



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 four focusing on different project components:

1. Revolving goat fund
2. Improved goat breeds
3. Community animal health workers
4. Women and children's nutrition

Project duration:

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

Project budget:

£3,845,000, of which £3,370,000 was provided by UK aid from the UK government.

REVOLVING GOAT FUND

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. In both locations, disease, drought and degraded grasslands have cut the size of herds, so although goat rearing is common it is unproductive. These regions are also characterised by high poverty rates and chronic malnutrition.

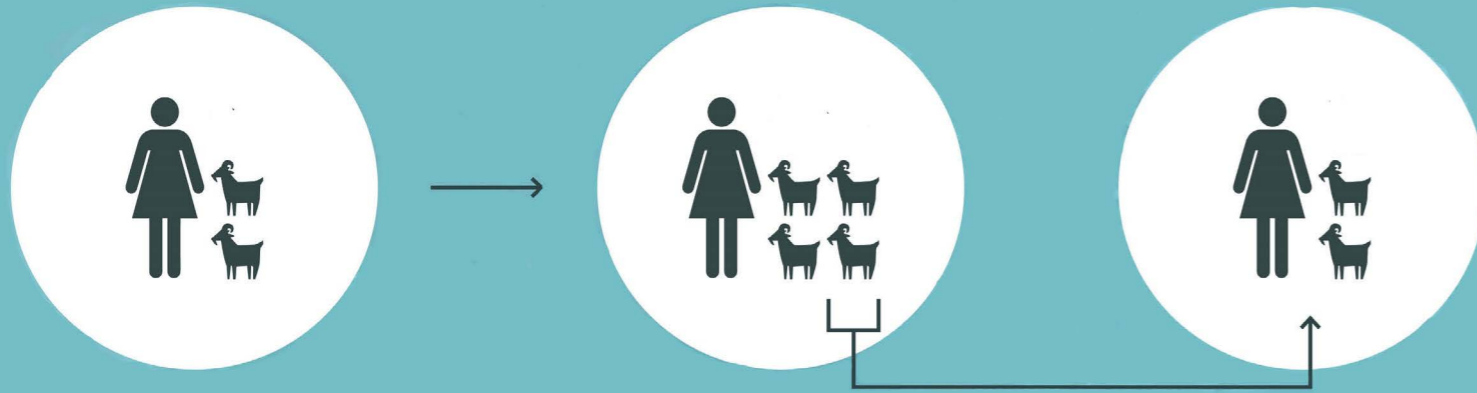
Goats in South Omo and Karamoja are often managed by women. However, pastoralist women have a low social and economic status, meaning that despite managing the goats, they have little voice in financial decision-making.

The Livestock for Livelihoods project aimed to economically empower pastoralist women, increase pastoralist women's involvement in household financial decision making and improve household nutrition. The project was designed to ensure that livestock and rangeland systems were productive, sustainable and appropriate for female pastoralists. The project has enabled women to set up sustainable, small-scale goat-rearing enterprises so they can earn an income through the sale of goats and goat products as well as receive financial support by participating in Village and Saving Loans Associations (VSLAs).

Over the first two years of the project, the Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture Survey¹ score of participants increased from 37% to 44% in South Omo and from 54% to 75% in Karamoja. This has contributed to an improvement in the nutrition levels in the households as the women are able to purchase a variety of foods for the families.

Farm Africa set up a revolving goat scheme across South Omo and Karamoja where each woman who received does (female goats) from Farm Africa was paired with another vulnerable woman, to whom she passed goat kids on to, creating a cycle of improved prosperity. A total of 10,350 women benefitted through the revolving fund, which strengthened the women's economic empowerment.

THE APPROACH



Scheme member receives two goats

Scheme members give two of the goats' kids to the next member, who will also give two kids to another member.

The women also received training in adding value to their goats, business skills and financial literacy, as well as equipment and tools to kickstart their business enterprises. The project worked closely with Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) who provided livestock extension services, ensuring the goats are in good health at all times.

How were the beneficiaries selected?

Steering or management committees were created to undertake participatory mapping processes to identify vulnerable households and earmark them as primary or secondary beneficiaries for the revolving goat fund, as well as monitor the goat transfer between households. The committees, which are composed of key stakeholders who included local village leaders, CAHWs and technical government officers from the veterinary department, used pre-agreed selection criteria, which were shared with participants beforehand.

Example criteria for selection (NB some criteria varied from location to location):

- 1) prioritising women-headed households
- 2) households with one or more members with a disability or chronic illness that limits labour capacity
- 3) women with children under five years old
- 4) households that have lost a significant percentage of their assets in the last two years due to climatic or environmental shocks
- 5) land size
- 6) pasture condition

The selected women were organised into Women's Livestock Groups (WLGs) each with 20 members. Once put into groups, Farm Africa trained the women and community leaders on the modalities of the revolving goat scheme.

The groups developed by-laws, which outlined in detail when and how goat kids would be transferred, ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalised households

were allocated an extended period for loan repayment to support goat rearing and greater resilience.

Distributing does

Local does were procured from local markets and the project worked closely with the government veterinary department and CAHWs who screened, vaccinated and treated the does before they were distributed. This was done to reduce the incidence of diseases such as brucellosis, a common cause of abortions amongst pregnant goats. Each doe was ear-tagged so that it could be tracked and any subsequent veterinary interventions or births could be recorded against its ear tag number.

Farm Africa distributed three local female does to each primary beneficiary in South Omo, and two to each woman in Karamoja. The number of does was decided in collaboration with the government. In South Omo it was agreed that three goats was more feasible and likely to improve the livelihood of a vulnerable woman.

