



Livestock for Livelihoods

Farm Africa's Livestock for Livelihoods project helped Ugandan and Ethiopian pastoralist women establish Women's Livestock Groups that rear and add value to goats, run savings and loans associations that support the development of small-scale businesses and learn how to improve their families' nutrition.

This booklet is one of a series of various learning products generated from the project.

Project duration:

The project ran from 2 March 2018 to 31 July 2021. This booklet was written in December 2021.

Project budget:

£5,060,000, of which £3,765,000 was provided by UK aid from the UK government.

HOUSEHOLD SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S DIETARY DIVERSITY

The drylands of Ethiopia's South Omo zone and Uganda's Karamoja sub-region are home to thousands of pastoralists who migrate with their livestock in search of pasture. Livestock is the main source of livelihood for the communities found in these areas. In both locations, disease, drought and degraded grasslands have cut the size of herds. Although livestock rearing is common it is unproductive.

Communities living in these regions are faced with other challenges such as high poverty rates and food insecurity leading to high rates of malnutrition and stunting in children. Food insecurity is a major and ongoing challenge rendering women and children vulnerable to malnutrition.

The heavy reliance on natural resources renders this livestock-based livelihood sensitive to climate dynamics such as recurrent droughts seen in the two regions. The regions are faced with constant insecurity, conflicts and subsequent instability, which further increase the challenges faced by the pastoralist communities.

Farm Africa, through the Livestock for Livelihoods project, supported pastoralist women living in these regions to set up sustainable, small-scale goat-rearing enterprises that helped them generate an income and provide their families with a more nutritious diet.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Household socioeconomic status is recognised as an important determinant of health and nutrition, as lower socioeconomic status contributes to health and nutrition disparities. Inadequate income, an indicator of lower socioeconomic status, reduces the dietary options for a household thus lowering dietary diversity. This puts households at risk of malnutrition and stunting in children. Dietary diversity is important, as it ensures the adequate intake of essential nutrients from different foods that can promote good health. It is also a useful instrument to measure food security as it is associated with access, availability and utilisation of both the quality and quantity of food to meet household members' nutritional requirements.

Farm Africa through the Livestock for Livehoods project implemented various activities aimed at improving the socio-economic status of the women beneficiaries as well as dietary diversity at the household level. These included:

▼ DISTRIBUTION OF GOATS USING THE REVOLVING GOAT SCHEME

The goats improve the socio-economic status of the women beneficiaries as they are an asset base. They also provide a source of income from the sale of milk, goat kids and goat hides. The milk produced from the goats contributed to improved household nutrition, particularly in children under five.

▼ IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

through the Social Behaviour Change and Communication (SBCC) strategy aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge of dietary diversity. This was done in collaboration with Africa Innovations Institute (AfrII) in Uganda and Mothers and Children Multisectoral Development Organization (MCMDO) in Ethiopia.

▼ SUPPORTING WOMEN BENEFICIARIES

to be more economically empowered through access to finance provided by savings and loans associations and facilitating them to be involved in profitable enterprises in the goat value chain (goat breeding, leather tanning and milk value addition).

RESULTS AND IMPACT

HOUSEHOLD SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS IN BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS

Based on the annual surveys conducted in 2019 and 2021 where the household income gap to the living income (adjusted for household size) and the wealth ranking were assessed, the two indicators improved (as shown in Table 1 below) and were highly correlated. This implies that as the household income increased, the gap to the living income decreased and the consumption of better nutritious foods for the households, especially for women and children, improved.

The percentage of women reporting an improvement in income from goat production has gone up across the two communities. For 34.8% of the households in Ethiopia and 27.1% of the households in Uganda, the income from goat production was enough to cover monthly living expenses. In 41.2% of the female-headed households, income was above the living income compared to the male-headed households where only 27.3% had sufficient income. Summaries are included in Figure 1.

| | 2019 | | 2021 | |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | South Omo (%) | Karamoja (%) | South Omo (%) | Karamoja (%) |
| Household income relative to living income | | | | |
| Below | 60.6 | 53.6 | 50.3 | 18.3 |
| Within range | 30.3 | 40.6 | 39.2 | 69.5 |
| Higher | 9.1 | 5.8 | 10.5 | 12.1 |
| Wealth ranking | | | | |
| Low | 31.6 | 41.2 | 18.6 | 21.2 |
| Moderate | 56.7 | 52.6 | 66.5 | 59.8 |
| High | 11.7 | 6.2 | 14.9 | 19.0 |

Table 1: Percentage change in indicators relating to beneficiary household socio-economic statuses

