

Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation (IMI)  
“Innovative forms of training and capacity-building in  
IFAD-supported projects and programmes”  
Policy and Technical Advisory Division

# Sudan

FIELD STUDY



Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

**International Fund for Agricultural Development**

**Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation (IMI)**

**“Innovative forms of training and capacity-building  
in IFAD supported projects and programmes”**

**Field Study**

**Sudan: Training and skills development within the Gash Sustainable  
Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP)**

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# SUDAN

## Training and skills development within the Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP)

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## Acronyms

AHA	Animal Health Agent
GSLRP	Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMI	Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation
NSG	Nutrition and School Gardening Administration
RIMS	Results and Impact Management System
SAAH	State Administration of Animal Health
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Analysis
VPC	Village Pastoralist Committees
WUA	Water User Associations

## Introduction

The case study in Sudan, undertaken in the framework of the Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation (IMI)<sup>1</sup>, analyzed training and skills development activities in the IFAD-supported Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP). The study is an assessment of the type of capacity building and training that can be implemented in an area of great poverty using innovative approaches in community development and training. It illustrates the kind of impact that is possible at individual and community level.

## Background

Sudan is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 169th of 187 countries assessed in the 2011 Human Development Index.<sup>2</sup> Only 40 per cent of Sudan's population (43.2 million) lives in irrigated areas and the country is thinly populated.<sup>3</sup> Pastoralism and shifting cultivation are widely practised. Large movements of people have occurred in many regions due to civil strife. Climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate the rural poverty. These factors have led to a reduction in agricultural production, widespread loss of livestock, increasing seasonal migration of men seeking work in urban and irrigated areas, and displacement of people. Due to recurrent crises, large parts of the country are dependent on humanitarian aid, and much of the country's economy is based on the exchange of goods and services.

## IFAD in Sudan

Sudan has been a priority country for IFAD for many years. Since 1979, the Fund has invested a total of US\$257.0 million in financing for 19 programmes and projects of a total value of US\$604.6 million. IFAD was one of the few donors who continued to provide assistance to the Government of Sudan throughout the embargo thanks to the Government's consistent engagement to address rural poverty issues and its efforts to make regular loan services payments. The Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP), one of IFAD's eight on-going projects,<sup>4</sup> in Sudan, is located in Kassala State in the country's eastern region. The Gash delta and its flood irrigation scheme is a major economic asset and is vital to food security and income generation. Despite its natural and social resources, the area is ranked among the poorest in Kassala State. In this challenging context, the Government launched GSLRP in 2004 as an innovative rural development programme, with the assistance of an IFAD loan of US\$24.9 million

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<sup>1</sup> The Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation is a three-year initiative to enhance IFAD's capacity to promote innovations that will have a positive impact on rural poverty.

<sup>2</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

<sup>3</sup> Total surface area: 2 505 813 sq km; population density: 16.5 people per sq km (UN Data 2008)

<sup>4</sup> <http://operations.ifad.org/web/ifad/operations/country/home/tags/sudan>

(63.9 per cent of the total project costs). The project's focus on irrigation and infrastructure rehabilitation is accompanied by support to key reforms in the governance of land and water resources and capacity-building. The project addresses the subsistence and economic base of the communities that rely on seasonal flooding of the Gash River and the surrounding rangelands for crop and livestock production, food processing, trade, and other non-farm micro-enterprises and income-generation activities.

### Targeting the poor

Based on the poverty ranking conducted at project formulation, 67,000 households representing 89 per cent of the rural households in the project area were poor. Approximately 57,000 households were living under the poverty line and were classified into three subgroups:

- The poorest (approximately 20,000 households) and landless, who have no access to irrigated land, do not own livestock, and mainly depend on casual labour on local farms, in villages and local towns; most depend on selling firewood and charcoal for their livelihoods. This group comprises about 4,500 female-headed households.
- The landless with access to at least half a feddan<sup>5</sup> of irrigated land through sharecropping from relatives and others (approximately 17,000 households) with production not sufficient to meet their basic needs. Most supplement their income from casual labour and charcoal selling. They may own a cow and few heads of small ruminants.
- Landowners (approximately 20,000 households) who have one feddan of irrigated land registered in their names and may sharecrop up to two feddans or more. They may own one cow and up to 10 heads of small ruminants.

The Hadendowa, the largest tribe of the Beja ethnic group, has traditional land rights. The tribe consists of semi-nomadic pastoralists who grow staple grains at subsistence level as a limited secondary activity. Living in larger villages of mud brick houses and in smaller settlements of traditional tenting, they are dependent on subsistence farming on very small holdings sharecropping, a few livestock, casual labour, firewood collection and sale, and charcoal making and marketing. Traditionally, women take care of the homestead, have no other additional productive activities, and live in confinement. The majority are illiterate and do not speak Arabic, the official language. Because of increasing poverty, women developed alternative coping mechanisms including home-based income-generating activities such as mat making and savings groups (sanduq) to improve household food security.

