

**Rehabilitation and Food Security
in Unity State, South Sudan
Evaluation Report**

SDN 1045



Welthungerhilfe

March 2008

Hendrik Hempel

1. Summary

1.01 Short Project description

The project SDN 1045 in Unity State, South Sudan is a food security and rehabilitation project and constitutes the transitional phase between relief, rehabilitation and development. The focus of the project's work is agriculture, vegetable production, fishery and livestock keeping. Women are trained in household hygiene. The establishment of self-help structures is being promoted.

The total budget for the two year project is 765.548 Euro. The co-financing partner is the EU. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is contributing seeds and tools in kind, which are included in the total budget.

1.02 Project holder analysis

Project holder of project SDN 1045-06 is Welthungerhilfe. Rubkona / Bentiu were the first sites Welthungerhilfe established in Unity State in 1998. The project holder has many years of experience in the project region, in emergency aid and food security.

The project structure contains two field compounds, one in Mayom and the other in Leer. On national level, the regional office (RO) in Khartoum supports the project. The organisational structure is generally appropriate for the implementation of project activities.

A total of 34 employees are working for the project. The project faces difficulties in recruiting qualified staff from Southern Sudan. The demand that the team should be gender and ethnically balanced further hampers recruitment.

The project site is a difficult site to work in for climatic, security and health reasons. Especially for expatriate staff living conditions and recreational activities are a real challenge. Employee turnover has been high at the onset of the project, so the majority of the current team has been working in the project for less than a year. Some still have to get acquainted with their tasks. Staff is highly motivated, willing to learn and cope well with stresses and strains. Office buildings and staff houses have been renovated. They are in good condition, well equipped and well managed.

Official project partner is the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (SSRRC). It is one of the best established government structures and responsible for ensuring cooperation between government structures, international humanitarian organisations and the population.

SSRRC's role is more one of a facilitator and entry point to the target groups, its involvement in the direct implementation of activities is low.

SSRRC would like to see an even stronger presence of Welthungerhilfe regarding the development of South Sudan.

1.03 Security situation and measures

Since 2005 South Sudan is an autonomous region within Sudan with about 9 millions inhabitants (figures 2006) and Juba (Dschuba) as a capital. In 2011 a referendum shall decide about the independence of South Sudan. After more than 20 years of civil war (from 1983) the situation in South Sudan has much improved since the conclusion of the peace agreement in January 2005.

Unity State as part of the Upper Nile Region is situated on the western banks of the White Nile River with few elevations. Natural conditions are characterised by yearly flooding of the Nile River, which on the one side bear a good soil fertility status and conditions for agricultural development. Unity state is highly susceptible to floods and drought with consequences to road communication and accessibility.

The occurrence of malnutrition was subject to high variations during the last years and is currently between 17 - 22 % for acute malnutrition (GAM) and 0.9 – 3.5 % for severe malnutrition (SAM). The child mortality rate reaches 150 out of 1.000 births. Maternal

mortality is about 1.700 out of 100.000 births. Malaria, fever, diarrhoea and respiratory diseases are the main health problems. However, the majority of the population seemed to have two meals a day. Only few households, most of them female headed, have only one meal a day.

1.04 Analysis of situation and target group

In the northern part of the state Dinka tribes are dominant while in the centre and the south Nuer tribes constitute the majority of the population. Both ethnic groups are agro pastoralists. Relations between both ethnic groups though are tense, as there are frequent conflicts regarding the scarce pastoral land. Locally there are frequent conflicts between ethnic groups, but also among the sub clans of the same ethnic group.

The improved security situation in South Sudan has encouraged thousands of IDPs and refugees to return to their home areas. Target groups include 6.340 families in five counties of Unity State. The majority of the population returned after war from other parts of Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. Food security of target groups has stabilised during the last years, but income opportunities are still rare.

The social network relies on kinship relation. Organisational structures or interest groups to deal with the outside world are still rare. Some women groups try to promote income generating activities, but mostly failed to achieve their objectives for a variety of reasons.

1.05 Assessment and analysis of project preparation

The preparation of the current project was based on a needs assessment that had been carried out by three staff of Welthungerhilfe Sudan and an external consultant. During a workshop the concept for a project proposal was worked out, in the beginning of 2006 a project proposal was presented to the delegation of the EU. The proposal was at first rejected. Funds allocated in 2004 to a project in Darfur (SDN 1030-04) that could not be implemented for security reasons, were finally, after local negotiations between Welthungerhilfe and the representatives of the EU in Khartoum, transferred to the project in Unity State.

Generally planning for the project site was difficult. Results and activities seem to have been designed more in response to emergency situations. There are a lot of experiences made and knowledge of the situation, but it is rather in the heads of the staff than systematically documented and processed.

1.06 Assessment and analysis of planning /project planning matrix

Project planning follows the concept of food security. The transition from food distribution in an emergency situation towards food security and rehabilitation follows the LRRD strategy. Instead of handing out goods for free, a cost-recovery approach is being adopted.

