

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



## PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18







# Introduction

The civil conflicts in South Sudan increased the influx of refugees into West Nile, Uganda. In a bid to enable refugees and host communities to achieve economic, social and environmental self-sufficiency, HORIZONT3000, Austrian Organisation for Development Cooperation in partnership with the Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) and Palm Corps secured a two-year funding from the Austrian Development Cooperation, Bruder und Schwester in Not Innsbruck (BSI) and Caritas Kärnten to support livelihood initiatives in Arua and Yumbe districts. The project goal is that “[4,875] Refugees and host communities [50% each] have secure livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development within Rhino camp and Yumbe resettlement areas, in West Nile Region, Uganda.” The specific objectives are: (i) To improve the nutrition status of 750 targeted households (60% female headed) in refugees and host communities; (ii) To increase the income of 750 targeted households and 225 youth in refugees and host communities; (iii) To promote peaceful settlements for refugees and host communities where natural resources are conserved and shared; and(iv) To capitalize and share the experiences made in this project as learning exercise to deal with refugee.

## **KEY Activities carried out**

In the reporting period, AFARD and PALM Corps conducted the following main activities:

Result 0. Start up, Monitoring, learning and close out activities

### **A0.0: Sign MoU with relevant authorities:**

HORIZONT3000 and OPM and in consultation with the Refugee Desk Officer (RDO) secured allocation of Zone 1 - Villages 11 & 12 in Bidibidi settlement for AFARD and Odobu, Ofua and Ocea zones for PALM Corps.

### **A0.1: Procurement of logistics:**

The project procured, engraved and included in asset inventory 6 Motorcycles, 6 Chairs and desks, 6 laptops, 6 digital cameras, 5 smartphones, 2 filing cabinet, and 10 bicycles.

### **A0.2: Staff recruitment, induction and training:**

The project recruited and inducted 05 field officers (03 females). Together with 10 Farmer Field School Facilitators these staff were trained in FFS methodology, VSLA approach, SAVIX MIS, and Do no harm approach.

### **A0.3: Stakeholders briefing:**

04 meetings were conducted at the district and sub county levels for 119 people (18 females) including representatives from UNCHR, OPM, RDO, other implementing partners and Local Government staff to inform them about the project.

### **A0.4: Conduct a baseline study:**

The project contracted Abi ZARDI and it conducted a baseline study and 100 copies of the report was produced and distributed.

### **A0.5: Develop training manuals:**

120 copies of trainers' manual were produced for VSLA, entrepreneurship, and apprenticeship.

### **A0.6: Project launch:**

On 14th November, 2017 a project launch event was held in Yelulu cluster, Odobu zone in Rhino camp refugee settlement in Arua district in the presence of representatives from ADA, HORIZONT3000, UNHCR, OPM, district and sub county officials, partners staff as well as refugees and host communities. During the event 160 jackets, 90 T-shirts, 100 fliers, and 1 banner were produced and distributed for visibility.

### **A0.7: Monitoring Field Visits:**

Management staff conducted 38 for quality and compliance assessment as well as performance reviews.

### **A0.8 Bi-annual group performance review meetings:**

388 meetings were conducted to routinely instill VSLA best practices, review farming season and youth businesses performance.

**A0.10: Conduct annual financial audits:**

Jasper-Semu & Associates CPA contracted by HORIZONT3000 conducted the audit.

**A0.13 Sensitization meetings on migration:**

This was mainstreamed in all community interaction.

**Result 1: To improve the nutrition status of 750 targeted households (60% female headed) in refugees and host communities by 2019**

**A1.1: Forming Farmer Field schools (FFSs):**

30 FFS (11 host community, 11 refugees and 8 mixed) were formed with the support of leaders from the Parish, RWCs and Village. These FFSs have 750 members (67.7% females).

**A1.2: Identify and train FFS Facilitators (FFSFs):**

10 FFSF (04 refugees) were selected and trained (see A0.2). Together with POs these FFS Facilitators set up demonstration sites, train FFS members in agronomy, and provide business mentorship.