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<sup>5</sup> One feddan = 1.038 acres

Livestock disease and death are a major cause of impoverishment for households. Government veterinary services are weak and recurrent drought and resulting feed shortages contributed to livestock attrition. A drought of the early 1980s caused the vast majority of livestock to perish. As a result, the Hadendowa, who were primarily livestock herders, began to also produce crops to supplement their livestock.

### **Training and participatory community development**

Initially, training and capacity-building activities on life skills and vocational skills were a minor component of the GSLRP, which was mainly focused on infrastructure rehabilitation and land and water access reform. Training of water-user associations had started in 2007/2008 but did not meet the required quality standards. In 2010 the training activities became more relevant to the water-user associations, and the training is now delivered by a core team from the state.

The irrigation rehabilitation works were completed and the formalization of land titles could not proceed as planned because of power issues and local elite capture. At this point, the strategic importance of life and vocational skill training activities was recognized as a means to empower beneficiaries. It became clear that without community development and increased individual and collective capabilities, other components would not be successful. In 2010, community development was a major activity implemented during the year and had increased by 25 per cent compared to previous years.

A major element of the project design was a participatory approach, which started with a Sustainable Livelihood Analysis (SLA). It captured the views of poor villagers and other proposed project participants, presented their interpretation of their past, their hopes for the future, their constraints and their potential. Participatory methods remained a fundamental feature during implementation.

Since women have a limited productive role and live in isolation in the encampments, activities started with raising awareness among women and men about the importance of including women in social and economic life. Before starting any training activities, the approval of men, in particular of tribal leaders, was needed. Community development facilitators capable of speaking the local language were recruited and trained in participatory methods. The combination of training activities was identified with the community groups, based on an assessment of women's needs and skills, existing resources and future opportunities arising from the agricultural rehabilitation.

### **Methodology**

The field study (May 2011) builds on a quantitative and qualitative assessment carried in 2008. Data collection in 2008 included meetings with staff from the project and partner institutions, field survey questionnaires and focus group discussion with



beneficiaries and providers. Information and data about training in food processing, handicrafts, brick making and animal health was collected from a sample of beneficiaries through questionnaires and focus group discussions.<sup>6</sup> The study assessed the trainings delivered by the project from the beneficiaries' point of view and in terms of adequacy of the training and its economic and social impact on their lives. As result of the assessment, several changes were introduced in the training programmes.

GSLRP was selected for an IMI field study (May 2011) to follow-up on the 2008 assessment, which is an excellent example of a detailed micro-study of training methodology, targeting and outcomes that can be undertaken in IFAD-supported projects. Despite the small numbers of trainees in each category, important lessons can be learned due to the diligence in collecting data and thorough analysis. The methodology applied in the 2011 field study included field visits, focus group discussions and interviews with selected beneficiaries.

### **Improved livelihoods in project areas**

A household survey carried out in 2008, three years after the baseline survey, showed that project intervention had resulted in improvement in the educational levels due to increased awareness and participation in the literacy training. Health and hygiene improved as evidenced by the increased number of the children vaccinated, legal midwives trained and more services provided in remote communities.

Due to the intervention of the project, housing had improved as indicated by a higher number of bricks or mud houses, establishment of latrines and shift from traditional to improved latrines. Most of the houses in the project area (37 per cent) are huts (gutiah), which are constructed from sorghum straws. About 44 per cent of the sampled families indicated that their houses improved during the last four years; 33 per cent of them established new latrines. Despite that, 61 per cent of the sampled families still have no latrine. The quality and sources of drinking water had improved as reported by 67 per cent of the sampled families. Consumption patterns changed with increased intake of milk, eggs and vegetables coupled with an apparent shift in the source of fuel, from wood to charcoal and kerosene and increased expenditure on health, education, food and clothing.

The survey indicated that there is an improvement in animal ownership. The major assets owned by the households are bicycles, cupboards, radios, iron beds, and some mobile phones, and televisions.

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<sup>6</sup> A total of 10 enumerators were employed and about 400 questionnaires evaluated.

## **Training under the GSLRP**

In GSLRP, training and capacity-building activities were implemented under the community development and capacity-building component (Nutrition Food Processing; Home Economics; Brick Making) and under the Animal Production and Rangeland Management interventions (Community Para-Veterinarians also called Animal Health Workers). This study analyzes the type of training offered, the targeting and selection of participants, their motivation, the trainers and providers, the transfer of knowledge and sustainability.

Prior to the training, three-day-awareness campaigns were organized in each village to mobilize communities and inform them about training components. The campaigns targeted men and women. It was important to gain men's approval first for training activities for women. The campaigns focused on the role of women in the community development process and the importance of developing life skills so women could contribute effectively to development at the household level, which in turn contributes to socio-economic development of their communities. The elders and community leaders supported the idea on condition that women organized their own development committees because local traditions prohibit men and women from sitting together in public meetings.

The campaigns were viewed as a good beginning for the training, in particular to encourage women to join the training activities. They were implemented in collaboration with the local partners selected by the project to deliver community training. Interventions of Community Para-Veterinarians (paravets) were not initiated by awareness campaigns. The lack of adoption and unwillingness of the community to remunerate paravets for their services indicated that campaigns are needed to raise awareness and explain the important role veterinary services play in increasing livestock productivity.