The impact hypothesis implied in the plan is that:

- Diversification and improvement of agricultural production
- Rehabilitation of livestock and fishery production
- Improvement of marketing and trade of local products
- Strengthening of community based organisations and capacities of communities to reintegrate returnees

lead to the recovery from war and the sustainable development of livelihood systems (specific objective). This will contribute to food security improvement and the rehabilitation of livelihood systems. Overall this chain of thought is coherent and plausible.

Assumptions regarding the specific objective are related to the peace and security situation, which are indeed the main threats on this level.

Generally it can be stated that activities support result achievement, and that the results contribute to the achievement of the specific objective.

1.07 Assessment and analysis of project implementation

The project set out in January 2007. Due to high employee turnover because of illnesses and other reasons, implementation delayed considerably. Only in June 2007, when a new DHoP assumed her position, planning and implementation finally took off.

Occasionally the security situation was extremely tense, so that Welthungerhilfe and other INGOs had to retreat for several days. Floods started from the end of July 2007, caused by torrential rainfalls in the whole macro region.

To strengthen participation and self-organisation of the target groups, previous projects established Village Agriculture Committees (VACs) and on county level umbrella organisations called Agriculture Development Committees (ADCs). These were supposed to support planning and implementation of project activities. ADC/VACs are in need of more capacity building.

The measures for an increase and diversification of agricultural production through the cultivation of vegetables, fruits and rice and the support of livestock production by improved veterinary services and capacity building for animal health workers are supporting target groups in overcoming the limitations of their current coping strategies. Training for nutrition and hygiene, infrastructural rehabilitation (water road clearance), capacity building for Village Agriculture Committees (VAC) and Agriculture Development Committees (ADC) and the partner, as well as income generating activities constitutes a meaningful supplementation. In order to increase and diversify agricultural production, seeds have been distributed and rice cultivation promoted in previous years. Vegetable production was initiated by introducing new vegetable varieties and a simple irrigation technique (buckets) to diversify agricultural production. Fruit trees are planned for, but have not been planted yet. This is supposed to be done during the next rainy season (May to August).

Finally there is only little coordination among SSRRC, Ministry of Agriculture, MoA and other actors involved in relief and food security causing a number of different approaches existing side by side. Some organisations are still providing inputs for free, while Welthungerhilfe is demanding a contribution by the target group in order to overcome the emergency approach, which is already influencing negatively target groups self-help efforts. It seems that relief NGOs became part of the coping strategy of target groups.

Women groups are highly motivated; demonstration plots and individual orchards have been prepared and fenced and women became familiar with different types of vegetables. New methods of cultivation are adopted, but only few techniques (manure, green fertiliser or mulching) used to improve soil fertility.

Training for nutrition and household hygiene was highly appreciated and beneficiaries are very receptive for trainings and already train others.

The restocking with goats seems to be an effective activity to support FHH, because after a short period of time, families can develop a reasonable herd. Animals can be used for household income, milk production and meat consumption.

Some women's associations already have been established and possibilities of IGAs discussed.

Rice production has been initiated and seems to yield high quantities, thus contributing considerably to family nutrition. Beneficiaries are highly motivated, have some knowledge on production techniques and are aware of pests and diseases. But they are still unable to tackle the related problems and they do not know exactly, how much they harvest on their plots. Finally seed banks are still not established.

The project's livestock component works closely with the SSRRC on county level and is in continuous dialogue with the community. The training for Community Animal Health Workers, (CAHW) was effective. So far all medicine is made available by Welthungerhilfe and there is no other actor available to take over veterinarian supply.

Fishermen are highly motivated and all trainings (Fish Processing and Preservation, Cost Recovery and Marketing Cooperative) were well received and enabled them to practice new methods they learned during trainings.

Beneficiaries are highly motivated to work for water road clearance although it is dangerous work, because of water animals; e.g. crocodiles and hippopotamus. Villagers are hopeful to achieve improved access to the main river and thus to markets.

The communities have been very receptive on the idea of forming groups, but would have to be accompanied. In relation to communities, guidance is missing and a follow-up on the needs of marketing cooperatives is needed. ADCs are very eager to develop into professional organisations and to become independent of Welthungerhilfe. Capacity building in Project Cycle Management (PCM) for ADCs has been carried out.

For some activities the project has already achieved all of the activities planned and is finalising project intervention. Regarding other activities, e.g. fruit trees and ruminant distribution, the project is still behind schedule.

Comparing the project plan with the present situation from quantitative and qualitative points of view, the project most probably will be able to carry out project activities within the foreseen project duration.

1.08 Impact with regard to development

A legitimate evaluation of impacts regarding politics of development is difficult at this point in time, as activities have not been progressed so far, that impacts on result level could be measured. As project monitoring is currently limited to input and output monitoring of activities, there is no data available to facilitate assessment.

The impact hypothesis of the project planning matrix most probably does correspond to the local requirements. Achieving project results and objective during the project period is only partly likely.