In South Omo, kids continued to be passed on until all members of the kebele/village received them. In Karamoja, some Women's Livestock Groups identified secondary beneficiaries to receive goats from the primary beneficiaries. In some areas, tertiary beneficiaries were identified who received goat kids from secondary beneficiaries, thus enabling the project to exceed the 10,000 women beneficiary target and help a further 350 women. The kids were passed on at an average age of five months. If a buck (male goat) was produced, it was passed on, castrated and fattened then sold. With the proceeds a doe, or does were bought in its place and immediately passed on if they exceeded the number usually transferred.

Goat distribution was carried out in a central location, in the presence of the WLG, local leaders and government officials. Subsequent transfer of goats is done in the same way to ensure transparency, and to reiterate to beneficiaries their obligation to pass on kids.

Breeding centres

To ensure the women had access to healthy and improved breeds of bucks for breeding, one member from each WLG was selected to become a buck keeper. They were selected based on their ability to construct a shelter for the buck, keep records, manage the bucks and be centrally located to other members of the group. The buck keepers were given two bucks each (Boer in South Omo, Toggenburg in Karamoja) which were then available to the WLG for cross breeding with the local does. To ensure sustainability, group members pay a small fee for breeding services (about £0.20) as agreed by the WLG members.

Community members who are not group members can also access the bucks for about £0.40. These proceeds are used to pay for the bucks' feed and medical costs.

RESULTS AND LESSONS

In April 2021, an annual household survey showed that 44.1% of women in Karamoja were living below the poverty line of US\$1.90/day, which is a big improvement from 68.4% at the beginning of the project. In Ethiopia, the percentage of women pastoralists living below the poverty line did not change from the baseline level of 36.5%, which is attributed to factors beyond the project's control (drought and insecurity, which destabilised the communities' food security and economic status).

Farm Africa has been designing and delivering revolving goat models in eastern Africa since 1988. The revolving goat model has proven to be highly sustainable in building assets beyond the project lifetime, particularly when supported with natural resource management, which builds environmental sustainability through soil and water preservation, and training to ensure healthy goat rearing and breeding.

Beneficiary feedback sessions confirmed that the animal health services at kebele levels improved significantly, supported by increased accessibility through the CAHWs. The beneficiaries were also satisfied with the approach of the revolving goat scheme. Farm Africa staff regularly collected data to verify that the revolving scheme was functioning according to the priorities established during the wealth ranking exercise, and to ensure that the secondary beneficiaries received the kids from the primary beneficiary they were partnered with.

The model of distributing the goats to individuals rather than groups ensured a sense of individual responsibility in

taking care of the goats and paying for health services.

The women received training on goat husbandry and management, fodder production, collection and conservation of locally available feeds including crop by-products, and/or growth of forage crops. As of April 2021, 3,162 women in Uganda were trained on fodder management out of which 59% (1,866) feed their goats on fodder. In Ethiopia, 4,350 women were trained on fodder management and 2,080 women feed their goats on fodder. By the end of the project, the beneficiaries were implementing improved husbandry approaches such as semi-zero grazing and supplementary feeding with cut fodder, which has contributed to the reduced mortalities in the distributed bucks and local does.

The increase in household income from the sale of goats and goats' products, and the strengthening of VSLA activities have positively contributed to the improvement of nutritional outcomes for women and children, helping to increase households' resilience during the COVID-19 crisis. The project exceeded its targets for average household revenue secured from the sale of live goats and goat products/services, achieving UGX 167,200 against the milestone target of UGX 65,248 in Uganda and 2,482 ETB in Ethiopia against a target of 2,064 ETB. This is attributed to training in animal husbandry practices and awareness among women on the potential to generate income through livestock sales. The project has strengthened the linkages between the WLGs and the goat breeding associations to ensure continued support on improving the knowledge around male goat fattening and the sale of goats' products.

The community breeding activities have been strengthened to allow the women to breed crossbreeds, which they can sell for more. The high levels of engagement, training and support provided at the household level to the women ensured that they continue to retain control over income earned from the sale of goats and input into decision making.





“The goats have meant food for us, they have meant money and resources as well.”

Pita Garday, South Omo, Ethiopia

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

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We carried out this work in partnership with the Africa Innovations Institute, and the Mothers and Children Multisectoral Development Organisation, an NGO that works to improve the lives of disadvantaged mothers and children. This project was funded with UK aid from the UK government and Jersey Overseas Aid, however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect their official policies.

Key success factors

- Provision of healthy does (normal gait with no gross abnormalities, sizeable udder with two functional teats, good temperament, body condition score of 3-5, bright and alert eyes) of breeding age (12 to 16 months old)
- Access to improved bucks in good condition (ie vaccinated against livestock communicable diseases, well managed, fed and sheltered.)
- Breeding stations equipped with basic structures such as areas for feeding, kidding, resting and exercising
- Access to water, feed and fodder of leguminous plants and grasses for dry season feeding
- Low prevalence of disease due to regular spraying and deworming of the goats
- Availability of well-trained CAHWs
- Supporting by-laws that help to guide and regulate the activities of the WLG
- Community buy-in: sensitisation of the communities and the women’s husbands has garnered support for the project
- Mobilising women into WLGs for close monitoring and peer-to-peer learning
- Pairing of the primary beneficiaries with the secondary beneficiaries creates a sense of responsibility and accountability to the recipients
- Consideration of gender dynamics, as these pastoral areas are highly patriarchal societies: the project engaged the spouses of the members of the WLGs during community meetings, distribution of goats, buck station construction and goat management, which ensured men understood the benefit the project will have to the family as a whole
- Working with local community structures and leaders ensures emerging challenges are addressed and makes the beneficiaries accountable to the community

1 Women’s Economic Empowerment in Agriculture survey. The survey is based upon one pioneered by IFPRI, that has been adapted for Farm Africa’s use.