## **Types of training**

### **Nutrition, food processing and home economics**

Following the awareness campaigns, the project established women development committees in 69 villages from 2005 onwards. In 35 of the villages, the committees facilitated training on food processing, handicrafts, animal husbandry, cooking with energy-saving stoves, planting community forests and literacy.

Two courses on nutrition and food processing were delivered separately. The first course on household nutrition covered the nutritional benefits of staple foods like vegetables, eggs, meat and milk. Women learned how to prepare a variety of dishes and special meals with high nutrition value for children and pregnant women. The food-processing course covered processing and production of biscuits, pastries, vermicelli,

drying of vegetables, sesame and groundnuts candies, cheese and yogurt with herbs and spices (mish).

After the 2008 assessment, the two courses were merged into one course on home economics that was opened to all interested women. The evaluation had shown that the majority of women benefited from the food processing and nutrition training and improved preparation of different food items and dishes, but solely for household consumption and not for business. New topics were added to the course, including improved stoves, hygiene and public health, care for children and primary nursing. The project started to deliver the home economics course together with a literacy education course using the REFLECT methodology.<sup>7</sup> From 2005 to 2009, the project trained 1,500 women in food processing and home economics and 359 women in first aid/primary nursing.



### Animal health workers

The objective of the training of animal health workers was to improve livestock production in the area. The selected beneficiaries were trained in preventative animal health care, simple curative procedures, improved animal husbandry practices, record keeping, and simple accounting. After completing the training, they were licensed by the

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<sup>7</sup> The REFLECT method was developed by ActionAid in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador based on the concepts of Paulo Freire and the participatory rural appraisal method. The majority of organizations working with REFLECT see it not as an approach to literacy but as a people-centred development and advocacy work. [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org)

animal health authorities to take up the responsibilities of routine basic animal health care in their villages and seasonal settlements on cost-recovery basis. They can deliver their services under the supervision of the veterinary officers attached to the mobile clinic provided by the project. To enhance the sustainability of the service, the paravets provide their services at cost and receive refresher advanced training annually. Each Animal Health Agent (AHA) received a basic veterinary kit and an initial supply of medicines on loan from the veterinary revolving fund, which was established by the project to serve the area. They were required to repay the loan in instalments with the income from the sale of services and medicines, to be sold at an agreed margin added to the purchase price.

### **Artisanal skills - brick making**

Among the community development interventions, brick making was the only training offered to men aged 18 to 45 years. Targeting was based on interest and unemployment.



The 2008 assessment found that neither self-employed nor day labourer trainees used the new skills they learned. Kilns are located outside the project area and work in the brick kilns would have meant they had to spend several weeks or months away from the village. The Hadendowa in general are not used to seasonal migration outside their traditional areas for longer periods. In view of this, the project stopped training in red



brick making. In 2010, it started to train groups of men in green bricks and introducing this simpler technique where bricks are made of mud and other local additives and not baked in kilns like red bricks, but are dried in the sun. Communities needed local builders to establish community development centres and construct houses for pastoralists settling down and demanded more training in brick making. In the project area, most of the houses and shops are constructed from green bricks and few local builders are specialized in building this material. The training consisted of theory (20 per cent) and practical part (80 per cent). The project trained 35 builders in five villages. By May 2011, training was conducted in five villages and the number of trainees in each village had increased from 7 to 30 because of high demand.

### **Targeting and selection**

Various methods of targeting and selection were used, based on the type of training. The nutrition course was open to all women interested. The food-processing course was initially an advanced course for women who had taken the nutrition course and had shown an aptitude to use the skills gained, including for income generation. In the second phase, the combined course on home economics was offered to all women in the participating villages. Priority was given to the very poor, widows, and female heads of household who were interested in establishing income-generating activities. For the training of AHAs, the State Administration of Animal Health (SAAH) set criteria for selection. Candidates had to be a permanent residents of the village; not be suffering from any serious health problems; able to read and write; not older than 35 years; and having a keen interest in becoming a paravet.

AHA trainees were selected by the village pastoralist committees (VPC), which interviewed candidates and did the selection without the involvement of the SAAH. However, it appears that the above criteria were not strictly adopted. Some VPCs may have practiced favouritism due to the fact that each trainee was entitled to a training allowance, which exceeded the cost of transportation, food and accommodation. The per diem was one of the main drivers because many of the trainees were either unemployed or employed in day labour with low daily wages. In interviews conducted in May 2011, three persons who received the paravet training confirmed that they would have taken the training without a per diem. Two of these three were employed. However, the majority were not in a position to cover their training expenses because they were either unemployed or doing daily work with unsteady income. When the trainees were asked about the benefits gained from the paravet training, 34 per cent of the responses had mentioned the per diem given during the training (2008 assessment).