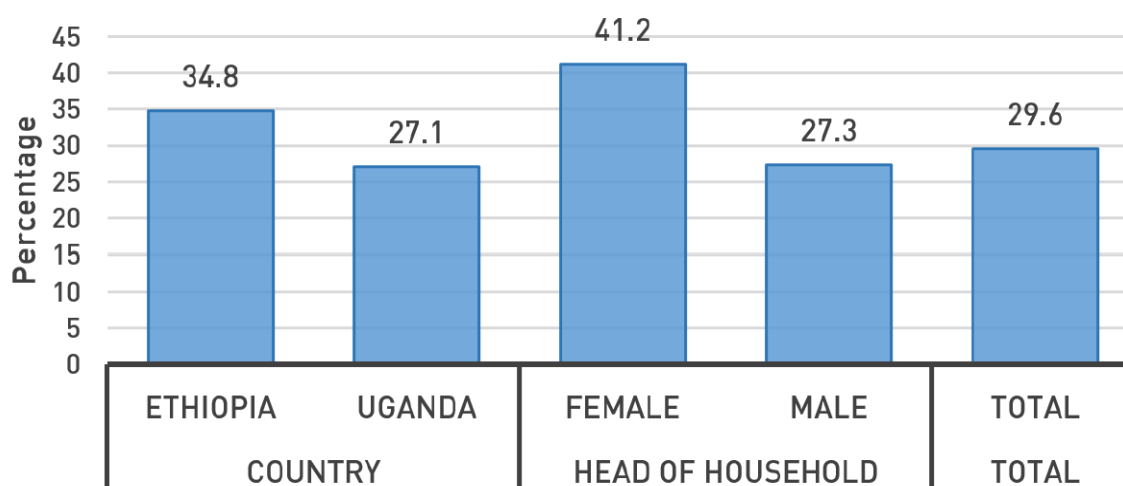


Figure 1: Percentage of households whose earnings from goat production is at least able to meet the living income level (April 2021)

“For me, it’s like a dream to have my own goats. I am just so happy. There is hope for the future. Now I have goats, I know that tomorrow I will be able to have something better.”

-Longole, Karamoja, Uganda



NUTRITION AND NUTRITIONAL OUTCOMES IN BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS

The nutrition-related indicators for Karamoja improved significantly from the baseline in 2018 to the endline in 2021. The minimum dietary diversity increased from 19.4% among women and 35.9% among children under five years to 42.3% and 49.8% respectively. The nutritional indicators for South Omo did not improve appreciably, as the minimum dietary diversity among women was 23.3% at the baseline and 22.3% in 2021, while that of children under five years was 34.7% at the baseline and 30.1% in 2021. This was primarily due to the droughts suffered in the region from 2019 to 2020 which reduced the availability of various foods, particularly vegetables. Overall, the consumption of milk by children under five

years increased significantly for both Karamoja (45% in 2021 versus 23.6% at the baseline) and South Omo (40% in 2021 versus 6.5% at the baseline).

The nutritional indicators were also seen to be better among the female-headed than male-headed households (Figure 2) and this could be attributed to the nutritional knowledge training given to the women and the freedom that the women running their households have on food choices and use of resources compared to their counterparts in the male-headed households. In general, access to the minimum dietary diversity was low among the women as compared to the children.

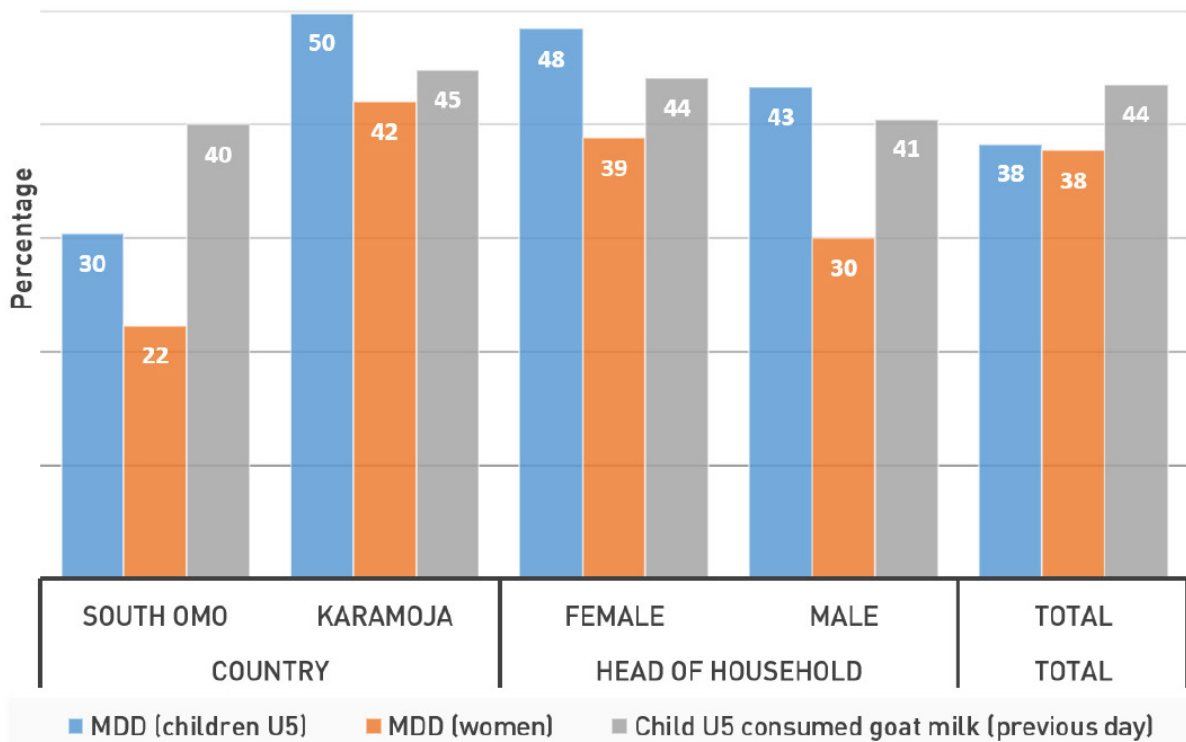


Figure 2: Nutrition-related indicators among the project beneficiary households

ASSOCIATION OF NUTRITION AND HOUSEHOLD SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES)

