

SECURE LIVELIHOODS FOR SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN WEST NILE REGION, UGANDA

PHASE II [OEZA 2826-00/2020]



ANNUAL REPORT



Introduction

The Migration II Project whose goal is, “refugees and host communities have secure livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development within Rhino and Yumbe resettlement areas, in West Nile Region, Uganda” contributes to SDG 1 – 2 (combating poverty and hunger) of South Sudanese refugees and host communities in Uganda. Directly the project reached to 750 households (572 females, 178 males; 366 refugees, 384 nationals) and 110 new youth (54 females, 56 males; 55 refugees, 55 nationals) while indirectly the project reached 5,250 (with average of 7 members per household). This report highlights the progress made in 2020 as well as the challenges faced and lessons learnt.

Implementation Progress

Below are the various activities that were implemented in the reporting period.

Result 0:

Start-up, Monitoring, learning and close out activities

A0.1: Procure logistics: The project procured two laptops.

A0.2: Conduct staff induction and refresher trainings: Project Officers (POs) and Farmer Field School Facilitators (FFSFs) were inducted in Arua with a focus on understanding phase two of the project’s core direction, strategies, expected results and targets as well as the mainstreaming of migration

awareness, protection, gender and environment conservation. Internally the Implementing Partners (IPs) - AFARD and Palm Corps - inducted their teams on the ADA code of conduct.

A0.3: Stakeholders briefing meetings: Each IP conducted a stakeholder briefing meeting to secure project buy-in and clarify stakeholder roles and responsibilities and 41 participants (06 females, 35 males; 12 refugees, 29 nationals) drawn from local government staff, Refugee Welfare Council (RWCs), livelihood sector partners (DRC, Welthungerhilfe, CEFORD), UNCHR, OPM attended.

A0.4: Conduct a gender analysis study: An external consultant conducted this study, which helped to improve the gender indicator targets.

A0.5: Revise the monitoring and evaluation plan: Building on the recommendations of Phase I external evaluation and gender analysis study, the project M&E plan was reviewed by PALM Corps, digitalized into Kobo-Collect and the project staff were inducted on its use.

A0.6: Attended Livelihood Sector Working Group (LSWG) meetings: The project management attended coordination meetings both physically (from Jan – April) and Online (via Zoom/Skype) due to COVID-19 restrictions. Emphasis has been placed on livelihood diversification support, youth skilling, VSLA for IGA and cash for work to enable refugees cope with livelihood shocks as well as block farming, value addition, natural resource conservation, market linkages and financial inclusion.

A0.7: Field visits by management staff and Board: To assess progress and strengthen linkages, both IPs held 22 field visits including joint ones with staffs from local government, partners, OPM, UNHCR, Board and management t with stakeholder.

A0.8 Conduct bi-annual group performance review meetings: A total of 50 group performance reviews (40 for FFS and 10 for youth groups) was conducted to validated membership, appraised group growth, review VSLA, and leadership performance as well as jointly discuss challenges experienced.

A0.9: Hold annual district review and learning workshops: This was conducted by AFARD in Yumbe district to assess the achievements, challenges and suggest possible solutions. The stakeholders engaged where from Office of the prime minister, UNHCR, District officials, sub county officials, refugee leaders and beneficiary representatives from refugee and host communities. The review started with field visits to youth apprenticeship trainees, commercial woodlot established by refugees, and the upcoming cassava producer cooperative.

A0.10: Conduct annual financial audits: Conducted by BVL & Co. Certified Public Accountants of Uganda.

A0.11: Conduct terminal external evaluation: Planned for year 3

A0.12: Conduct district closeout meetings: Planned for year 3

A0.13: Conduct sensitization meetings on migration: This is an ongoing and mainstreamed activity.

A.0.14: Exchange Visit SOS Children Village Fort Portal: Planned for year 2

Result 1:

Nutrition status of 1,085 targeted households (67% females) in refugees and host communities improved by 2022

A1.1: Conduct refresher training farmer field school facilitators (FFSF): A 5-day residential refresher training on FFS methodology was conducted to enable FFSFs support FFS to develop agricultural calendar-based work plans and set up demonstration or learning sites targeting higher adoption of good agricultural practices.

A1.2: Establish Farmer Field School learning sites: 60 learning sites were established and mini group work adopted to comply with the COVID-19 prevention measures. At these sites, hand washing tanks were provided together with JIK, hand sanitizers and re-useable face masks. While in Yumbe, some FFS groups used cassava cuttings from Phase I to expand their group plots as a strategy to generate income for their groups, in Rhino Camp, vegetables (onions, tomatoes, egg plants and cabbages and pumpkins) were raised. With a learning focus on five selected climate smart agriculture practices, adoption increased (early land opening 89%, correct spacing 84%, integrated pest and disease management 64%, soil and water conservation 88%, and post-harvest handling 90%).