The training in brick making was open to men in the villages and no specific criteria were established. Some of the trainees had completed elementary school but others had

not received any education. Their main occupation is farming and animal rearing. Some make and sell charcoal. All the trainees took training to increase their incomes.

### **Background and motivation of trainees**

The 2008 assessment showed that more than 60 per cent of the beneficiaries lacked previous knowledge and experience in the training subjects, about 32 per cent had limited knowledge and experience, and the rest ranked their prior knowledge and experience as good. The majority of the beneficiaries (72 per cent) expressed an interest in acquiring knowledge and skills as the main reason for enrolling in the training programme. Other motives included an interest in assisting their families, interaction and socialization with their community, and increased social status and respect.

In 2008, 88 per cent of trainees in home economics mentioned income generation (32 per cent) and diversification of family diet (30 per cent) as drivers to participate in the training. Approximately 22 per cent confirmed that their main motive was to socialize and have contact with other women. Generally, women only meet for short times at social occasions such as weddings and funerals. The training sessions enabled them to socialize in a sheltered environment.

### **Trainers and training providers**

The project partnered with local institutions to deliver the training in the communities, which helped to enhance local resources and build the capacities of the collaborating institutions. Local partners were contracted in their fields of specialization. Contracts were based on technical and financial proposals presented by the implementing partner and submitted to the project for discussion and approval. The subject-by-subject contract was considered to be an effective approach as it enforced planning that led to replications of efforts and ensured effective organization and implementation of the training. The project's annual training plan was prepared and discussed with partners and agreements were made for the whole year. Partners were expected to prepare technical and financial proposals for each type of training. It was suggested to prepare a standard package that could be used by the implementing partners and that allowed the project to have more input into its development.

Veterinary doctors from SAAH, State Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Health, which acts as the project local partner for the Livestock Development and Range Management component, delivered the training of the AHAs. Training in kiln-baked red brick making was organized by the Kassala Vocational Training Center which is owned and managed by the State Government. For the training in green brick making, the project relied on the skills of the local builders.

The main provider of technical assistance in the food processing and home economics training was the Nutrition and School Gardening Administration (NSG) of the State Ministry of Education (see Box 1). Other partners in the training were the State High Council of Youth and the local extension workers. Most of the trainers of the other secondary partners were principally trained by the NSG. In 2005, GSLRP contracted the NSG to deliver training in food processing and home economics. NSG nominated eight qualified junior trainers to organize food processing training courses for women's groups in the participating villages. The other two partners provided 23 trainers throughout the training period during project implementation. Before the training started, the project organized an orientation workshop for the trainers to inform them about the project goal, objectives and components and the project implementation approaches.

**Box 1: The Nutrition and School Gardening Administration in Kassala State**

The Nutrition and School Gardening Administration (NSG) was established in 1978 by the Federal Nutrition and School Gardening Administration based in Khartoum, which itself was set up in 1964 by the Federal Ministry of Education, in cooperation with FAO and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture.

The main objective of NSG is to increase the nutritional and health status of children in schools by targeting both students and their mothers. The staff of the NSG in Kassala includes eight senior qualified trainers. The trainers attended the rural education diploma course, which was specifically tailored to the needs of the NSG. The rural education course is a three-year course organized by the Faculty of Agriculture of Khartoum University and the Food Processing Center affiliated to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. The training covers animal production, horticulture, forestry and food processing. Around 50 per cent of the diploma course is allocated to food processing training.

NSG Kassala trained around 24 junior trainers to work with the targeted beneficiaries and communities in urban and rural areas. The junior trainers usually receive an initial three-month training after which they are qualified to train women in rural and urban centres. The junior trainers receive a refresher training every year. Junior trainers sent to rural areas speak the local languages.

The NSG have designed courses targeting different women groups, including mothers and household heads in rural and urban area; teachers in schools; men and women who sell breakfast meals to students in schools; and women who plan to establish cafeterias in urban areas. The NSG is a training provider for UN organizations like IFAD or WFP as well as for national and international NGOs. In addition to the mentioned working relationships, the NSG has been organizing direct training for teachers.

## Location of training

The training for green brick making was conducted at village level. AHA trainees were given stipends to cover the cost of food, accommodation and transportation to the training site, which was first at village level and then in the veterinary clinic.

Accommodation for facilitators in food processing and securing suitable training venues in the villages remained a challenge. In most villages, the training was delivered at schools and usually started after the students finished their lessons and left the buildings.

Because of lack of housing and the difficulty trainers faced staying in remote areas for a long period, adjustments were made to the length of the training in home economics. Initially there were no community or women development centres in the villages targeted by the project. Later on the skills of men trained in green brick making and construction were put to use and the project assisted some village communities to construct and furnish community centres. The centres were used for training and enabled women to meet and discuss their concerns and to produce food and pastries collectively. In the beginning, the length of the training course was 30 days. Later, the course duration was reduced to 15 days and the training hours per day were increased.

