

W4EE success stories: Private sector drive

KEY SUCCESSSES

- + Transformation of small businesses into water and farm service centres with input and training support
- + Training of 148 vegetable farmers in innovative practices and 40 oxen in field ploughing using local business development service
- + Mentoring and inputs (vaccinated scavenging birds) to 250 poultry farmers organised in 10 groups of mainly women
- + Support to village savings & loan associations on by-laws, record-keeping, and linkages to financial opportunities
- + Training of women's groups in soap-making
- + Establishment of a youth-run commercial car washing bay

Engaging the private sector to build capacity and sustain growth

One of the critical success factors of W4EE has been the involvement of the private sector to increase output and marketing of various productive groups and individuals. Working in close cooperation with the project team, and specifically the business development advisor, a South Sudanese business development firm, Premium Agro Consult and Innovative Institute of Agriculture, Business and Capacity Building, a regional Institute, have been important partners in working with farmers, livestock traders, poultry groups, and even youth groups seeking to improve their economic prospects. For example, Agro Premium worked intensively with six selected progressive farmers – providing mentoring and hands-on supervision at all stages of production – to help them establish demonstration farms and become role models for commercial farming.

Such activities have a knock-on effect. When a farmer, for example, is able to increase output and sell to the market, it creates demand for locally produced, more affordable produce. A local transport provider can offer a service to bring the produce to the market so the farmer can stay and work on the farm, increasing his productivity. At the market, with the support of village savings and loan groups, women are able to buy wholesale from the farmer and then sell directly to customers so they themselves earn some income. As the farmer becomes more advanced and looks to expand, he will buy inputs such as seeds and equipment from local farm service centres, who in turn also provide training and support at a small fee to other farmers to establish commercial farms. And thus the system becomes self-sustaining.

940

Number of women benefiting from economic activities

250

Poultry farmers organised in 10 groups supported with inputs and training

34

Village savings & loan associations supported in establishing by-laws and saving kits

The project is a testimony that even in a conflict setting, development can persist. The individual can contribute to his or her own success, no matter how small the amount. There is room for markets. People can prosper."

Andrew Yunda, NIRAS Deputy Team Leader seconded from The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation.



In Katire, Geria County, 49-year-old model farmer Lokang Peter is supporting a family of seven. With the training he received from W4EE – advice and in-person guidance from Premium Agro Consult – inputs, and equipment, he has cultivated onions and turned farming into a business, generating an income which has paid for two children to attend school and the construction of a two-room house for his family. He has bought two heifers to supplement his income and saved 6,000SSP in his local village savings and loan association in less than two weeks.

“This project has improved the community and brought it towards self-reliance, building resilience and eventually development. You see how productive farmers have become and how the private sector, like the farm service centres, has a role to play. Instead of giving free to the community, people must pay something. That is where ownership comes in. When you own something, you handle it with care. If it’s free, you don’t protect it; you expect more and more.”

**Dr Margaret Itto, Deputy Governor
Torit State, farmer and businesswoman**



Taban Dominic works at Afrognics, a farm service centre in Torit. He is a trained water pump mechanic, sells farming equipment and inputs, and provides advice and training to customers.

Water & farm service centres: facilitating production

W4EE has connected with four small businesses to establish water and farm service centres (WFSC). These operations – two each in Torit and Kapoeta States – were already established and selling seeds, farm equipment, and services. As a pilot intervention, the project signed an agreement to support their transformation to WFSC with the development of business plans and a supply of inputs and equipment. In addition to seeds and farming tools, WFSCs are now stocking large equipment and supplies such as treadle pumps, water pipers, oxen ploughs, and spare parts for

hand pump repairs. They have also received training on all phases of production and can offer this service to customers as a form of ongoing support. The sales of agricultural inputs have picked up well but remain fragile. However, more needs to be done to sensitise potential customers and lobby donors to reduce the distribution of free inputs, which completely undermines the market. In the interim, one way forward is for donors to purchase supplies from WFSCs through a cost-sharing agreement with communities. W4EE is already linking the WFSCs to producers with the aim of gradually building a customer base.



Poultry and villages savings & loans groups

In 2018, W4EE introduced a quick-impact and alternative livelihood intervention by providing, in conjunction with training, two-month-old, vaccinated, free-range scavenging birds – which require minimum care and grow to a large size – for egg and poultry meat production. Most of the eggs in Torit market are today produced locally. Many eggs have hatched and this has had a multiplier effect, providing an overall improvement in the gene pool of indigenous chickens as well as community income and nutrition.

Members of one women’s village savings and loan association (VSLA) in Torit, Hope Women’s Group, each received 11 birds. The group had started as a “person-to-person” lending body prior to W4EE. Following training and leadership reorganisation support from the project, members established by-laws and shares in a common social fund, growing membership from 10 to 29 participants. In addition to poultry and egg production, the group supports members with loans to launch microbusinesses such as the sale of baked goods, production of liquid soap, second-hand clothes retail, and beer brewing.

“I have been able to pay school fees for my children in Uganda,” says Hope Women’s Group Secretary, Jane Keji. “But we are keen to do more. We received training on soap making, so next we are looking to invest in some equipment to do it on a larger scale.”

Both the poultry and VSLA group continue to receive mentoring through W4EE and partnerships are being developed to link them with upcoming projects and opportunities to sustain their success.

