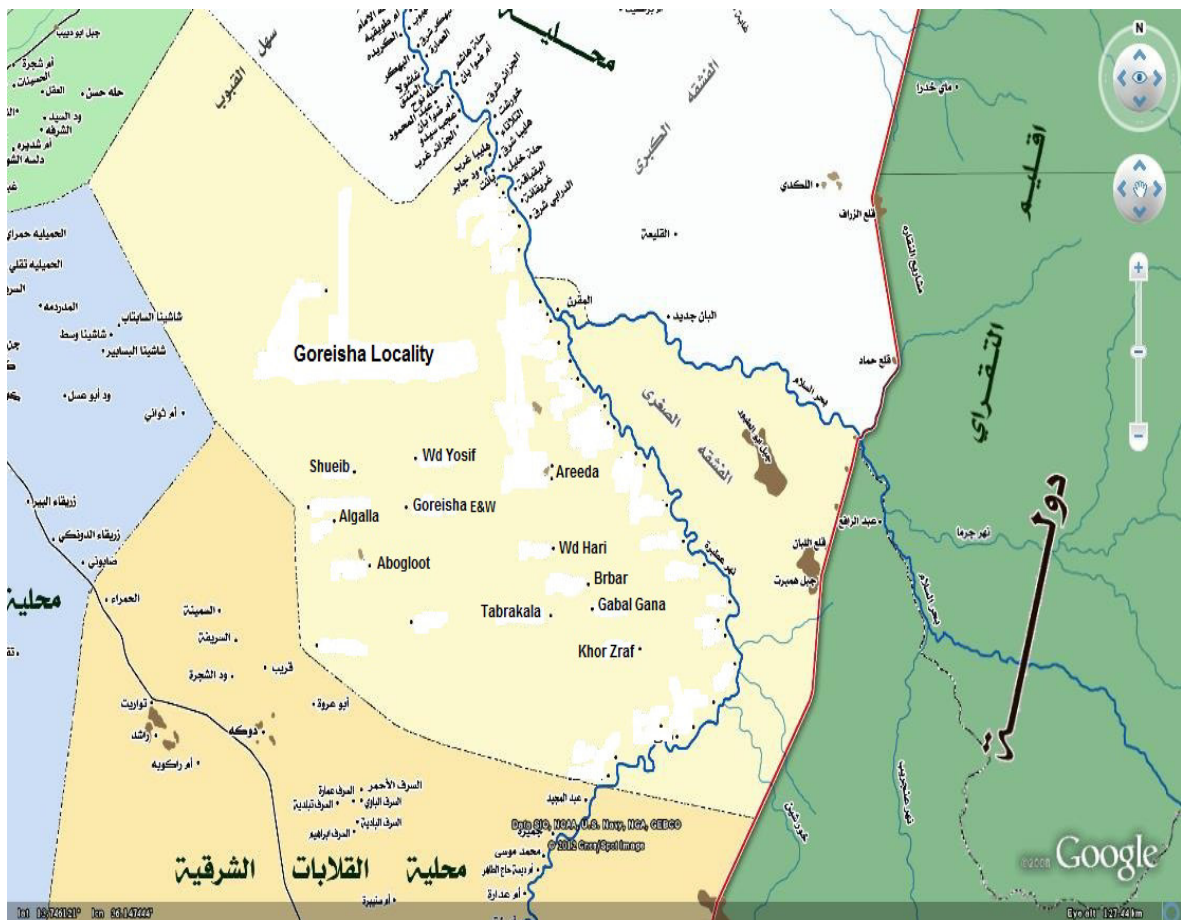




Integrated Food Security Intervention, El Goriesha locality, El Gedaref State, Sudan Project



