

End of Programme Evaluation Report

Sustainable Livelihood Programme, Trócaire Ethiopia

Summary of End of Programme Evaluation (November 2012)

1. Background

The Joint Ethiopia Program (JEP) – a partnership of Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) and Trócaire (together; CST) - designed the “Sustainable Livelihoods Programme” with the full participation of local partners. The programme design took account of Ethiopian socio-economic and environmental contexts and the Ethiopia Country Strategy Paper. The programme ran from September 2009 to February 2013 and had a total budget of €7,776,017. The programme was supported from both the internal resources of JEP and external sources (like Irish Aid, European Union, Department for International Development (DFID), Comic Relief, Big Lottery and Isle of Man). The programme was designed to **enhance the livelihoods of 300,000 people in the most vulnerable communities in three parts of the country by improving agricultural production and productivity in an environmentally sustainable manner and by improving pastoralist communities’ access to and control over resources**. The central objective of this programme evaluation is to assess the programme in terms of its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes, impact, and sustainability. Also to be assessed were the added value of the JEP as well as whether or not gender and HIV/AIDS issues are adequately mainstreamed. A critical role of the evaluation was to draw lessons for the future of the programme.

2. Methodology

This end of programme evaluation was carried out by an external consultant. Secondary data were collected from programme documents including baseline and follow-up surveys, progress reports and project evaluation reports. The primary information was also collected by the consulting team through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation of activities on the ground. Final conclusions and recommendations are the views of the external consultant.

3. Key Findings/Conclusions

Overall the program is successful in achieving its objectives and making progress towards anticipated outcomes for activities which have not yet been completed. Programme relevance, efficiency and effectiveness are assessed below.

Programme Relevance: The programme objectives and components are all in line with the priorities and needs of the target communities. They also align with the policies/strategies of the Joint Ethiopia Programme as well as that of the Ethiopian Government. The programme components are generally complementary to one another. Over the course of the programme, the programme management shifted away from less relevant activities (like silkworm, molasses as well as tractor rentals) to more relevant activities (such as animal fattening, vegetable and poultry production). The performance of the distribution of Borana cattle breed is mixed, perhaps due to management and adaptation problems. This needs more detailed investigation.

Programme Efficiency: Physical accomplishments indicate that programme activities were implemented on time and to the required standard. In terms of budget utilization, about 97% of the total budget allocated was utilized during the programme period (2009/10 to 2012/13). This represents efficient budget utilization.

Programme Effectiveness: Overall, the programme was found to be moderately effective. **The programme directly benefited 463,976 people or 97,193 households (of which 57,009 were female**

headed households). This exceeded the original plan to reach 300,000 people or 76,380 households (43,754 female headed households).

Key findings are summarized as follows:

Improving agricultural production and productivity: To enhance crop productivity (cereals and vegetables/fruits), the programme undertook a range of different activities including developing irrigation infrastructures, rehabilitating degraded lands, and distributing improved seeds/seedlings. As a result, beneficiaries were able to produce vegetables 2 or 3 times a year and increase cereals yields/ha by up to 88%. The programme also introduced improved breeds, better rangeland management and veterinary services for livestock. Although consolidated quantitative data was not available, case studies indicate that cereal crop productivity increased, on average, from 4 quintal (100kg) /ha to 7.5 quintals /ha (representing an 88% increase). The average wheat yield increased from 15 – 17 quintals/ha (representing a 20% increase). Household income improved by an average of 4,000 birr per household per year. Similarly, pasture availability was enhanced by 62% (from 1.3 – 2.2 ton/ha) in the north, and farmers were able to harvest twice a year. Consequently, milk yield substantially increased to a range of 2.7 – 5 litres/cow/day (compared to an average of 1.3 litres/cow/day before the programme started). Farmers also benefited from having more calves.

Improving access to natural resources and resilience of pastoralist communities: In the programme sites, various physical and biological conservation measures were undertaken, including: inspecting dam construction, gully treatments, plantations in closure areas, clearing unwanted bushes and planting rangeland with improved fodder. The results of the evaluation shows that **the programme was effective in treating vulnerable catchments, rehabilitating degraded lands, reclaiming rangelands and developing water sources for humans and livestock.** There was significant progress in decreasing soil erosion (a decrease of 44% over the programme period), increase vegetation cover (an increase of 5% over the programme period) and enhancing water discharge from treated watersheds. In pastoralist communities, over 6,500 ha (>40% above the target) were cleared of unwanted bushes and weeds, and considerable areas have been planted with improved fodder seed. This work benefited a total of 1,945 households and a livestock population of 73,452. Similar efforts in Shinile zone of Somali region created rangeland closure for regeneration of pasture complemented with the introduction of various grass seeds adaptable to the area. Moreover, extensive water development works were undertaken in both pastoralist and non-pastoralist programme areas contributing to increased access to water sources for domestic and animal consumption, improved clean water coverage and reduced distance travelled to fetch water.