Generally, households with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to have better dietary profiles consistent with nutritional recommendations than other households. This has been summarised in Table 2 below. Households with incomes that meet the living income threshold (as determined by the survey data and additional qualitative interviews) had a higher proportion of women accessing the minimum dietary diversity and children that were less likely to be malnourished. Similarly, the better the wealth ranking, the better the nutritional indicators and nutritional outcomes.

Other household factors that were seen to improve dietary diversity in women and children include:

✔ HIGH WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT SCORE:

This is a score of the woman's influence in the decision making at the household level.

✔ PRODUCTION OF FOOD CROPS:

Families that produce food crops have a higher dietary diversity due to the access and availability of the different foods.

✔ LIVESTOCK HERD SIZES:

Households with large herd sizes have higher dietary diversity due to the higher incomes from the sale of livestock and livestock products.

| | Minimum dietary diversity in children under five years | | Minimum dietary diversity in women | | Mid-upper arm circumference* (Malnutrition) | |
|---|--|------|------------------------------------|------|---|------|
| | n ¹ | % | n | % | n | % |
| Household income relative to living income | | | | | | |
| Below | 78 | 33.9 | 23 | 18.4 | 30 | 27.5 |
| Within range | 131 | 39.7 | 112 | 32.4 | 39 | 15.0 |
| Higher | 31 | 46.3 | 28 | 41.8 | 11 | 19.0 |
| Wealth rank | | | | | | |
| Low | 36 | 28.6 | 14 | 14.0 | 10 | 13.3 |
| Moderate | 135 | 34.3 | 103 | 29.8 | 59 | 21.0 |
| High | 69 | 64.5 | 46 | 50.0 | 11 | 15.5 |

¹ Number of households

* Mid-upper arm circumference is a measurement that allows health workers to quickly determine the level of malnutrition

Table 2: Association of household SES and the nutrition indicators and outcomes

“Goats mean food, they are money as well: this one brings my family money that means I can pay for medical expenses or buy clothes.”

-Beka, South Omo, Ethiopia



LESSONS LEARNT

For better outcomes on nutrition interventions, there is a need to have a multi-pronged approach with a focus on both the income and the socio-economic status of households in combination with other contextual factors such as gender norms that dictate access to resources and decisions on land use. Factors that are especially affected by gender norms and roles should be considered in projects aiming to improve women's incomes. Men should also be involved in the project activities to ensure their buy-in to the project and to support their wives. This will affect the overall impact on income and nutrition as intra-household dynamics such as male and female household heads' preferences determine household resource allocation.

The selection of nutrition intervention beneficiaries should be preceded by an analysis of the socio-economic status of households, and households with the lowest socio-economic profiles should be targeted more than the wealthier households. This is especially important for projects that include activities aimed at improving household incomes. Providing nutritional education alongside agricultural interventions is likely to enhance these projects' impact on nutritional outcomes, at least in areas where there is access to and availability of food.

Challenges were experienced in the project areas that hampered the implementation of the project as well as the attainment of the desired outcomes and impacts. These included livestock disease outbreaks in the goats and the drought in the region. These resulted in the deaths of many of the goats and reduced food security among other negative impacts. The project mitigated against some of these by

compensating the beneficiaries whose goats died from the livestock diseases. However, there is a need to incorporate a crisis modifier in the project, that will ensure the project can mitigate and adapt to the risks which may be realised during the implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is assumed that inadequate or low incomes (as an indicator of lower socioeconomic status) of the household will result in unhealthy diets and low dietary diversity for both women and children. There is a need to further evaluate situations where an increase in household resources did not automatically translate into healthier diets for households. An increase in the price of food would often lead to changes in the quantity and type of food consumed by the households. However, further research is required to link downward fluctuation in food prices to improvement in nutritional outcomes of the household.

Although the number of children and women feeding on four or five or more balanced diet food items is increasing, the child nutrition and health indicators are still below the national average. This could be partially because the majority of women breastfeed their children for less than twelve months, despite the available high level of knowledge about child nutrition and the value of breastfeeding to child nutrition. Nutrition projects need to assess factors contributing to early weaning and improve on sensitisation, especially of nutritious meal preparation, handling and utilisation for children and women using the Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) approach ensuring that women have the required institutional and social support.

Farm Africa promotes sustainable agricultural practices, strengthens markets and protects the environment in rural Africa.

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