Mid Term Evaluation

December, 2016

Ali A Karim

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Midterm review team

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
Acronyms.....	4
List of Tables.....	4
Project data	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. BACKGROUND	9
1.1 The intervention.....	9
1.2 The midterm evaluation	9
2. THE PHYSICAL PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION.....	10
3. THE INTERVENTION ACHIEVEMENTS/OUTPUTS	11
4. MID TERM EVALUATION CRITERIA	15
4.1 Relevance of the intervention.....	15
4.2 Effectiveness of the intervention	15
4.3 Intervention efficiency.....	16
4.4 Impact of the intervention	17
4.5 Comparison of the Baseline, project targets and midterm indicators.....	18
4.6 Sustainability of intervention benefits.....	20
4.7 Visibility	20
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21

Acronyms

ARC	Agricultural Research Center
CB	Capacity Building
EU	European Union
FFS	Farmers Field Schools
FG	Focus Group
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GOS	Government of Sudan
GRC	German Red Cross
HFG	Hunger Fighting Group
LCG	Land Care Group
LPMC	Locality Project Management Committee
MTE	Midterm Evaluation
PMCs	Project Management Committees
PCCs	People Community Committees
RWHS	Rain Water Harvest System
SPMC	State Project Management Committee
SRCS	Sudanese Red Crescent Society
TOT	Training of Trainers

List of Tables

- Table 1, allocation of sample
- Table 2, Rate of goats' insemination
- Table 3, Frequency of vegetables consumption

List of Figures

- Figure 1, Actual vs. planned implementation
- Figure 2, Distribution of respondents by sex
- Figure 3, Average productivity of the main crops
- Figure 4, Issues women mentioned to show their nutrition knowledge
- Figure 5, Examples of nutrition attitude women adopted
- Figure 6, Overall impacts
- Figure 7, Specific impacts
- Figure 8, Results impacts

Project data

Grant Contract No	DCI FOOD, 2014 / 352785 Food Security Gedaref
Implementing agency	German Red Cross and Sudanese Red Crescent Society
Project title	Integrated Food Security Intervention, El Goriesha locality, El Gedaref State, Sudan.
Project location	El Goriesha locality, El Gedaref State
Project duration	01.01.2015 to 31.12.2017 – 36 months
Project start date	01/01/2015
Original contract end date	31/12/2017
Project extension (months)	No
Project suspension (months)	No
Actual contract end date	31/12/2017
Names of Evaluator(s)	Ali A Karim, Mohamed Boshi
Evaluation firm/organisation	Tadbeer Consultancy Enterprise
Date of Evaluation	04/12/2016
Date of Evaluation report	31/12/2016

Financial data

Overall project budget	€ 1,11,111
EC funds contracted	€ 1,000,00
EC funds disbursed: Initial payment	€180,422.70 Date: 17/05/2015
Intermediate payment	€272,759.34 Date: dd/mm/yyyy
Expenditure incurred by project at evaluation date	€545, 070.12

Summary of Conclusions*

1. Relevance & quality of design	a
2. Efficiency of implementation	b
3. Effectiveness to date	a
4. Visibility	a
5. Impact to date	a
6. Effect on alleviating poverty	a
7. Potential sustainability	a
8. Reporting	a

*) a=very good; b=good; c=inadequate; d=serious deficiencies=catastrophic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intervention

The 36 months, EU funded intervention, implemented by GRC in partnership with SRCS covers the period 01/01/2015-31/12/2016. The intervention aim is to improve the food security situation of 720 poor beneficiary households in 12 selected villages in Gedarif state, Goreisha locality, through implementation of beneficiaries lead, carefully tailored integrated activities that draw entirely on use of local resources to increase food production and diversification and increase nutrition knowledge and practices. The activities are implemented in participation with government institutions, which input is organized through committees established at all levels, including, HQ level steering committee. State and locality levels technical committees and village level people community committees

The midterm evaluation

The MTE was carried with the objective of generating reliable information to inform the stakeholders about the progress the project is making towards achieving the stated results, measure EU evaluation criteria, and derive feasible recommendations. The process of MTE included debriefings by the implementing organization, review of intervention literature and field visits to interview committees and project staff and obtain information from the direct beneficiaries in the 12 targeted villages and observations at activities sites.