### **Training approaches**

The Animal Health Administration of Kassala State provided the training for AHAs. Once selected, the trainee candidates received a trial training of five days in their villages. Only successful candidates were selected for the advanced 21-day training in the veterinary clinic in Kassala town. The theoretical (30 per cent) and practical (70 per cent) training was delivered by professional veterinarians and covered primary animal health care; epidemic diseases and vaccination; meat inspection and hygiene; transmitted diseases between humans and animals; animal production and feeds preparation; study visits to Kassala slaughterhouse and the demonstration farm; common medicines used for primary health care and protection against common diseases (dosages, preservation); and leather tanning and preservation. The three-week training was considered short and may not have enabled all the trainees to understand and apply the knowledge delivered. The standard paravet training curriculum designed in other states of Sudan is usually delivered in two months. After the training, the AHAs received graduation certificates, toolkits and a stock of medicines, which were considered adequate incentives for the paravets to establish small primary veterinary care business in their villages.

The food processing training was organized by NSG for groups of 25 to 30 women, often divided into two sub-groups according to the training subjects. The NSG training methodology included practical and theoretical sessions. At the end of each practical session, the trainees had to take a practical test. If the performance of some trainees was not satisfactory, the trainer asked better performing trainees to assist them. At the end of each course, NSG evaluated the trainees with the help of a questionnaire to find out more about the number of meals prepared per day, contents of meals, drinks people take and other questions to find out whether the trainees benefited from the course.



The trainers assisted illiterate trainees to fill in these questionnaire. The standard training cost for 25 trainees was around SDG 15,000<sup>8</sup>, around SDG 600 per trainee. This cost is reasonable and justified considering the social and economic impacts of the training.

## Using skills for employment or income generation

### Animal health workers

The 2008 assessment showed that the training of animal health workers or community paravets was not successful. The negligible rate of adoption can be attributed to the selection process and the lack of incentives to continue using the knowledge gained.

Income generated from being a paravet was not sufficient to meet household needs. Most of trainees did not have a permanent income source and depend on casual work within or outside the project area, which made them unavailable in the village most of the time. This shows that the selection criteria stated above was not adequate to ensure that the trained persons will deliver primary animal health care services in a reliable and sustainable manner and when needed. The income from paravet services should be a secondary income supporting the original source and not the main source. This finding is clearly supported by the profiles of the three paravets interviewed in May 2011. Of the 20 trained paravets, only one paravet was still operating (see Box 2).

Approximately 40 per cent of the initial stocks of medicine delivered to the paravets after the training were not used appropriately. One of the paravets sold all the quantity in the market in one transaction, two others have not used the stock at all because they have never practiced the services, and four have used part of the stock and left the balance until it expired. Most paravets confirmed selling the medicines directly or through treating animals and used the income for consumption and not for buying new stock of medicines.

Trainees had expectations for income before the training and hoped that they would either establish veterinary service businesses, which will generate reasonable incomes, or will be employed by the animal health authorities as paravets in their villages and community settlements.

With the exception of one paravet (Box 2), no other paravet has implemented these expectations. None of them was employed by the SAAH because salaried employment was not part of the intervention plan. Those keen to establish primary animal health care businesses were constrained by the fact that their communities were not willing to pay for the service. This is also a result of fluctuations in the Government policy for

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<sup>8</sup> 1 SDG = US\$ 37.

providing veterinary care services. Traditionally it had been Government policy to provide free animal health services, especially routine vaccinations. Several years ago the policy changed, and sometimes the service to pastoralists was provided free of charge and at other times at a cost. SAAH had been providing free vaccination and treatment services in the project area using the mobile clinic provided by the project at the time when the AHAs graduated from the training.

In addition to the above factors, the four female paravets were never given toolkits and drugs after graduation. SAAH justification was that women might not be able to function as paravets given their restricted mobility and the perception that they would not be able to deal with livestock.

### **Box 2: Profile of a Community Para-Veterinarian**

**Name:** Mohamed Mahmud

**Village:** Hadalya

**Age:** 45

**Marital Status:** Married with 3 children

**Education:** Secondary Level

**Main Occupation:** Imam of the Mosque; Employed with Ministry of Religious Affairs

**Income from main source:** SDG 300

**Livestock ownership:** Sheep and goats; his extended family owns sheep, goats, cows and camels

**Paravet training:** Trained in 2005. After successfully completing the initial five-day trial training, he completed the three-week training

**Other trainings:** None

**Adoption and description of the paravet practice:**

- Practicing since 2005 mainly for income generation.
- Owns a stall for selling veterinary medicines.
- Tours the nearby villages and nomads' settlements to treat livestock.
- Used to obtain his drug supplies from drug revolving stock established with the project support and managed by the Animal Health Administration of the State Ministry of Agriculture. Since the revolving stock ceased functioning more than two years ago, he started to obtain his drug supplies from Kassala Market.

**Monthly net income from the paravet services:** SDG 100 – equivalent to 33 per cent of his income from the main source.

**Relation with the State Animal Health Authority:**

Limited to informing the authorities about any disease outbreaks in the area.