Enhancing income generating activities: Income generating activities undertaken by the programme include: innovative livelihoods options (irrigation, poultry, silkworm, molasses feed supply and tractor rental service); petty trades, bakery, traditional food preparation, sale of dairy products, production and sale of honey, and selling other non-timber forest product. In 2010 and 2011 about 4,438 beneficiaries (3,682 female) were able to engage in 25 income generating activities (8 on farm and 17 off-farm activities). Support services were also provided such as trainings, organizing savings and credit, linking with markets, and organizing certification of products. **Consequently, the beneficiaries have developed business skills and confidence, received fair prices for products, have increased regular income and working capital. Women, in particular, become more empowered.** The most successful women achieved an income of 2,800 birr/month and a working capital of over 500,000 birr. However, silkworm, tractor service and animal feed supply initiatives needed rethinking on economic and technical relevance as

indicated in the mid-term evaluation. Accordingly, corrective measures were taken by the programme management and activities shifted to fattening livestock and vegetable production.

Establishing and strengthening local institutions: The programme has both established and strengthened local institutions. These include credit and saving cooperatives (SACCOs) and unions, Water Users' Associations/Committees, Area Closure Management Committees, and Watershed Management Committee, Groups of producers and traders, Saving and Internal Lending Community, 'Dabare' associations and Stakeholder Networking & Multi-Stakeholder Forums, Community Learning Forums. Supports to these institutions were found to be moderately effective in contributing to the sustainable and equitable use of resources, access to saving and credit services, and market opportunities and fairer pricing for their products. However, weak management capacity of these institutions and inadequate support from the government means more is needed to strengthen these institutions to enable them fully play their roles.

Gender and HIV/AIDS: A review of performances of the entire projects of the programme reveals that the gender and HIV/AIDS issues have been adequately mainstreamed. The programme intervention effectively reduced vulnerability of communities to HIV/AIDS and gender inequality. Women are economically and socially empowered, and therefore better able to protect themselves against the epidemics and defend their rights.

Programme outcome and sustainability: Some of the significant outcomes of the programme include the knowledge and skills acquired by beneficiaries and the adoption of improved technologies. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of degraded and invaded lands resulted in increased agricultural production and productivity. The target communities have created more assets, and have increased income and food security and better access to potable water. The communities have realized the importance of a gender sensitive development approach and have a better understanding of HIV/AIDS. Looking at the programme outcomes from the perspective of sustainability, it was found that the programme was environmentally friendly, financially viable and replicable. However, as the programme was generally designed for a short term intervention (less than five years) the results from this short-term intervention alone may not be adequate to improve the livelihoods and develop deep resilience of such vulnerable communities who have been suffering from deep rooted poverty and chronic food insecurity over several decades. Moreover, the local institutions developed have limited managerial skills and leaders have no financial incentive. Disappointingly, they get little technical and legal support from the local government. Thus the sustainability of the outcomes of the programme could be challenged if this is not addressed.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Follow up with incomplete projects:

The programme evaluation was carried out before the completion dates of some of the projects. Expected impacts will be fully realized only if the activities underway are properly completed. For instance, the success of the bulla value chain will be determined only after the required drier machine is supplied to start bulla processing and when the problem associated with Dicho-Tulto Community Based institution is resolved. Some of the irrigation users' cooperatives in Tigray are still struggling for market access for their products to gain fair prices. There is need to support the 'Income Generating Activities' groups a little further technically and also by establishing market information systems in order to access market and fetch fair price for their products. This might entail conducting value chain analysis for

selected commodities and development of value chain strategies. Moreover, the cleared land in the pastoralist areas needs further enrichment and follow up to control re-invasion by unwanted weeds/bushes.

4.2 Scale up of best practices:

The programme achievement in land reclamation in the north, mitigating the incidence of the unwanted bushes in pastoralist areas, introduction of irrigation-based production of high value crops, improved dairy breeds (mix of Holstein) and development of potable water are among the most important. It is essential to scale up these initiatives. Thus, preparing guidelines to scale up such successful technologies through various experience sharing channels is suggested. The development of similar rehabilitation works is strongly recommended as environmental degradation has increased the vulnerability of the many farmers in the country. Unless there is continuous work on rehabilitating areas under threat through watershed management, the benefits observed so far could easily be reversed.