**A1.3: Establish farmer field school learning sites:**

25 FFSs secured land and with Project Officer and FFSFs set up learning sites. 05 FFSs in Yumbe however failed to secure land and depended on learning on individual members fields.

**A1.4: Provide agro-inputs to selected beneficiaries:**

Various agro-inputs were provided in consultation with Abi ZARDI and the District/Sub county Agricultural Extension Officers namely; 750 hand hoes with handles, 90 watering cans, 60 spray pumps, 1,749 bags of cassava cuttings, 9,902 Kgs of groundnuts, 570 Kgs of cow/pigeon peas, 225 sachets of eggplant, 225 sachets of collards, 450 sachets of okra, 624 tins of onions, 2,825 Kgs of maize, 565 Kgs of sun flower, 3,031 Kgs of simsim, 200 bags of fertilizers, 125 PIC bags, 674 Kg of sorghum, 64 Kg of green gram, 300 Kgs of rice, 300 Kgs of Soya beans, 902 Kgs of beans, 16 sachets of cabbage, 40 sachets of tomatoes, 16 tins of water melon, 4 sachets of Chili, and 4 tins of pumpkin.

**A1.4: Train in climate smart and good agronomic practices:**

176 training sessions were conducted according to the cropping calendars by FFSs and POs on site selection, land opening, planting, weeding, soil and water conservation practices such as soil bands, raised beds and cover cropping.

**A1.6: Train in back yard gardening:**

120 training sessions were conducted.

**Result 2: To increase the income of 750 targeted households and 225 youth in refugees and host communities by 2019**

**A2.1: Train FFS members in Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA):** The 30 FFSs had 90 training sessions on VSLA operations and management and were provided with VSLA kits.

**A2.2: Train in poultry production and disease control:**

05 youth groups with 25 members (4 females) in Bidibidi refugee settlement Yumbe were trained in poultry agribusiness using the programmed hatching technology.

**A2.3: Train in entrepreneurship skills and farming as a business:**

90 sessions of trainings were conducted by the POs with a focus on how to: identify business

opportunities, conduct simple business planning, mobilize start-up capital, conduct business marketing, and manage customers, stocks, and records.

**A2.4: Place youth for apprenticeship training in marketable vocational skills:** 177 youth (87 females) were placed on a 1 – 4 months apprenticeship training in various marketable trades.

**A2.5: Provide business start-up kits:**

202 youth were provided the necessary trade-related tools/equipment, in kind, for a business start-up to avoid diversion if cash was provided, ensure that quality inputs are procured, and to speed up the turn-time for starting own-account enterprises.

**A2.8: Conduct (agri)-business mentoring and coaching:**

The POs conducted 176 sessions of business health check for effective business mentoring and coaching for youth to address their businesses growth thus 20% are keeping business records and 21% separates business and family finances.

**Youth Placement on Apprenticeship Training by Marketable Trade**

Marketable Trades	Project Total		
	Males	Females	Total
Horticulture	10	3	13
Poultry	21	4	25
Carpentry	15	0	15
Tailoring	7	23	30
Motor cycle repair	11	0	11
Soap making	4	3	7
Phone repair	2	0	2
Brick laying	3	0	3
Hair cutting/dressing	6	28	34
Bakery	2	4	6
Agro – forestry	24	7	31
Art & craft	3	17	20
Aluminum fabrication	3	2	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>202</b>

**A2.9: Conduct market linkages:**

The project has continued to provide linkages in areas of: access to Sun flower seeds from Ngetta Tropical, sale of agro-forestry seedlings to Cyclop, ADRA, PALM Business Consult, and water melon to NIN /school feeding project.

**Result 3: To promote peaceful settlements for refugee and host communities where natural resources are conserved and shared**

**A3.2: Train in wood lot establishment and maintenance:**

60 training sessions have been conducted to FSS members on the causes and effects of land degradation, why tree planting and site preparation and seedling planting and management.