**Aspirations:**

- Expand delivery of the services in the surrounding villages and nomads settlements using appropriate means of transportation.
- More young men from his area to be trained as paravets and would like to employ them because of a high demand for the service.
- Establishing a veterinary clinic and an enclosure to isolate animals infected with transmittable diseases.

## Brick makers

Brick makers used their skills to build the community centres in their villages as part of the training. After the training, demand for brick houses increased and trainees started to build their own houses and houses for the other community members on demand. All trained brick makers met by the case study team confirmed that they wanted to be professional builders.

### **Box 3: Green brick making in Togali village**

In Togali, a nomadic community that recently settled, seven men were trained in green brick making and used their skills to build approximately 80 houses. Each one-room house is built for lump sum ranging from SDG 200-300. The fees depend on the financial position of the person demanding the service.

The owner of the house must provide all the materials and contribute with his and other family members' labour. The builders also expect to receive future rewards if they are in need of financial or material support for family consumption. This future reciprocal reward is a traditional practice called the silif (mutual exchange of benefits). The reward is usually in kind and in the form of sorghum for the household consumption or livestock. The livestock is given for a limited period up to one year. During this period, the person rewarded through the silif tradition will make use of the milk production and have the right to own the offspring delivered during this period.

While building the 80 houses, the seven men have trained another 35 men. After settling, the Togali community is looking forward for more and better education for their children to assist in developing the village and establishing all the basic services in the village. One of their plans is to construct a market place adjacent the tarmac road. More construction will be needed.

## Food processors

In 2008, 38 per cent of trainees in food processing, confirmed that they were using the skills for income generation. Of these, 91 per cent established new businesses and 9 per cent improved existing businesses that they already own. Those using the skills are producing biscuits, pancakes, candies, vermicelli, and dried vegetables like okra, onion and hot pepper. Of the 52 who established new business, 35 did not own any business before the training, thus increasing the number of business owners in the sample from 47 to 82 - an increase of 74 per cent. This increase is very significant given the limited market demand and the local traditions, which prevent women from selling their products in the market. Of the 52 women who established new income sources, 71 per cent sell their products from home, 17 per cent sell the products directly in the village or outside the village, and 12 per cent sell outside the village through other persons such a brother, husband or an elderly woman. Those who sell by themselves outside the house are either not from the indigenous clans or could be elderly women and widowed.

At the time of the 2008 assessment, 20 per cent of the businesses in food processing had been functioning for six months, 57 per cent for 6 to 12 months, and 23 per cent for more than one year. This is an indication that the majority of the businesses are viable. Around 90 per cent of the new businesses were established within one month after the training and 87 per cent of the owners confirmed that their incomes increased.

The majority of those who used the food processing skills were from villages with high populations, schools and other social services, market places, villages near Kassala, or located on the tarmac road to Port Sudan or near it. This finding implies that the types of skills trainings targeting each area or village should be based on market demand, availability of inputs, or the comparative advantages of the area.



In the focus group discussions of May 2011, women using the food processing skills for income generation mentioned that they work individually or in groups. Those who work in groups produce soft drinks and biscuits and sell them in exhibitions. The groups usually become more active before the two Eids and during Ramadan when demand for their products increases. The women who work in groups use the income to buy raw materials and equipment to increase production. One of the groups in Digain village is saving the profits to buy a tent and chairs to be rented in the social occasions. Those working individually normally use the profits to buy food or other household items such as bed sheets and utensils. The group in Tindilai village which includes 30

women, started to save SDG 5 per month per each group member. They used the savings to produce and sell biscuits and dried okra and onions. They produce twice a month and completed about 20 production cycles. The profits realized in each cycle ranged from SDG 30 to 40, which they used to buy utensils for making biscuits and soft drinks and rented them out to families in social occasions. The group also uses the profits to issue free emergency loans to its members.

The skills gained from the home economics training were widely adopted within the household for consumption purposes. In focus group discussions, women confirmed that the home economics, literacy training and working in groups changed their lives.

**Box 4: In their own words**

- "Before the training, we were just sitting in the house. But through training, we became more enlightened and active. Meetings have broadened our thinking."
- "We learned how to speak Arabic and how to pray and cite the Koran."
- "Before the training, our meals were mainly sorghum porridge or KISRHA (sorghum pancake) and sauce made of sour milk or dried okra. Now we know how to cook dishes with vegetables and meat, how to prepare salads, and how to make delicious and nutritious sour milk sauce. We also learned how to prepare special meals from local ingredients for children and pregnant women."
- "Before learning how to dry meat and vegetables, we used to cook all the quantity brought and consume it in one day. After learning how to preserve and dry, we use daily rations of meat and tomatoes."
- "Before we did not care when the vaccination team came for our children, now we all go out and know how important it is".
- "When the IFAD bus came, my husband told me to dress up and go to the community centre to find out if it was bringing something new for us".
- "Because I am attending this meeting today and cannot prepare a meal, my husband is bringing food for the family from the market".

