Innovation- Engaging Minority Youth in Productive Sectors (Agriculture and Livestock) in Somalia

Presented to FAO- June 2021
Mohamed Yusuf| Mercy Corps Somalia
Muhumed Mohamud /Mercy Corps Somalia
PROJECT : DARYEL 2018-2020
Development of Agricultural Resources and Youth Economy Livelihoods

Donor: Somalia Stability Fund (SSF)

Program Start Date: August 2018 - June 2020

Program Duration: 2 years
Program target area: Balcad District-Middle Shabelle region- men, women and youth

Program Goal: To promote economic development and livelihood activities and more broadly livelihoods across all productive sectors.

Approach: a conflict sensitive approach increasing inclusivity, the action in the productive sectors to create job opportunities, with a focus on improving agricultural productivity and small-scale business development.
Key Objectives

- To ensure that youth play vibrant and diverse roles across the productive sectors (Agriculture and Livestock) and
- create income-generating activities that brings out the individual potential skills contributing to the community economy.

Relevance

- Accessing safe, profitable and dignified work throughout agricultural markets and value chains; contributing to the food and nutritional security of their communities.

- To break youth idleness and overcome youth association with issues that provokes the wellbeing of the community.

- To support them generate much needed income and creating saving associations to re-plough some of their income in sustainable agriculture.
Geography

Project Site in Balaad District

- Marerey
- Yaaqle
- Bulo Barwaqo
- Wargab
- Bulo Abtow
- Mukey dheere
- Hawo Tako
- Kurshale

- Project Sites
- District Boundary
Key priority to the most vulnerable youth includes:

- Minority youth (youth from minority clans/groups) that have interest in farming
- Jobless youth that has interest in farming
- School dropout youth
- Youth from culturally marginalized communities.
- Agro-pastoral and Pastoral youth
- Youth without any access/ownership of productive land for agricultural cultivation
Three key stakeholders - District Administration-Government Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Livestock), local communities and seed companies engaged on decisions on target locations, implementation and joint monitoring

**Identification of beneficiaries**

Community mobilization and Identification of beneficiaries through local authority, community leaders
Advertisement of opportunity of training for youth on Agriculture infrastructure rehabilitation skills
Selection, Registration and verification of beneficiaries

**Youth Engagement on Fodder Production**

- Farm hire support provided to youth
- Input provision (Farm tillage, farm tools, provision of high quality fodder seeds, tractor hours and opening up irrigation canals)

**Youth Engagement on Agri Skills and internships**

- Selection of successful youth in the agri-rehabilitation skills training
- Hiring vocational centers that offers the needed skills
- Incentivizing them during the training to allow them access and avoid drop out
Key Components

**FODDER PRODUCTION**
- Engaged **10 idle youth (6 of them from minority clans)** in fodder production
- Provided youth with support for **Farm hire, fodder seeds (sudan grass) provision, tractor hours, farm tools and water** for irrigation for 3 seasons.
- Facilitated **fodder production** for two seasons
- Enabled youth to **sell fodder to local dairy farms** - an opportunity to generate income that enabled them to re-plough the rent farm land, pay for the expense.

**TRAINING IN AGRI-INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION SKILLS**
- Idle youth were trained in ‘agriculture infrastructure’ rehabilitation skills (Masonry and welding). All from the minority groups.
- Established a **market center** for the trained youth
- The trained youth are providing support the community, government and local/humanitarian organizations in agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation works.
- The youth are leading the rehabilitation of culverts, ditches and troughs, and bridging the gap of lack of technical persons in the previous Somalia government.

**INTERNSHIPS FOR HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE**
- Engaged **7 youth graduates** (4 minority clan) in agriculture and veterinary courses as interns within the Ministry of Agriculture department, Darusalam seed company and Central Regional and Livestock Professional Associations for 5 months
- Enhanced the workforce skills that match technical capacity needed in the Ministry of Livestock and Agriculture. The Youth are currently volunteers and others engaging in self employment, awaiting permanent employment.
Youth distributing fodder to local dairy farms in Blacad district

Production on hired farms and
Harvesting fodder for two seasons
Youth trained on masonry skills that will help in rehabilitation of culverts, ditches, troughs and construction in the community.

Youth trained welding/metal fabrication skills necessary in rehabilitation of agricultural structures.
ACHIEVEMENTS - Minority Youth

**Engagement of Youth for Fodder production**
- 80% increase in fodder production for the engaged youth in the target areas according to Mercy Corps Internal evaluation.
- It also gave the youth an opportunity to generate income from the fodder production

**Training youth in Agri-infrastructure rehabilitation skills**
- Improved the income of the trained youth by 75%.
- Technical services were made available for the community.
- Youth also supports Mercy Corps, MOA and other organizations in the district with the skills needed

**Youth Internship to have hand on experience**
- The internship gave the youth graduates an opportunity to interact with entities and acquire hand on experience skills.
- It gave the youth the hope that they can be absorbed within the entities they are working as volunteers when Mercy Corps incentivization ended on July 2020
Overall Project Achievements - DARYEL

- **267** Total number of men and women who have benefited from socio-economic opportunities in partnership with government.
- **250** Number of farmers accessing peer learning and networking opportunities through market linkages.
- **95%** % of cooperatives reporting improved capacity.
- **80%** % of supported enterprises that can demonstrate improved business performance.
- **200** Number of farmers accessing tractor hours for tillage & Trained in GAP.
- **200** Number of farmer cooperative members practicing good agriculture practices.
- **3** Number of newly established and functional agro-vet shops.
- **89%** % change in income at household level for farmer cooperative members, youth, and individual farmers.
- **89%** Percentage increase in agricultural production for farmers in targeted areas.
- **80%** Percentage of targeted households who have enough food to meet their survival threshold and surplus for local market.
Challenges and Lessons

Challenges

- Natural Disasters affected crop productivity, e.g., recurrent floods in the region affects the farmers production.
- Difficulty in sustainability as youth are bound to relocate in search of greener pastures

Lessons

- The transparent and inclusive process employed to identify project participants through the engagement of the village selection committee, women, youth and minority groups, and the endorsement of an agreed criteria (which was discussed in a consultative meeting), has contributed to stability as the community were jointly working on the common good and bettering their livelihoods.
- Effective coordination and partnership that exists between the project stakeholders and the community ensured the project to be community owned and government lead.
- Despite the challenges in land access, especially for women and minority clans, organizations can support these groups in leasing land for farming, especially for individuals that have passion for farming.
Thank you! Questions!