A1.3: Provide start-up agro-inputs: The IPs procured and distributed inputs agro-inputs to 750 households for both cash and food purposes. While vegetable seeds and wheel barrows were provided at mini group level, cassava cuttings, sorghum, sesame, hoes were distributed at individual household level. These were: Vegetables - onions (470 tins), egg plants (520 sachets), kale (500 sachets), Tomato (50 tins), Cabbage (20 tins), Water melon (30 sachets); Pumpkin (120 sachets); Sorghum (2,091 Kgs); Pawpaw (1,100 seedlings); Hoes (500 pcs); Wheel barrows (10 pcs); Cassava NARO CAS 1 (500 bags); and Sesame 2 (1,000kg)

A1.4: Train in Kitchen gardening: A 3-day training of trainers on kitchen gardening facilitated by Kulika Uganda was conducted for the POs and FFSFs. After the training, the staff conducted 90 training sessions with FFS groups on kitchen gardening. This led to increased establishment of own kitchen gardens (Rhino Camp 99.2% and Yumbe 94.2%). The vegetables produced from the kitchen gardens contributed to food security and the excess was sold for income. One refugee said this

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with the reduction in food rations and COVID-19 restrictions, I resorted to vegetable production which has helped me minimize the shock of the pandemic. I use part of the harvest for food and sell part of it for money that I buy with other food stuff and save in my VSLA.

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A1.5: Conduct nutrition education: 40 training sessions were conducted, where married couples attended with their spouses, with a focus on food needs for different social groups especially children, pregnant and lactating mothers, the sick, and the elderly.

A1.6: Train in poultry management: Planned for year 2

Result 2:

Profitable sustainable agriculture practiced by 750 households (67% female headed) in refugees and host communities

A2.1: Develop farming as a business for FFS members: This activity included:

Provision of start-up agro-inputs: To build on the agribusiness focus, FFS members were facilitated to conduct cost-benefit analysis wherefrom they selected priority crops that guides the IPs to provide start-up inputs. A total of 100 training sessions were conducted on the agronomy of the selected crops and the groups planted 225 acres of cassava, 8 acres of water melon, 22 acres of onions, 257.1 acres of simsim, and 181.475 acres of sorghum. The 3 groups who did onions harvested 5,400 kgs, and sold each kg at UGX 5,000. Taban Zubair who planted a quarter acre of water melon noted that,

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I only harvested 70 heads of water melon and was able to earn UGX 318,000. This income is far much better than simsim and groundnuts that I used to plant. I have also learnt lessons e.g, by not buying pheromone trap, I made losses from the fruit flies. I will do this better next year.

”

Piloting small scale value addition:

The project provided 50 tuplins, 03 digital weighing scales, 07 cassava chippers, and 01 small scale cassava mill with a production house to support the formation of Bidibidi United Cassava Producer Cooperative.

Developing collective marketing skills of FFS using one product cluster:

In Yumbe POs conducted trainings on collective marketing skills for FFS members to promote the product cluster approach so that members produce together the same product at the same time, with the same quality primarily for sale. And in each FFS a collective marketing committee was formed and trained.

A2.2: Conduct agribusiness mentoring and coaching: 20 sessions of mentorship and coaching targeting the upcoming producer cooperative together with existing 05 value addition machine beneficiaries (ground nut and simsim paste and hibiscus powder grinding machines), was conducted to help them grow their enterprises.

A2.3: Conduct market linkages: Different market actors were profiled. In Yumbe, AFARD brokered 66 deals between FFS members and input suppliers. As a result, some FFS groups sold 5,400 Kgs of onions worth UGX 27,000,000 collectively. Meanwhile in Rhino Camp FFS members sold 49.6 MT of sesame collectively worth UGX 148,659,000.

Result 3:

Women's average income from economic activities in refugees and host communities has increased by 2022

A3.1: Conduct a labour market scan: An external consultant conducted this study that profiled, analyzed and recommended niche trades for youth skilling.

A3.2: Train youth, women and girls in entrepreneurship skills: 110 youths (PALM Corps 30; AFARD 80) were trained prior to their apprenticeship placement and they were able to clarify their aspirations and set business and life goals.

A3.3: Train and equip youth, women and girls in vocational skills: 110 youths were trained in various vocational skills using the competence-based apprenticeship training model. Master trainers were provided a pre-placement orientation by Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) Assessors. The project paid for master trainers' fees, trainees feeding and basic training materials. AFARD also provided basic startup kits to all the trained youth to aid transition from training to work in own-account enterprises.

