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Supporting Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives for Vulnerable Smallholder Farmers to Promote Food Security in Akobo County, South Sudan-A report.



CEDA Volunteer Watering the vegetable during the project implementation in Akobo County, Jonglei State, South Sudan.



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A. Acknowledgment

CEDA would like to thank all its members for the technical and self-financial support of this project accorded in order to reach the most vulnerable communities in conflict-stricken areas of Jonglei State. CEDA remains indebted to the local government and the communities of Akobo County for the warm reception, cooperation and security they offered to the teams during our implementation of smallholder farming project activities. Finally, is to extend our appreciations to CEDA Management Team for operational support and coordination with the local authorities and other actors, thank you all volunteers.

B. Main Objective of the Project.

Improve food security and sustainable livelihoods of vulnerable, agriculture-based households using sustainable simple technologies and indigenous Knowledge to promote food Security. And to increase awareness on the importance of small-scale subsistent farming in the community so that they can be efficient and live dignify life and avoid not to rely on humanitarian assistant and by improve quality of farming that promote sustainable food security.

C. Coordination

CEDA continues to participate actively in County NGOs coordination meetings at both National and state level meetings as well as in other cluster meetings of other WASH, education, Livelihood, Health and Nutrition. CEDA in Akobo participated in the meetings of preparation of the campaigns of farming day.

During the reporting period, CEDA also participated in Rapid Respond Mission (RRM) in Jingmer Nasir County, Upper Nile State.

As part of collaboration and coordination with other actors, CEDA, conducted service mapping in Akobo and Nasir and worked closely with other service providers like Hold the Child to plan on how to create awareness in school especially the clubs for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).



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A. Methodology

During the implementation process of the planned activities, diverse methodologies were applied to ensure better results at the end of the project, and these involved the following:

- i. Plenary presentations
- ii. Group discussions
- iii. Brainstorming
- iv. Facilitations
- v. Individual interview among others.



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Introduction

Shortage of food availability in Akobo county has been an issue and it worsened at the onset of South Sudan conflict in 2013 Akobo County was cut off from all the government services since the conflict is erupted and it is under the opposition forces. The 2014 weather conditions in Akobo County had negative impacts on small-scale farming in which there was a little rain in the beginning of rainy season that did not allow the farmers to plant their crops. Heavy rainfall between August – October each year destroyed some crops and certain of the areas had no yield at all There was low yield in 2019 compared to 2012 - 2013 Smallholder farmers in South Sudan faced poor yield in 2012 that caused food insecurity and severe shortage of food. Up to 40% of the population lack food it has decreased from 47% in documentation of 2011 Akobo County has been cut off from National government since 2013 when the civil unrest; the farmers received limited supports from International Non-Government Organization (NGOs). The study by Museli (2017), indicated that small-scale farmers in South Sudan produce less food to population due to socio-economic factors affecting them. Farming in South Sudan and in Akobo County still remains traditional small-scale farmers who used simple technology and animals are reared for cultural and tradition activities not for market (Africa Development Bank, 2012). For instant, animals reared in Akobo County are kept for prestige and for dowry payment instead for meat, milk and other commercial purposes. Therefore, on-going conflict in South Sudan has contributed negatively on Akobo farmers in which they cannot afford to purchase any agriculture tools and seeds from neither South Sudan nor Ethiopia sides (ZOA, 2014). Furthermore, report from (WFP, 2009 and UNHCR, 2009) revealed that Akobo County has been affected by food shortage due to insecurity that started in the Capital in 2013 and escalated to



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all parts of South Sudan and states. Small-Scale subsistence farming has been the source of food availability contributing over 95% food. The crisis had negative impacts on food security in South Sudan (Oxfam, 2014). Civil unrest has disrupted the normal activities of farmers mostly in greater upper Nile states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile state. In Akobo farmers abandoned their farms due to insecurity in most payams (Sub-districts) and bomas (villages). Therefore, this study is aiming to investigate whether or not there are some impacts on small-scale farming on Food security in Akobo County.

Overview of the Circumstances of Returnees and Host Community in Akobo

It is already 5 years since some sections of South Sudanese communities were Internally Displaced in their own country as the civil war caused devastated suffering for the civil population in South Sudan. Since war broke a portion of South Sudan have been leaving under the United Nation Civilian Protection Bases, in the capital Juba, Unity State, Jonglei's Bor , Malakal and Wau. While their homes are being occupied, destroyed, lost of live and their properties has caused them a lot of Trauma.