Progress of the intervention

The project physical progress is measured by comparing the activities the project has planned to implement, as stated in the project proposal, against the activities that are actually implemented during the midterm period. It has been found that 9 out of the 15 planned activities are almost completed, while some activities exceeded its target. The remaining six activities are in satisfactory progress and are expected to be completed, as planned. In overall, the progress with implementation of the planned activities is rated as higher than expected and is calculated at 77.0% of the plan. Hence, and based on the current rate of implementation, it becomes obvious that the project will meet the stated physical targets and implement the planned activities during the remaining time of the project duration.

The intervention achievements/outputs

The activities the project has implemented conform to the planned activities as stated in the project inception report. Where, the beneficiaries have implemented all activities in accordance to the preset specifications. The learning strategy the intervention adopted to equip the beneficiaries with the technical aspects of each activity prior to implementation has been effective in generation of beneficiaries led implementation approach that speeded up the implementation progress.

The implementation is further enhanced by organized input of the established PCCs that undertake the responsibilities of monitoring of the activities implementation and trickling down the training to the beneficiaries by trained PCCs members. The newly formed PCCs are supported by inclusion of SRCS volunteers as members to acts as catalysts and contribute to the CB of PCCs.

The immediate outcomes of the activities have shown positive effects that attracted the interest of the beneficiaries, such as the increase in the production of crops and vegetables, attributed to adoption of learned extension practices such as use of improved seeds, organic fertilizer and pesticide and establishment of RWH system and home gardens, which, in addition to the FSN awareness sessions enhanced food availability and improved nutrition status of the beneficiaries.

Relevance of the intervention

The intervention responds to the EU, GRC and SRCS food security objectives, which are recognized as a priority for developing countries by the international community. At field level, the preparatory measures, the baseline and the inception phase geared the intervention at best to the local context and beneficiaries needs and resulted in the introduction of feasible adaptable new techniques in farming and RWH to improve FSN situation of the target communities. In addition, the involvement of the

PCCs in the selection of the beneficiaries has contributed to reaching of the most poor in the community.

Effectiveness of the intervention

The cumulative sum of the results associated with the implemented activities will most likely exceed the sum of the individual activities results. This is attributed to the on the ground realistic integration of the activities, where, each activity is linked and contribute to the other activities result.

The quality of inputs and activities is ensured by adoption of specifications set by the respective line ministry and endorsement of accountability agreements with partners including community members. The quality guarantees enforced by the project included; the manuals, signing of agreement letters with the government departments, public bid advertisements and procurements of activity inputs from recognized institution such as Arab Seeds Company and National Forest Administration. Irrespective, intangible non conformities were recorded in the procurement of the bucks.

A positive non planned result that emerged is expressed by the large number of non beneficiaries who become direct beneficiaries, who learned from their peers and implemented the activities on their own when they saw the benefits gained by the beneficiaries.

Intervention efficiency

The staff is in place within the first 6 months and maintained their positions. At field level, volunteer heads are assigned to assist the project field officer based in Al Goreisha, in addition to increasing the number of volunteers in each of the villages. The latter's, as well as securing a temporary office for the field staff in Goreisha, has much increased the project efficacy in prompt access to the villages as well as reducing the pressure on the project vehicles caused by the far distances and rough roads between the villages. Insertion of volunteers in the membership of the PCCs has much assisted in the capacity building and effectiveness of PCCs.

Inputs are procured and activities are smoothly planned and timely implemented, though, some activities are late, but this is mainly attributed to the seasonality of the local inputs such as the green leaves needed for the organic manure, Neem tree fruits needed for the organic pesticide and RWH system which is affected by the small area of some of the houses in the un demarcated villages.

The pre-activity training of beneficiaries strategy adopted by the project in implementation of all activities, has also contributed to the project efficiency, where, beneficiaries are carrying the project activities without a need for external support, and thus reduced cost and boosted progress.

Spending is governed by monthly planning and financial reports, though, one month is considered a very tight planning period and doesn't constitute a realistic planning horizon in practice, In general, the rate of spending is considered suitable to the volume of activities implemented and the remaining period of the project duration.