**A3.3: Procure and supply fast maturing local tree seedlings:**

The project supplied 41,147 seedlings of sesbania, neem, acassia, white teak, giant lira, and pawpaw to FFS members to speed the regeneration of the depleted vegetation cover. Refugees with small land sizes were encouraged to use their field borders for planting trees (mainly for wood fuel). Host communities with ample land planted on either on field borderline or woodlots depending on each individual capacity and interest.

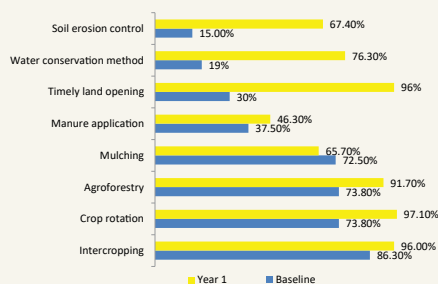
**OBSERVABLE OUTCOMES**

From the various monitoring visits, review meetings and annual performance assessment it is evident that:

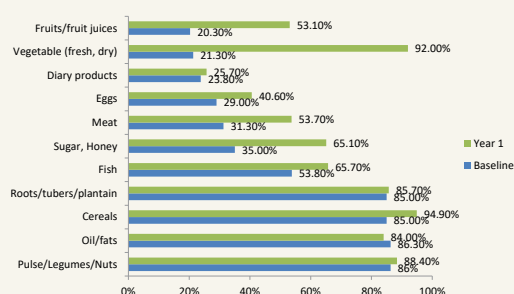
- Adoption of good agricultural practices has increased and food security situation is improving. The use of good agricultural practices doubled from 40% to 80% especially in the areas of timely land opening, soil erosion controls, and water conservation methods.

- Food security situation is improving. The number of households that ate 3 meals daily rose from only 36% at baseline to 65.7% at the end of year 1 of project implementation. FFS members reported improved diet diversity due to the establishment of kitchen gardens and income earned from doing petty businesses.
- Income diversification is on the rise. VSLAs members pooled together UGX 74.5 million (€17,525). The average savings for FFS members increased from UGX 45,896 to UGX 99,328 and for youth from UGX 48,850 to UGX 70,780. Access to loans from VSLA enabled refugees and host communities alike to start petty businesses from which they earn income to meet their basic family food and emergency needs. FFS members reported during monitoring visits that they no longer have to rely on World Food Programme food ratio (refugees) or subsistence farming (host communities) in order to earn income.

**Figure 1: Adoption of good agronomic practices**



**Figure 2: Dietary diversification eaten in last 7 days preceding the annual assesment**



- There is a sense of financial liberation amongst female FFS members who reported that they no longer bother their husbands with demands for households needs such as salt, sugar and paraffin
- Youth self-employment is on the rise. While 43 youth gained formal jobs after their training, 83 started their own-account enterprises where they are self-employed, earn income and are able to meet some of their basic needs.
- The training of youth in tree nurseries increased the average tree planted per FFS member from 18 to 75 and host communities with land are establishing timber and firewood woodlots. And households using briquette and other energy saving technologies increased from 16.5% at baseline to 26.9%.

In so doing, the project is contributing to SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and Goal 13: Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.





### **COOPERATION/NETWORKING**

- AFARD and PALM Corps closely cooperated in planning and implementing the project to their mutual benefit. Regular project steering committee meetings ensures joint and timely decision making. AFARD continued to provide technical guidance to Palm Corps especially in the area of procurement and accounting as part of internal capacity building process.
- UNCHR and OPM have continued to provide the overall coordination functions of the refugee work in the district. AFARD and Palm Corps are active members of the Livelihood Working Group.
- The private sector enterprises offered apprenticeship training for the youths and market for their finished products.
- PALM Corps partnered with Welthungerhilfe in commemoration of the world environment day organized by Arua District Local Government and UNHCR held in Rhino camp refugee settlement.
- Local authorities of both refugee and nationals and zonal agriculture research and development institute (ZARDI) were involved in planning and implementation of the project activities, e.g. the selection of beneficiaries, crop varieties suitable for the project area, and marketable trades and artisans for youth training. Their involvement increases awareness about the project.

