

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN NORTHERN UGANDA

This case study covers the work of Send a Cow in Uganda (SACU). Send a Cow Uganda was established in 1988 to assist groups of subsistence farmers to overcome poverty and malnutrition through training in integrated livestock and agriculture, the provision of high quality seeds and livestock, and by strengthening communities to become self reliant. The aim of this project is to restore livelihoods by increasing household incomes, food production and social support for farmers in northern Uganda.

This Case Study was a background briefing for Oxfam Novib's 2013 Annual Review, prepared in partnership with SACU, and describes the programme in Uganda. Although it is not a formal evaluation it does consider lessons learned by both Oxfam Novib and its partner organisations.

These Case Studies are shared in the form in which they were submitted, often written by partners whose first language is not English, and have not been edited since submission. We believe that the meaning is clear enough, and the authenticity of the reporting and the availability of Southern Voices on development makes their inclusion in the Oxfam iLibrary worthwhile for sharing with external readers.

Programme Partner: Send a Cow Uganda (SACU)

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The aim is to restore livelihoods by increasing household incomes, food production and social support for farmers in northern Uganda.

This project has been well aligned with government plans and promoted agriculture as a business by supporting the Government of Uganda's own priorities of establishing agriculture as a key productive sector to drive the economy. The National Development Plan (2010/11 – 2014/15), Agricultural Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP) and the recent Background to the Budget FY2012/13 call for the realisation of growth and development targets through food security, income enhancement and employment. Two further government strategies of note are the Rural Development Strategy (RDS) and the Prosperity for All (PfA), the focus of which is to address the needs of rural households by engaging more households in gainful enterprise production.

The work also complemented that of other organizations like AFARD, CARITAS and CEFORD which do offer services in Food & income security, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, good governance, Agricultural input support, training, Functional Adult Literacy, advocacy and research in the region. The project has also changed the mindset of the local people; both beneficiaries and non beneficiaries positively towards development rather than handouts which used to be the order of the day especially in the 80's and 90's. Farmers have clear visions and their future plans well documented as compared to the past and they have greatly influenced decision making at local levels since they have been empowered and their self esteem has really been strengthened.

Main actors

- Oxfam Novib
- Send a cow Uganda
- Farmer partners (beneficiaries)
- Lower Local Government
- Cultural leaders
- Religious leaders

WHY DID OXFAM NOVIB GET INVOLVED?

Send a Cow Uganda approached Oxfam Novib for partnership and funding. Oxfam Novib was convinced that there was convergence of aspirations by the two agencies for the West Nile region. More so, SACU was phasing out its work from the region for lack of funding to continue its programme work. Oxfam Novib came at the right time when the halt had been on for over a year and yet, Oxfam had been impressed by the amount of change SACU had caused in Acholi Sub region. While SACU was phasing out from the region, the need for its services was still enormous. Through a situational analysis carried out by Send a Cow Uganda, it was revealed that a number of people still lived in the bondage of poverty and were not yet fully empowered to come out openly to voice their concerns and yet these had negative impacts on them. Besides, SACU was not covering a wider area. Oxfam Novib coming on board was timely especially with SACU expanding its work to other areas that had not been reached.

Oxfam Novib believed in SACU's style of delivering development initiatives but there was also a proven record of partnership and achievement between the two organizations.

METHODOLOGY

Activities, strategies, theory of change

- The project started with baseline surveys, sensitization, training needs reassessment and gender analysis carried out by SACU.
- Training on gender, group dynamics, leadership and conflict resolution resulted in greater equality between men and women and they have become self-reliant and confident and are sharing household chores.
- Farmers were trained in animal and crop husbandry, simple gardening techniques, animal traction and others such as manure composting, preparation of organic pesticides and kitchen gardens.
- Families were prepared to receive livestock and other inputs such as drugs like acaricides among others
- The farmers received local cattle, cross bred cows and improved seeds to enable them farm efficiently.
- Surplus production has been sold for income, while savings & credit and marketing trainings were conducted to support establishment of small businesses.
- Legal support was encouraged through mediation of the local authorities and community approaches by the Uganda Law Society.
- Families were trained to have practical and simple hygiene structures like built pit latrines, tip-taps for hand washing and drying racks, clay made sofa sets, cupboards which are made at no financial cost.
- Specialized training and awareness creation on HIV/AIDS were successfully carried out in addition to counseling, prevention and care this was done through Music Dance and Drama .

What was needed to achieve the changes?

- Training in mindset change and retraining
- Agri-inputs
- Community involvement

RESULTS

Outputs

Food production and income generation

- SACU helped the beneficiaries grow crops and vegetables by training them in simple techniques including manure composting and kitchen gardens. Families attended animal management trainings with emphasis on improved animal welfare and received both local cattle and dairy cows and seeds. Because water is a challenge, dairy cows were only placed with those farmers that have a reliable water source nearby. Farmers were trained in water and soil conservation too. Beneficiaries who received inputs agreed to pass on the equivalent gift plus training to others so that the benefits multiply. Twenty women were trained as “Peer Farmer Trainers” and are providing ongoing advice and support to fellow members on organic farming.
- Farmers were also trained on village savings and loans associations to support establishment of small businesses. The farmers were also trained to become effective entrepreneurs in sustainable crop value chains.