**Food processing groups, initiator of savings and lending groups**

The food processing groups formed by women in several villages like Tindilai, Digain, and Makali initiated the idea of forming rotating savings and lending groups. As presented in the previous section, the groups' savings were used to establish group micro-businesses using the skills gained from the food processing training. Some of the business profits were loaned to group members in emergencies. Other groups use some of the profits to support the group savings managed in a ROSCA form where the pot of each group member is increased by a share from the profits of the group business. The project built the capacities of these groups to enable its members to meet their growing



credit needs by borrowing from the Agricultural Bank of Sudan Branch in Aroma town, the biggest population centre in the project area.

Women who attended the focus group discussions in 2011 mentioned that from the ROSCAs and borrowing from the bank they learned how to buy and sell and how to establish viable businesses. They said that they use the bank loans for different purposes such as trading in consumption goods, livestock rearing, milk production, trading in fodders, and to a lesser extent, making and selling food products using the food processing training. Some women said that they were no longer depending on men for everything. Now if the husband is not in the village they manage to meet their needs from their own incomes.

### **Social and cultural impacts**

Responses of the women interviewed in 2008 indicated that they had benefited from the training at household and community levels. Women also knew how to prepare nutritious meals for children and pregnant women, and understood the importance of improved general hygiene and care for children, including first aid and vaccinations. Women reported that better family meals and reduced home expenses pleased their husbands. Some men even started to give women the responsibility of managing the household budget. The majority of women made use of the food processing skills they acquired during social ceremonies and Eid where they produced candies and biscuits. These cultural and social impacts were also the result of awareness training about the nutritional benefits of food items not commonly consumed but locally produced or available such as vegetables, pulses and eggs.



As a result of this change and the diversification of family diet, men started to appreciate the trainings delivered by the project and became less resistant to women attending meetings with project male officers and consultants, which had not been possible previously. In one village, the mayor confirmed that he will not resist women going outside the village to produce vegetables if the project provided the necessary technical and material assistance.

The aspirations of women in 2011 are similar in all the villages visited and reflect the social changes introduced by the project interventions through community development. Women's priorities in 2011 are: having a fenced nice brick house with trees; electricity and water supply; beds, chairs and other furniture in the house; electric equipment at home; a doctor in the clinic; a social centre; better planning, public hygiene, and environmental sanitation in the village; kindergarten and Koran school in the village; more training in primary nursing and home economics.

Five years earlier, these women would not have given the same replies. Most of them would not have given any answers at all. When asked about their future training needs in 2008, 23 per cent answered that no further training was needed. Currently, they knew what their training needs are and what they want to achieve in the future.

## **Lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations**

### **Programming and trainees**

- In the context of GSRLP, training and capacity-building activities on life and vocational skills were not a main component of the project and therefore only a small amount of funds was allocated; however, they are clearly a key factor for the successful implementation and probably also for the long-term impact of the programme and its sustainability.
- The challenge for the project was to train people, in particular pastoralists and women in the encampments, who had never been exposed to training before. This had an impact on the organizational set-up for the training and required a careful approach using participatory methods.
- Given the specificity of the target group and their origin as pastoralists, the fundamental principles as described in IFAD's Engagement with Indigenous Peoples needed to be respected, in particular consideration of cultural heritage and identity as assets and free, prior and informed consent.<sup>9</sup> All activities were undertaken in the spirit of not imposing but letting people decide themselves and preparing decisions

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<sup>9</sup> IFAD (2009), Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, Policy

through consultation and campaigns, in particular when approval of leaders was required.

- Community mobilization and orientation with special focus on women was an important first step and the basis for further activities in capacity-building and skills development. It took considerable effort and investment in time to convince the community about the importance of training for women and to obtain support, particularly from elders and men in general. In the case of GSLRP, it took about three years until the activities gained momentum. Such a long gestation time for planning community activities should be taken into account in planning, since results will not be visible for a long period. Results can only be achieved through campaigns respecting local culture, careful consideration, participatory consultation and negotiation.
- In parallel to creating an enabling environment in the community, trainers needed to be identified and trained in the participatory methods to be used. It was a challenge to find female trainers who were capable of speaking local languages, had adequate educational background, and were willing to work in remote areas. From the outset, GSRLP recognized the lack of qualified trainers and made efforts to find, train and invest in suitable candidates among teachers and community development facilitators.
- The lack of classrooms and meeting rooms was a major obstacle for the capacity building in encampments and some villages. In the beginning, school buildings were used, but were not always available when needed. The construction of community centres that could serve as training sites was an important step forward. More centres are still needed that would serve also as space for administration, tool storage, accommodation for trainers and child care in the future.
- Since the community had been affected by natural disasters and conflict, they are used to getting support because of continued food aid, which led to various levels of dependency. Participants in training are expecting handouts and support.
- The experience in GSLRP shows that when a community is poor and used to handouts, they seem to expect always to be paid a stipend (fees, breakfast, etc). This led the project designers to believe that people would not attend training unless they received incentives such as breakfast and per diem. It also made participants believe that they could expect more support once the training was finished. Although training stipends and allowances had an impact on attendance, these should be revised regularly and phased out. In interviews, many said they would have attended if they were not paid.