Impact of the intervention

R-1; Food production is improved

Analysis of the responses of the 225 beneficiaries interviewed showed 95.5% of beneficiaries have realized or expected to realize (for those who did not harvest their crops yet), an increase in their productivity, which is estimated for sorghum at 18.5 sacks per (*hour = 2,5 feddan*), compared to 11.5 sacks in the previous seasons. Beneficiaries have also recorded a remarkable increase in the productivity of ground nut, which is an important cash crop, where they attribute the increase in the productivity to the use of the organic manure. Increase in agriculture Knowledge has been also one of the factors, mentioned by the 93.2% of the beneficiaries that contributed to the increase in productivity.

R-2; Knowledge on nutrition is enhanced

Women are able to mention the subjects that reflect their understanding of nutrition issues as well as to give examples of the positive attitudes they adopted in respect, particularly for children nutrition, such as complete, diversity of meals and awareness about children supplementary feedings. In this respect, 81.9% of the HHs and 90.2% of the women are inclined to award more attention to children nutrition.

R-3 Resilience increased in "Rain Water Harvesting"

RWH encouraged beneficiaries to cultivate home gardens and irrigate gardens from a nearby water source. Home gardens have increased consumption of vegetable, where, 88.4% of the beneficiaries eat vegetables in their meals, of which 67.1% is obtained from the beneficiary own produce. The frequency of vegetable consumption reveals that 86.5 of beneficiaries who consume vegetable tend to eat vegetables in their meals daily or more than once per week.

R-4; SRCS and other stakeholders have increased their capacities in FSN interventions

The intervention has succeeded in establishment of a large base of community based trainers composed of the volunteers and members of the PCCs, for training of beneficiaries, where, 96% indicated participation in the training subjects delivered at the village and manifested on beneficiaries skills who are well equipped with the technical aspects of the activities they are undertaking and are able to demonstrate in practice.

Comparison of the Baseline, project targets and midterm indicators

Further analysis of beneficiaries' responses was carried for the project logframe indicators and is compared to the baseline and project targets, showed that the project impacts have significantly exceeded the targets, which are well met for all target indicators.

Sustainability of intervention benefits

Seeds of elements of sustainability are implanted in the design of the intervention and were observed throughout implementation, which included training of beneficiaries on technical aspects of the activities, implementation of the activities by beneficiaries themselves, entire reliance of the activities on local materials available at village level. This is further enhanced by setting up of the project committees at all levels and direct involvement of the State authorities, which would make a safe exit for the project after ends of after duration.

Visibility

Signs and posters showing the name and logo of European Union, SRCS and GRC are placed at training venues and on the roads connecting the villages as well as stickers with the EU name on the computers, furniture and other work facilities in the project office. In addition to the awareness about the identity of the implementing organizations, they expressed their knowledge of the EU as a donor and made frequent reference to EU during the FG discussion.

Conclusion and recommendations

The intervention is a successful example of integrated community development that makes use of local skills and resources and adapts similar experience from abroad countries to improve the livelihoods of poor rural. A unique characteristic of this intervention is the implementation of the activities by the beneficiaries themselves.

For further improvements during the remaining period the following are recommended.;

1. Maintain the learning environment the intervention has created as implementation strategy by reproduction and distribution of the training manuals.
2. Complement PCCs acquired technical skills with administrative and managerial skills.
3. More technical coordination with the partners will be required to investigate more the safety and proper utilization of pesticides and RWH by conducting sites visits and discussion workshops.
4. Consider Consolidation of the activities by exploring added value options for the beneficiaries' products, such as processing and marketing of produce, if time and budget are available.
5. Launch intensive media campaigns adopting attractive means of communications to disseminate awareness as well as for recreation using audiovisual aids.
6. The intervention is replicable and SRCS and GRC are encouraged to seek funds to replicate the intervention in another locality with similar mode of livelihood and socioeconomic conditions.
7. Ensure the community center is established at a convenient accessible location for community members gathering and socialization.