A3.4: Train in Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA): First, the informal business market assessment study that identified viable small enterprises and appropriate strategies for their promotion in Bidibidi settlement and Romogi Sub County was conducted. Second, in Yumbe a consultant conducted refresher training for POs and FFSFs in agro-input savings who cascaded the training (by 20 sessions) to FFS members. Third, 133 out of 205 youth were trained on VSLA (19 sessions) and linked to FFS and other VSLA groups to save. In Rhino Camp, 10 new VSLA committees were trained on record keeping and formulation of group VSLA guidelines. While in Rhino Camp the 10 FFS groups cumulatively saved UGX 45,592,200, in Yumbe savings increased to UGX 52,940,000 (excluding Social fund UGX 4,606,300, Agro-input fund UGX 20,260,700).

A3.6: Conduct business mentorship and coaching: 40 business mentorship and coaching sessions were conducted for FFS members and youth using business health check approach that generates enterprise growth gaps and ensures customized business development services support with agreed performance improvement action plans.

Result 4:

Peaceful settlements for refugees and host communities where natural resources are conserved and shared promoted

A4.1: Conduct awareness on natural resource conservation: 30 awareness sessions on natural resource conservation was conducted. In Yumbe, the LECs also used a mobile van and public address system given the COVID-19 restrictions on public gathering to drum up the high risk posed by environmental degradation and the urgency to conserve the environment through tree planting.

A4.2: Procured and supplied fast maturing local tree seedlings: The IPs procured and supplied trees 20,580 tree seedlings (AFARD-15,000 and PALM Corps-5,580). Specifically, in Yumbe refugee planted 1,000 eucalyptus seedlings for the landlord as an incentive for the land offered to them. The annual performance assessment showed tree survival rate at 68.7%.

A4.3: Train in improved energy saving stove making: Planned for year 2

A4.4: Support LECs to implement CEAP: The 05 LECs were supported to review their Phase I CEAP. Due to COVID-19 regulations, the LECs together with the project team implemented activities A4.1 and A4. 2 above.

A4.5: Hold dialogue meetings: A total of 8 dialogue meetings were held in Peace group and it enabled refugees to acquire 119 more acres of land for farming in addition to the 300 acres they acquired in 2019 and the landlords also accepted to give 20 acres for planting commercial community woodlot



The annual performance assessment found out that in the 750 targeted households, 89% ate at least 3 meals daily compared to 73% at baseline value due in part to the COVID-19 response that emphasized frequent eating of nutritious food of different varieties. The average annual income also rose from UGX 140,636 at baseline to UGX 334,836 as more cassava, vegetables and sesame were sold. However, the income of targeted women, youth & girls dropped from UGX 148,780 to UGX 141,000 as well as the ownership of productive assets was at 60% at baseline, this dropped to 32% because most of their businesses were close during the COVID-19 lockdown. Amidst all these, the average monthly savings for households rose from UGX 17,182 to UGX 35,315 and for youth from UGX 25,385 to UGX 38,864. Of the 20,580 trees planted survival rate was at 68.7%.

	Baseline	Progress	Target	
Purpose: Refugees and host communities have secure livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development within Rhino and Yumbe resettlement areas, in West Nile Region, Uganda				
% of the 750 households eat at least 3 meals daily	73%	88.7%	85%	
Increased incomes (UGX)	140,636	334,836	500,000	
% Increase in the number of women who own productive assets	60%	31.6%	85%	
Result 1: Nutrition status of 1,085 targeted households (67% females) in refugees and host communities improved by 2022				
% of the households adopt at least 4 of the 7-climate smart and good agricultural practices	70%	73%	90%	
25% of the households increase in yield (Kgs/acre) of selected crops above baseline	Cassava (Kgs)	960.4	-	4,818
	Sorghum (Kgs)	567.4	-	533
	Poultry (Live birds)	2	11	20
	Sesame (Kgs)	163.02	234.6	180
	Onion (Kgs)	-	45	5
	Water melon (heads)	-	61	1,000
% of the households practice better food preparation, preservation and storage compared to baseline	88%	92.7%	90%	
Result 2: Profitable sustainable agriculture practiced by 750 households (67% female headed) in refugees and host communities				
% households who own agribusinesses	0	-	85%	
# of targeted FFSs that sell their farm produce through collective marketing	0	13	30	
% of targeted FFSs members that sell their farm produce through collective marketing	63%	38%	75%	
Increase in annual income of targeted households (UGX)	140,636	334,836	500,000	
Increase in average monthly savings of targeted households (UGX)	17,182	35,315	32,000	
Result 3: Women's average income from economic activities in refugees and host communities has increased by 2022				
% increase in income of the targeted women, youth & girls (UGX)	148,780	141,000	160,000	
increase in average monthly savings of the targeted women, youth & girls (UGX)	25,385	38,864	31,731	
% of female beneficiaries who own income generating activities	16%	67%	75%	
% of women borrowing from VSLA to start up & sustain IGAs	0%	No data	85%	
% of women in targeted households who adopted at least 3 of the 5 good business management practices	3%	No data	25%	
Average number of hours women spent on paid work	0	4	6	
Result 4: Peaceful settlements for refugees and host communities where natural resources are conserved and shared promoted				
% reduction in the time (1 hour and more) that women and girls spend in search for firewood	65%	No data	25%	
% of targeted households use briquette and other energy saving	59%	53.5%	75%	
20,000 trees planted	-	20,580	20,000	
% trees (20,000) planted at the end of the project	-	68.7%	65%	
% reduction in annual Bush fire occurrence in the community	100%	No data	50%	