### **CROSS-CUTTING THEMES**

- Social inclusion of PSN has been critical in the selection of beneficiaries and leadership e.g. the elderly, child-headed, single-mothers, persons with disabilities or chronic ailments.
- Gender responsiveness is integrated in staffing (66% females), member selection (68% females), baseline data analysis, enterprise and skills selection, trainers sourcing, and group work planning.
- The project makes a deliberate effort to adhere to mainstreaming environment issues e.g., by distributing 41,147 tree seedlings to FFS members together with awareness creation about environment conservation.
- Backyard gardens comprising micro-nutrient rich vegetables and fruits were established for beneficiaries to supplement food ratios received from WFP.

### **MAJOR DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED**

- The restricted youth training within their settlement increased training cost, as trainers and their training tools and materials had to be transported to the settlements.
- In Bidibidi settlement in Yumbe, it has remained difficult for refugees to access sizeable land for farming. Many refugees failed to use the 50 X 50 meters of land because of the long distance (over 5 kilometres).



- Weather variability caused dry spells and deleterious pests and diseases with devastating losses for maize, beans and tree seedlings. It also increased destructions of sun flower, sesame and groundnut by rodents (birds, rats, squirrels, etc.) as well as poultry disease outbreak.
- High inflation increased prices of some of the inputs e.g., motor cycles and fuel
- UAP insurance company is understaffed to effectively cover the regional demand for farmer enrolment.

### **LESSONS LEARNT**

- Involvement of communities and their leaders in the selection of beneficiaries reduces conflict and enhances acceptability of a project
- Refugees with short term settlement plans prefer to plant quick maturing (especially firewood) trees, whereas host communities prefer trees for both short- and long-term use (including timber).
- Without access to larger areas of land, refugees remain constrained to intensive agricultural production options e.g., small livestock, horticulture.
- Involvement of entrepreneurs in the planning for apprenticeship improves the implementation of the programme
- Peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities can be attained through joint activity/event such as mixed group membership, and trainer contracting.
- The use of 50:50 benefit approach was widely accepted and applauded by local government leaders and the communities themselves.

### **Agri-skills Training for Gainful Employment and Adequate Income: A case study of Peace and Hope Agro-forestry Youth Group in Bidibidi Refugee Settlement**

Youth in Uganda disliking agriculture because it is considered a dirty job that earn meagre income. As a result, many youth prefer traditional vocational skills such as carpentry, tailoring, bakery and hair salon/dressing, among other trades. This was the case that Secure Livelihoods for South Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities in West Nile region, Uganda faced. Only 05 youth groups with 25 members (06 females) out of 45 groups with 225 members selected tree nursery as a viable trade. They argued that the trade had ready market given the heavy depletion of vegetation in both the refugee settlements and host communities coupled with the emphasis by UNHCR on tree planting. Peace and Hope Agro-forestry Youth Group with 10 members (03 females) located in Zone 1, Village 11, Bidibidi settlement is one of the groups that has started to upscale its business.

Members of this group were provided 3-month apprenticeship training within their village by a professional refugee forester. Their work-based training involved setting nursery, nurturing the seedlings, tree planting extension services, and marketing. During the training, the group was able to raise 16,000 seedlings of cassia, sesbania, white tick and Neem. At their pass out, the project procured 12,000 of their 16,000 seedlings at UGX 6,000,000. Through the linkages built from UNHCR coordination meeting ADRA procured another 1,700 Neem tree seedlings at UGX 850,000. With UGX 6,850,000, the group shared UGX. 3,000,000





among themselves. The 10 members each earned UGX. 300,000. They saved the UGX 3,000,000 in one of the member's mobile money account and the 850,000 was reinvested in the business for buying seeds and making shade for the next season.

A one group member Mr.Ojja Morrish pointed out that,

***With this unique knowledge and skills of agro-forestry, we have seen that we are already employed. The money we earned immediately on completing our training is a sign that we are in a good market that will give us reliable steady income as we continue to raise and sell seedlings. The good income that we have shared has energized us to continue working as a team and to diversify into fruit and ornamental seedling production and sales so that we have sustainable and higher income.***









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