4.3 Programme formulation:

The integration of components of the programme to provide a more holistic intervention is encouraging. There was significant flexibility in the programme to accommodate partners' projects. Some critical recommendations include:

- Consolidating interventions for larger areas by pulling together adjacent kebeles/woredas¹ with similar problems. This would facilitate Monitoring and Evaluation and attract government attention in relation to policy.
- Partners' projects should be framed so that the achievements can be aggregated to show the contribution to the programme.
- The fact that poverty is deep rooted, and livelihood development is generally complex and requires the integration of complementary activities means that long term programmes should be designed to result in tangible changes and enable communities to really become resilient to shocks.
- Leadership of cooperatives/committees: Cooperatives have increasingly become essential institutions both as business entities (such as SACCOs, milk and fruit/vegetable marketing cooperatives) and social service providers (like water user committees). As often assumed leadership is provided on a voluntary basis without any recognised form of incentives. Different cooperatives might have different forms or incentives or might not have any at all. However, incentives have a direct impact on the motivation and performance of the leaders and, indeed, sustainability of the entities they represent. Therefore, there is a need for incentives so that leaders of cooperatives/committees would be bound in principle and personally motivated to promote the cause of the entities they represent. Building their managerial capacity (e.g.; professionalize marketing cooperatives through hiring experts in booking and marketing at least on a part-time basis), and lobbying for stronger government commitment to provide technical and legal supports for greater sustainability.

¹ Kebeles are municipalities. They are the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia. Woredas are composed of a number of kebeles. Woredas are typically collected together into zones which form a region.

- Adopting WASH (Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion) Approach: - The provision of water supply without proper sanitation and hygiene services is a partial treatment of the whole problem. In future, it is desirable to integrate sanitation, hygiene and water supply into WASH approaches in areas where the water supply is intended for domestic use.
- Promotion of the technology to be transferred: There are ample works on innovation and technology transfer including promotion of high value crops, improved irrigation practices, artificial insemination, improved seeds provision and provision of improved livestock breeds. In order to be effective, it is desirable to promote this work in order to gain the communities' buy-in.

4.4 Free hand out and dependency syndrome:

There is evidence of a dependency syndrome among the projects' beneficiaries despite the entrepreneurship promotion efforts of all projects of the programme. This is particularly evidenced in PSNP (productive safety net programme) based implementation of natural resource management activities where people engage in the work for sake of a return. This does not promote a sense of ownership of the schemes. There is a need for devising a mechanism where PSNP and Cash for Work initiatives do not erode the self initiated contribution of communities to feel a sense of ownership and therefore ensure the sustainability of such schemes. Hence alongside with PSNP and Cash for Work initiatives, these communities should be encouraged to contribute to accomplishing activities. Moreover, free hand-outs should be discouraged in favour of community participation as much as possible.

4.5 Conflict sensitivity:

Conflict is one of the cross-cutting issues in the programme framework. This is not evident in most of the projects components. This is, however, important among communities where ethnic and cultural borderlines are not clearly marked and the provision of services along the conflict line can easily spark conflict between neighbouring people. This is of particular importance in the transition zone between the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas like for Burji and Amaro, for instance, who border Guji zone of Oromiya where the transition line can easily be crossed unless proper care is taken. Similar cases apply elsewhere

5. Management Response to the Evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation was for CST (CAFOD, SCIAF, Trócaire) and our partners to learn from our experiences and feed this into the new programme design. The final evaluation report and workshop was of a high standard and provided CST and partners with an appropriate level of information to assess the programme over the last three years. The quality of the report meant that CST decided that it would not be necessary to do an end-line survey to the programme instead it would use the information in this report and supplement with more additional quantitative information from the partners annual reports in January 2013 to provide a full comprehensive report to our three agencies (CAFOD, SCIAF, Trócaire) and the relevant donors (Irish Aid and DFID).

CST management are in full agreement with the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: CST team will continue to follow up with the projects until they are complete.
- Recommendation 2: CST team will integrate scale-up of best practices in the new programme within the limits of the programme budget.
- Recommendation 3.5: No action required at present.

- Recommendation 3.6: No action required at present.
- Recommendation 5: In the current programme life the government introduced directives which forbade International Non-Governmental Organisations and most National Non-Governmental Organisations for engaging on conflict related issues however this has now been clarified so as to exclude conflict sensitive approaches. Conflict sensitivity will be mainstreamed in the new programme. CST has trained a number of partners on the approach already.

CST management are in partial agreement with the following recommendations.

- Recommendation 3: The new programme will build on the old programme, and the new programme period will be 5 years. Through this CST believes it is taking a longer term approach. The new programme framework was designed in close consultation with the partners and results based management will be rolled out to the partners in the coming months as they design their projects to fit the framework of the programme. However CST, as a partnership based agency, continues to believe that partners must be allowed some flexibility to respond to the particular needs of the communities they serve if we are to be effective.
- Recommendation 3.4: The problem of leadership in cooperatives is something already recognised by CST especially since of research on cooperatives done in 2011. However CST believes the core problems are more complex than stated here and included issues of literacy, workload, and cooperative law. Our current TRADE project in Borana and our new programme design aims to tackle these issues in a locally appropriate manner.
- Recommendation 4: CST believes the communities we work with do not want to be dependent and when given the opportunities have shown themselves to be willing and able to work for their own and their community betterment. Evidence of this has been shown in Borana where CFW activities were carried by the community without the payment (only most vulnerable got paid) and where activities were continued when project has closed. CST will continue to work closely with partners to ensure that this principle is prioritised and people's dignity and right to work is respected.