Cooperation and networking

- PALM Corps worked closely with AFARD and jointly convened four steering committee meetings. In addition, PALM Corps conducted three coordination visits to AFARD in Yumbe. Involved in key project activities were also the leadership of district (Yumbe, Terego and Arua) and sub County (Romogi, Uriama and Odupi) local governments, Refugee Welfare Council (RWCs), DRC, Welthungerhilfe, OPM, RDC, UNHCR and CEDIL and CEFORD.
- PALM Corps secured 1,250 pawpaw seedlings from National Forestry Authority, seeds from Dan Church Aid, and assorted emergency vegetable seeds from UHNCR. AFARD also secured 2,330 seedlings from DCA through UNHCR and planted pilot commercial community woodlot in Ilanga Village
- In collaboration with the respective District COVID-19 Taskforce, PALM Corps provided assorted food items and blankets to Institutional Quarantine Centre (IQC) in Arua and AFARD provided fuel support for community education. COVID-19 gave strong visibility for PALM Corps and AFARD as most International NGO partners pulled off for the safety of their staff.
- Internally the project staff maintained a close working relationship with its sister both at PALM Corps and AFARD projects especially in terms of cross-skilling in agriculture and beneficiary cross-learning.

Sustainability

- All the 30 FFS groups have continued to save in the VSLA groups over the last three years and this has helped to build group cohesion.
- Youth supported in the phase I have continued to operate own enterprises. For instance, in Rhino Camp, two of the master trainers contracted to train youth in salon and hair dressing in Phase 2.
- FFS groups in Yumbe are advancing into value addition and cooperatives especially in Yumbe.
- FFS groups have maintained ways of raising additional inputs by own means for instance through increasing agro-input savings, home saved seeds, etc.
- In Yumbe, 10 FFS groups in host communities used cassava cuttings from Phase I to expand their group plots as a strategy to generate income for their groups.
- The FFSFs have continued to provide peer support to the farmers to ensure improved adoption of climate smart practices.
- Working in partnership with local government departments has ensured that government policies are known to the FFS members e.g. sourcing for seeds, markets for produce and quality assurance.

Cross-cutting Issues

- The project implementation targeted both refugees and host communities on a 50% ratio. In some groups, including the upcoming cassava cooperatives, there were mixed membership of nationals and refugees.
- Gender responsiveness was maintained as in the project design. Overall, 73% of the targeted beneficiaries are female headed. The Gender Analysis study informed the log frame indicators modification using a gender lens. Planning for activities also take into consideration the time needs of women.
- Environmental conservation was promoted through the planting of 20,580 tree seedlings. Meanwhile selected climate smart agricultural practices were promoted. Local Environment Committees (LECs) were supported to create environmental awareness on bush burning and trees planting. As a result, a pilot commercial woodlot co-owned by national landlord and refugees was planted.



Challenges faced

The following challenges were experienced:

- The COVID 19 pandemic negatively affected a number of FFS group activities. VSLA periodic meetings were restricted and both savings value and loan uptake remained low. The closure of weekly markets and public transport hiked food prices.
- The late onset of rain fall delayed the productive use of first season cycle leading to late planting and harvesting.
- The cost of maintenance of the Phase I motorcycles has become high due to frequent breakdown that also affects the timeliness of field activities.
- Land access has remained difficult for refugees in Village 11 in Yumbe.

Lessons learnt

- COVID-19 has proved the relevance of working with the local partners. At the onset of COVID -19 in March 2020, a number of International NGOs closed shop.
- Building economic resilience takes time. In only few months savings were depleted both cash and productive assets.
- Effective market participation is depended on household food security. During the COVID-19 most households diverted to food production than the commodities for the market.
- A participatory beneficiary selection process especially of youth reduces conflict and enhances acceptability of a project.
- The provision of specialized training to Phase I vocational skills training youth graduates improved market positioning since new skills and product quality is enhanced.

