

Ministries, FAO and UNESCO launch an education curriculum and programming framework for pastoralists

16 November, 2017 - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in partnership with Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MLF) and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), today launched the adapted Pastoralist Livelihoods and Education Field Schools (PLEFS) curriculum and the Pastoralist Education Programme Strategy Framework.

“It is our long-term vision to see to it that pastoralist communities receive adequate services and infrastructure to improve their livelihoods,” says James Janka Duku, Minister of Livestock and Fisheries.

The curriculum and programme strategy framework is the first of its kind in South Sudan as it integrates literacy and numeracy training and livelihood support, tailored specifically to the nomadic lifestyle of the pastoralists. As a result, it provides pastoralists with sustainable and high-quality learning opportunities as they move.

“The project has seized the opportunity to create a quality curriculum within the framework for *lifelong learning for all* for marginalized pastoralist communities, and has empowered the communities to access literacy and livelihood opportunities” stated by Sardar Umar Alam, UNESCO Representative South Sudan. “Today’s event is devoted not only to acknowledge the efforts of all partners in developing the curriculum, but also reassuring their commitment to implement the pastoralist education programme to promote literacy to build more inclusive and peaceful communities”.

This curriculum is based on an approach used by FAO all over the world: the ‘Pastoral Field School’, which strengthens individuals’ knowledge and practices whilst reinforcing collaborative learning at grass-root level. It provides an excellent entry point to engage pastoralists as they learn by doing, versus the traditional top down dissemination of information and skills.

“The partnership between the three line ministries, FAO and UNESCO is unique and has realized a way for marginalized communities to access vital services in challenging conditions,” says Serge Tissot, FAO Representative. “FAO is committed to strengthening livelihoods, and integrating basic literacy and numeracy skills into the field school approach really improves pastoralists’ way of life.”

The PLEFS curriculum provides an active, constructivist approach to learning as it is tailored to the needs and interests of South Sudanese pastoralists. It is designed to target adults, youth and children. The adult’s content has been adapted to lean more on imparting skills that can immediately be applied to improve their livelihoods; for example, integrating literacy and numeracy training and skills building in milk handling and processing.

For youth, the curriculum follows the Accelerated Learning Programme approach but now lays emphasis on livelihood diversification to take up business opportunities and appropriate

technology to open up the world beyond the cattle camp. The child component follows the formal school curriculum but also integrates aspects of livestock management and agriculture.

Overall, it also addresses cross-cutting issues such as gender-based violence, climate change, disaster risk reduction, HIV/AIDS and peace building.

The PLEFS curriculum has been developed with European Union funding under the project "Enhanced Knowledge for Resilient Pastoralist Livelihoods and Education in South Sudan," implemented by FAO and UNESCO in Western Lakes and Eastern Lakes States. Currently there are 11 learning centres, catering to approximately 1 600 learners.

As the curriculum and framework have been finalized, it is hoped that it can now be scaled-up, and brought to other pastoral communities across the country in the near future.

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