Socioeconomic changes are visible in the project area, even enormous changes. But they can not be attributed to project activities. Some output can be measured, but for outcome it is simply too early. Nevertheless the women groups appreciate the nutrition and household trainings as well as the vegetable gardens and the social impact of it is definitely visible and giving hope.

Once again the early stage of project implementation is hindering any reliable statement on the project's contribution to the achievement of MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), MDG 5 (improve maternal health), MDG 6 (combat HIV/AIDS Malaria and other diseases) and MDG 7 (ensure environmental sustainability).

On the one hand the project activities are aiming to strengthen the development oriented coping strategies, while on the other hand the beneficiaries are promoted to change the destructive part of their coping strategies through capacity building and improved crop management. Therefore the project follows the Welthungerhilfe Self-help Approach.

1.09 Project management

In general the project management and staff are highly motivated and committed. The project management in Rubkona works professionally and with a clear hierarchy and division of labour. The team spirit is visible and the office atmosphere is gentle and respectful.

Project equipment is properly maintained and vehicles are used with care. But the drivers system for trucks and cars (project drivers have to drive trucks and vehicles, because there are only few drivers totally for all vehicles) causes a lot of maintenance work and high costs. This situation cannot be improved at the moment.

The project staff gives high importance to friendly and respectful contacts with the target groups and is willing to learn from them. Communities and SSRRC as well as MoA are very much engaged in dialogue with Welthungerhilfe for best solutions. The DHoP is respected and has a good reputation.

Project management plans to go for more data collection and outcome and impact monitoring. Generally the project is on the right track and most probably it will be able to complete the activities implementation.

A security plan exists, is visible and project staff is aware of it. UN Security check by phone or radio every evening has become daily routine. A bomb shelter that was used twice up to now exists and is easily accessible.

Evacuation by UNMIS is possible, but a MoU must be signed beforehand.

1.10 Recommendations to

Project strategy

- Wherever it is possible, distribution of inputs should be tied to a contribution from the beneficiaries' side. Inputs (seeds, tools, boats, nets, etc.) should not be distributed for free any longer. Ownership can be increased by the contribution approach.
- A next project phase is highly recommended to strengthen sustainability. It is necessary to elaborate and prepare exit strategies, which help the target groups to be better prepared for the ex-post situation.

Personal

- Management should try to keep staff stable and motivated, employment practice should be aware of gender and ethnicity. More responsibilities could be delegated.

Project steering

- Continue to streamline the project office and its outside structure by getting rid of some of the trucks and containers for cost reduction.
- The Deputy Head of Project should advise SSRRC and MoA to improve coordination among food security actors in order to promote coordination and a common strategy for food security in Unity State by all actors.
- Do not expand the VAC/ADC approach as long as outcome, transparency, sustainability and benefit for members are not institutionalised. CBOs / NGOs should be analysed and where possible contracted for community education as monitors, organisers, translators and trainers. The project should concentrate on already existing structures, instead of creating new ones.
- Management should develop a long term strategy for the project and ensure feasibility (finance) or be prepared for exit strategies and develop contingency plans.
- Lack of clarity regarding security and evacuation should be clarified. The procedure for evacuation in case of illness, accidents or security incidents should be clear for all. Agreements with the UN regarding evacuation should be signed as soon as possible.

Monitoring

- Project site history (relevant documents of previous projects, e.g. final reports) should be compiled into one single documentation, which should be easily accessible for all staff as well as other relevant reports and surveys regarding Unity State analysis and food security.
- Extend and intensify monitoring and data collection relevant for outcome and impact. Decide on what type of information must be collected and how information can be

obtained. Select work indicators which are smart” (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound). Comprehensive and real-time data collection should be carried out.

- An outcome monitoring and simplified cost benefit calculations are crucial as a base for decision making of the management.

Crop production and fishery

- Activities should be comprehensively planned, assessed and prepared (water tests, less strenuous irrigation methods, mulching, manure and green fertiliser techniques, simplified cost benefit calculations).
- For agriculture, livestock and other livelihood activities an inventory of possible risks and advisable corrective measures should be worked out. For natural disasters contingency plans for rapid intervention in case of need should be worked out.

Capacity building

- The project should increase its efforts to improve transparency within the VAC/ADC system. Funds should be invested to maintain current projects and activities (tractor repair, fencing nurseries, etc.) or spent for social infrastructure investments. VAC/ADCs require training for small scale enterprise management.
- Capacity building in community development, small scale enterprise management, project management and marketing relationship should be organised. Further training is needed.

1.11 General conclusions

A project period of two years is too short to achieve sustainable results regarding organisational skills and self-help ability of target groups and improve food security significantly. There is an alarming tendency of donors towards preferring ever shorter project duration periods with little chances for adjacent funding. At the same time expectations on impact and sustainability are increasing. These are hardly relevant after the project ends, they are hardly ever checked on and cannot be the basis for further fund acquisition. This antagonism is clearly articulated by the implementing agencies such as Welthungerhilfe, but it seems that it does not impress EU. Probably it would make sense to discuss the problem with other donors in order to secure adjacent funding.