Strengthening groups

- The 11 farmer groups were trained in group dynamics, leadership, gender issues and conflict resolution. Group members elected leaders, set by-laws, identified training needs and managed group funds, gaining in confidence so they can manage the project themselves. At

the end of the project, SACU will continue to monitor and support groups until there is evidence that they are self sustaining and self-reliant. SACU developed a “Group Capacity Assessment Tool” to help them do this. This should be in a period of 3-5 years of direct interface.

- Capacity of 435 Farmers and their communities were built in gender relations for the women to optimize benefits from their projects.

Strengthening community disaster preparedness

- The beneficiaries were trained to identify and analyze different types of hazards and examine community managed approaches to reduce disaster risks, assessed the impact of major hazards affecting the communities and developed community action plans to support community managed DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) in consideration to the major hazards in the region.
- The project also promoted the adoption of climate smart technologies by encouraging innovation in sustainable technologies, diversification, training and adoption of early warning systems, growing climate change adaptive crop varieties and by training in environmental protection practices (tree planting, contour bands, water harvesting and conservation, waste recycling, composting and fuel-efficient stoves among others).

Health and hygiene

- Farmers also learnt how to build pit latrines, tip-taps for hand washing and drying racks - basic hygiene practices that help reduce disease. Farmers were also sensitized on family planning, malarial disease control and HIV/AIDS awareness; prevention, counseling and care.

Outcomes

- Farmer groups equipped with skills and confidence to manage their own development initiatives. 11 strong women-led groups in West Nile and 10 women led groups were equipped with skills and confidence and can manage their own development initiatives.
- Increased soil fertility and land productivity that has resulted in a 2-5 fold increase in crop production (measured against Organisational Self Review conducted at the end of 2011), resulting in improved food and nutrition for 435 families (2610 people) in west Nile and 509 in Acholi (3054 people) evidenced by 3 meals per day. Improved hygiene and health for 435 families (2610) people) in west Nile and 509 (3054 people), as compared to baseline survey of 2012.
- Increased income from increased productivity compared to baseline survey of 2012. Incomes have doubled with more than 900 households having access to incomes and have acquired and bought productive assets such as bicycles, which are often referred to iron horses of West Nile. Parents are able to take their children to better school.
- Improved health: There have been reduced cases of illness and related to lack of income, some farmers are able to access and pay for health care in private facilities.
- Trained and equipped farmer groups to become effective entrepreneurs in sustainable value chains. 21 groups have been trained and equipped to become effective entrepreneurs in sustainable value chains (growing marketable crops, value Chain governance and bulking of produce for collective marketing). Farmers have formed producer association in which they now collectively sell their produce, for example Pulka Women group which bulked over 20 tonnes of coffee and Gum Peloke and Ribe Aye Teko has bulked soya and yellow beans respectively close to 10 tonnes.
- Increased resilience to disaster. There is increased resilience to disasters such as floods, droughts, cattle and crop diseases. This is remarkable in 21 communities against The 2007-2012 strategic plan midterm review.
- Enhanced self esteem for project participants with disabilities, Persons Living with Hiv/Aids (PLWHA's), child mothers, and widows (ea). These groups of participants have been widely accepted by the communities they live in through extensive sensitization and counseling services conducted through Music dance and drama.
- Improved family and community cohesion. There is remarkably better sharing of household tasks, reduced domestic violence, and greater appreciation for women/girl child rights

including inheritance rights, increased access, control and ownership of House hold resources by women. Notably, the case of one Sabina Ayiorwoth, a widow who lost her husband recently and lives with her 3 children and grand children. The community members made it clear that she will remain the administrator of her husband's properties including her children. They now look after their cow with her children who are all girls. The girls did not have any hope of any property but thanks to SACU for the awareness created, none of their male relatives has inherited their mother as a wife nor taken away any of their property.

Impact

- Enhanced household incomes, production and productivity capacities. Farmer household production and productivity capacities have more than doubled in 73% (695 HHs) of participating household as indicated by increased volumes of surplus produce that is being bulked and marketed together. This has in turn translated into strengthened incomes earned by the households and thus ability to access basic necessities. Reduced disease incidences. This has been as a result of improved home hygiene and sanitation amongst target households and hence households have more time for work and saving on medical expenses.
- Strengthened family relations. There has been remarkable reduction in domestic violence since there is shared responsibility and restored love among family members and decision making has been collectively made.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project has registered some successes by organizing farmers into producer groups and training them on leadership and managerial skills, built their capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change and variability and availed them with agro-inputs like high yielding crop seeds and animals.