Therefore, they are in desperate need for help in all aspects of lives, including trauma healing, Shelters, Food, hygiene and water (WASH) and this kind of healing is to be done through conducting a trauma awareness and resilience workshop, constructing emergency shelters for returnees. The 2013 and 2016 war which broke out in the capital for the first and the second time has affected every South Sudanese plus the foreigners living in Juba and other cities across the Country. This Agriculture project can benefit the returnees from Bor Protection of Civilians Site (POC), since they have nowhere to cultivate.

The understanding premise in this aspects is that one cannot build tukul for his or her family, or cultivate in the community or the larger society until he or she first feel more peace with himself/herself and that peace and healing can only come when he or she recognized and start to cope with the hurt and trauma he or she have experienced in the past. And then if they settle for some time in Akobo, they can be able to care and start working for themselves even



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cultivate some garden or construct shelters should be theirs, the insecurity in most part of the Country has affected majority of family to farm.

change of market price and inflation also made many returnees not to afford to construct their own Tukuls or have a garden to cultivate their food. Most the returnees are women headed household and venerable groups also made the majority.

Given the South Sudan context where wars, violence, ethnic conflict and famine, have characterized the region for decades, the real healing also depends on the recognition that everyone else in their surroundings has also experienced some hurt and trauma.

Activities Conducted

- Mix Green Vegetable Garden
- soil preparation.
- sowing.
- manuring.
- Irrigation.
- weeding.
- harvesting.
- Storage



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CEDA Volunteer working on the Project Site in Akobo

- Engaging Community in forum and teach them on local farming
 - a. Training local community on how to grow adapting crops that is resisted climate and subsisting farming to promote food security.



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Community leaders in taking part in the discussion of how susistain farming can help community food secure.

a) Sensitization of Community leaders, youth leaders, teachers, local authority.

25 participants in Akobo were involved in the sensitization of community leaders (chiefs) humanitarian actors, police, teachers and local Authority. The discussion basically focused on skills on how of subsisting farming. Expected outcomes raised during the workshop were to acquire knowledge on modern farm skills.

Challenges

- In Akobo floods affected many homes and fields were flooded and the crops were destroyed yields and the project sit was also affected.
- Lack of farming tools and seeds for the project



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- climate variability, lack of appropriate agricultural infrastructure, shortage of farming skills, high levels of soil degradation and tough economic conditions are amongst the constraints facing small-scale agricultural productivity in Akobo.
- lack of seeds multiplication capacity, low profitability and efficiency of fertilizer, lack of irrigation development, lack of transport infrastructure, inaccessibility of market and overgrazing, deforestation.
- Based on the above study we can say that the chronic poverty, illiteracy, lack of mechanisation
- Pests that destroy the crops during the implementation of the project. In stead the team rely on ashes to use it as insecticide.
- Animals who intrude in the Garden and eat the crops
- Lack of funding as the project was self-funded and initiated by the CEDA volunteers.
- Lack of specialization from the CEDA team implementing the project.

Recommendations to CEDA

- ☑ More capacity building of CEDA team who are implementing the project so that they can be efficient to work professionally.
- ☑ Creating further awareness in the community so that the community should know the value of producing their local food themselves.
- ☑ Introducing more farms and engaging many community members in the farming activities and other income generating activities so that they can have income and contribute to food security.

Lesson Learnt

- ☑ Farming and related activities make up the basic fabric of rural life, contributing significantly to the overall state of rural regions in terms of employment and business opportunities, infrastructure and quality of the environment.
- ☑ Agriculture education is important in Community and public schools because students learn ways to efficiently feed a burgeoning population and gain a better understanding of food production and distribution.

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- ☐ Volunteers learn skills of small-scale farming.
- ☐ Small-scale farming provides a foundation for a more resilient rural Akobo food system.

Annexes

a. Pictures.



Egg plan

Tomatoes



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Ashe being use as insecticide



CEDA Volunteer Malual Kuony Harvesting Okra



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Community Member working at the Project site



Kennedy Nhial, CEDA Volunteer after harvesting Okra.



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Khan, CEDA volunteer watering the garden



Kennedy Nhial, CEDA Volunteer watering the Garden.

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Mean of transport to Market



CEDA Volunteers in the Garden



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Mean of Watering the garden



Koang Kolang-KK, The Project Manager at Site.