization that is leading in this effort.

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