The project has gone a long way to help farmers however the need is still big particularly in

- Value chain analysis and mapping
- Capacity building in collective marketing-bulking and bargaining
- Adding value to produce-lack of processing equipment
- Financial numeracy and literacy

Tips and more

- Even the landless households can through creativity with what is available to them have food on their plate as well as some income regardless of owning no land; this is possible through the backyard gardens which do not require big chunks of land. Households are able to grow vegetables for food as well as for sale and use the proceeds for their children's education and general welfare at home.
- The backyard/kitchen gardens are a climate smart approach and therefore women continue to grow vegetables throughout the year ensuring that there is a sustainable source of their income and food.

HUMAN INTEREST

Success story

Titirach Roselyn of Bedo Ber Ogonjo is one of the beneficiaries of SACU intervention and received all the inputs given by SACU such as seeds and livestock among others. She received her cow in 2012 and shortly the cow calved down and she started milking the cow after 3 days.



ONL Business Ambassadors enjoying milk at Ongojo's milk bar

The community of Bedober is widely known for having many drunkards who do not drink individually but in bars where they sell local brew. Being a very creative farmer Roselyn started boiling milk and mixed it with sugar and started selling the milk in the same community. Little did she know her boiled milk gave birth to a milk bar, where instead of gathering to take local brew and the community members were taking milk in the evening while they pass their time and tell stories.

This has greatly earned her a lot of income in her home which has now enabled her to pay school fees for her five children (two boys and three girls), who are both in primary and secondary schools. The milk bar has also greatly impacted on the entire community. There have been reduced cases of domestic violence since the men who used to drink alcohol now drink milk.

Amia; a non-beneficiary said, "A Miracle has happened in this community, I did not spend a single week without being beaten by my husband. I thought I was unfortunate in my life but when this milk bar started; my husband stopped drinking heavily and instead comes back when he is sober and we are able to plan and do things collectively.

Dratibi Gilbert, whose wife is a member of Oduleba Women Group shared his success and had this to say; "When this group started in 2010 I told my wife to join because that was something for women. In 2012, when SACU intervention came in, my wife told me the organization I sent her to join was very complicated because they want every household member to participate and other group members though indirectly.



Gilbert shows off his iron sheets and the new chairs

I was touched and decided to go and see these people of Send a Cow. I was surprised to learn that all of us are supposed to join Primary One (P.1) level in poverty eradication training. Yet there were members who had completed Primary seven. When the training started I was very attentive up to the end.

After the training I realized that I was lost and did not know anything in as far as changing the future of my family was concerned. Remember I have five children. But after putting in practice what we were taught, I became a cell leader and my home hygiene improved drastically since I did all that was required of me.

Later on I was rewarded for maintaining my home clean I should say with a crossbreed heifer in June 2013 which fortunately calved down normally in December 2013. Four days later, I started milking the cow. I could not believe that a cow could give 20 litres of milk in a day. This is something I had never seen in my life. The cow started by giving me between 10 – 12 litres in the morning and 6-7 litres in the evening. Imagine, I earn at least Shs.15,000/- daily. After one week, the money was too much. I knew I had become a salary earner and no longer 'poor Gilbert'. This uplifted the face of my family because the song of no money in the house and the violence brought about by poverty was no more.

My family now lives its dream. We have started implementing our dream of constructing a permanent house because we already have 15 iron sheets bought from the proceeds of milk, 6 plastics chairs already in the house and a plastic table which I and my wife would not have thought of owning. We thank Send a Cow Uganda and Oxfam Novib which funded this initiative because they gave us the right tools to fight poverty. We now plan together as a family and we are sure our children will never fail to go to school because if it is money, then we have it.

© Oxfam Novib March 2014, February 2016

First published as an internal document in Oxfam Novib March 2014

Loaded to the Oxfam iLibrary and first published online February 2016

The Oxfam Novib Programme Case Studies are documents prepared as background to the Annual Reports from the organisation. They are shared here mainly in the form in which they were submitted, often written by partners whose first language is not English, and they have not been extensively edited since submission. We believe that the meaning of the text is clear enough, and the authenticity of the reporting and the availability of Southern Voices on development makes their inclusion in the Oxfam iLibrary worthwhile for sharing with external readers. If you want to ask for more information or need clarification on meaning for any title in the series, please email info@oxfamnovib.nl

This case study was written by Harriet Mbabazi.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail info@oxfamnovib.nl

This publication is copyright but the text and accompanying photographs and graphics may be used free of charge for advocacy, campaigning, public and institutional education, teaching, programme development, research and knowledge sharing, provided that the use is not undertaken for direct commercial benefit, that the source is acknowledged in full, and any changes or modifications to the text are clearly shown. The copyright holder requests that all such free-of-charge use is registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, or for any form of commercial publication, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. email policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published through the Oxfam iLibrary by Oxfam GB for Oxfam Novib in February 2016.

Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, United Kingdom

Oxfam Novib, P.O. Box 30919, 2500 GX The Hague, The Netherlands

Aahung, Karachi, Pakistan

OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org.

www.oxfamnovib.nl



OXFAM