- It is important to be realistic about goals and not to set aspirations too high. In the case of the GSLRP, the primary objective of the life-skills training should be improved nutrition and hygiene, and a secondary objective would be income generation. Expectations need to be adjusted to what can be achieved in a set time frame. The technical training changed some of the negative perception about women's role in the community. However, they did not lead to establishment of businesses in the short term, as only a few women were capable and interested. It led nevertheless to major improvement at the individual and household level. Without the training of women in particular, the improvements in vaccination, housing and hygiene (latrines) as shown in the impact assessment would have not been achieved.

### Providers

- A long-term commitment is needed to identify, train and strengthen the capacities of providers and trainers, especially in communities defined by high levels of poverty and a lack of basic skills and services. First investments have to go to the selection and training of local facilitators or trainers who can work with the target group and communicate in local language. Commitment and support from many sides is needed to find resources and the right people.
- Experience shows that the more qualified the trainers and the more established the institutions, the better the conditions for successful training outcomes. In a context of rural development, it is important to select a provider with a decentralized nature, that has a well-established programme, and qualified and decentralized trainers (e.g. the Nutrition and School Gardening Department).
- Support and strengthen training providers as institutions are important aspects. There is a need to work with institutions and to help them to grow, develop new programmes and be innovative. This requires continuous support from Government – there has to be constant scaling-up of capabilities to stimulate creativity and achieve innovation and flexibility in handling new situations. The better they are, the more they have to offer, and the better for the programme as the example of the Nutrition and School Gardening Department shows.
- The training provider, embedded in the quality control of a technical field (e.g. paravet services) is responsible for setting standards for certification of skills acquired. Accreditation of a particular technical skill at the end of a training programme is very important as it ensures adherence to quality standards and quality control, legitimization and rewards in the form of higher payment for services.

- The awarding of certificates plays an important role at the end of a training programme and serves several purposes. They increase the self-confidence of trainees by giving them recognition for the new skills acquired, which is of particular importance for those with low levels of education. Certificates are also a building block for further training, provide proof of accreditation and are a record of the level of skills and knowledge achieved.
- For the transfer of knowledge and sustainability, scaling up, and viability of businesses, policy dialogue is needed with the Ministry of Labour, Education and Agriculture and Chambers of Commerce, among others. This applies in particular for the establishment of standards for training and certification or accreditation.
- The number of women who established income-generating businesses as an outcome of training remains very low. However, the private and social returns, such as improved nutrition, cooking and hygiene are important. The increased social capital for women through their involvement in women's groups and ability to speak out is also positive. For this reason, the focus on home economics and training in basic skills therein is justified and show in the improved results of the impact survey.
- It is too soon to analyze the viability of businesses established. Savings and lending groups for women were established, and serve as an indicator for business, which were started with food processing.
- Training targeted specifically for income generation should be part of a multifaceted programme that includes investigations of constraints in existing value chain and market opportunities. Besides training, the design of the intervention may include other interventions in marketing, such as pricing, quality control, branding, packaging and credit. To improve the situation for the targeted group in the value chain development, interventions targeting other players in the value chain may need to be implemented. The intervention may also be creating a new value chain for the commodity on which women are to be trained to link producers to end outlets.
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation is important. A monitoring system needs to be put in place that keeps track of trainees for a period of time (e.g. alumni association). The preparation of micro-studies (e.g. GSRLP 2008), including a quantitative and qualitative analysis, are also a good tool for routine monitoring and assessment. Preference should be given to local educational institutions to prepare such research studies, or to the establishment of partnerships between research institutions in North and South, which could be mutually beneficial.

### Follow-up activities

- The time for investment projects like GLRSP is relatively short (six years). Realistic estimates about what can be achieved through capacity building in terms of social capital and income generation in areas of extreme poverty need to be on the conservative side. A follow-up training programme building on lessons learned (e.g. training of AHAs; brick making) would allow to build on the now improved individual and community capabilities, and should lead to better services, increased agricultural production (animal health, irrigated fields) and improved household well-being. It should also create more income-generating activities, which are in demand for young men in particular.
- The home economics training was the first contact for many women with learning in an informal environment. Priority for the aspirations of women is reduced drudgery, improved livelihoods, better living conditions in villages or encampments and more services. There is strong request now for more support, as well as for tools and machinery for pastry making and cooking. It would be important to enable women to increase their aptitude to search for opportunities and their capacity to grasp them as well as support them in their organization and decision making. More opportunities should be provided for learning, including literacy training, as well as for the establishment of village savings groups or group savings.
- The example of GLRSP shows that future training needs can only be addressed if there is a pool of qualified trainers. To address this need, it is suggested to offer a new course at the University of Kassala that would be designed specifically to upgrade the skills of rural people and train more trainers and facilitators. This would be a seven-month training in food processing and crafts at university level, with scholarship for local residents from Aroma and surrounding villages, and would lead to a Diploma in Community development. It will be important that more local people from villages and settlement or of same ethnic background be included in the training.

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