

BOOSTING FOOD SECURITY

LOCATION	Hiyala Payam, Murahatiha Boma
IMPLEMENTER	Global Aim
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“There is no more hunger in our home”, says 49-year-old Galileo Ohide. “Since I attended the training on how to use oxen for farming, I now earn an income that meets my household needs. I love peace, because then people are free to do their farming and earn money instead of raiding cattle. With my wife Imoya, I now live a happy life.”

Insecurity undermines food production

Traditional livelihood systems of the people from Murahatiha Boma in Hiyalla Payam rely on large-scale agro-pastoral activities. Because of this, Hiyala Payam is considered as the food basket of Eastern Equatoria State. But due to insecurity and inter-community conflict that affects neighboring communities since 2016, many people could no longer access their land. Murahatiha’s people fell back to subsistence farming for their survival. Their production sharply dropped and the area became socially and economically impoverished, with many people depending on handouts from relatives and

humanitarian organizations. Now that relative peace returned in Hiyala Payam, the communities still struggle to engage in intensive farming due to limited access to labor saving technologies. Big areas of land remain uncultivated, and food insecurity persists.

Easing labor as oxen help to plough the land

A community needs assessment conducted by Global Aim in Hiyala Payam confirmed that the soil is fertile and good for agricultural production. Community members expressed their desire to be supported to engage in intensive farming. Especially the promotion of labor saving technologies was mentioned as a viable strategy to increase the acreage of land cultivated, boosting food sufficiency and alleviating hunger.

That is why Global Aim promoted the use of ox-traction as labor saving strategy. A total of 120 lead farmers, including men and women, were trained in how to use the oxen. These trainees then trained other group members. They received ox-ploughs and oxen, hoes, pangas, seeds and watering cans. Furthermore, the trainees were equipped with business skills focused on hiring out the ox-ploughs to other community members as an income generating strategy.



Training on ox-traction.

Increased income has stabilized families

Training in ox-traction has raised household incomes. Other farmers request Galileo to train their oxen too, or pay him to plough their gardens. Galileo also hires out his oxen and earns between 500 and 1,000 SPP (5-7 USD), depending on the acreage ploughed. He uses the income to pay for schools fees, medical bills and provide for basic family needs. Because of the increased income and joint decision making of Galileo and his wife about the oxen, his household stabilized.

He says: “This project has created more harmony in my household. I work together with my wife Imoya and we are saving up money to purchase more pairs of oxen”.



Ox-ploughs distributed by SARRA.

Maximizing participation as strategy for success

The success and sustainability of the oxen-traction project strongly relies on the involvement of County authorities, local leaders, partners and beneficiaries. Involving these groups in planning and implementation of the activities enhances ownership and replication of good practices. Participatory planning also facilitates the participation of marginalized groups such as women, girls, minorities and ethnic groups. Close contact between the direct beneficiary and other stakeholders furthermore offers them access to (more) technical support, which helps them to better implement the skill trainings.

Way forward

The lead farmers now trained in ox-traction should be supported to roll out similar training to benefit other farmers. This will motivate more households to engage in farming activities and help them generate income through hiring out their oxen. This can also help to mitigate challenges such as the prolonged dry spell that affected the harvest in 2016. As persistent inflation of the prices of goods and services has limited the access to agricultural inputs, such as good seed varieties, it is important to take such additional support to farmers into account. Although the general security situation in the surroundings of Hiyala Payam improved, community members still fear to cultivate on ancestral land that is more than five kilometer away from their current settlement. To boost the sustainability of large scale farming, there is hence also a need for peace-building actors to increasingly support dialogue among the warring communities.