



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 in Uganda

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.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S NUTRITION IN UGANDA

The drylands of Uganda's Karamoja sub-region are home to thousands of pastoralists who migrate with their livestock in search of pasture. Disease, drought and degraded grasslands have cut the size of herds, so although goat rearing is common it is unproductive. The region is also characterised by high poverty rates and chronic malnutrition.

According to the 2016 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) report, chronic under-nutrition, measured by stunting, for children under five years stands at 29% (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS] & Inner City Fund [ICF], 2018).

The same report indicated that 11% of children under the age of five in Uganda are underweight and 4% of the children under five are wasted. The prevalence of wasting among children in Karamoja sub-region is 10%.

To contribute to the reduction of these high levels of malnutrition in the Karamoja sub-region, Africa Innovations Institute (AfrII) and Farm Africa implemented the Livestock for Livelihoods project with funding from UK aid from the UK government.

The project was undertaken in partnership with local civil society, SMEs, cooperatives and women's livestock groups to develop market systems that support livestock services and enterprises for 10,500 women through contributing to women's economic empowerment, reduced poverty and improved nutrition of women and children.

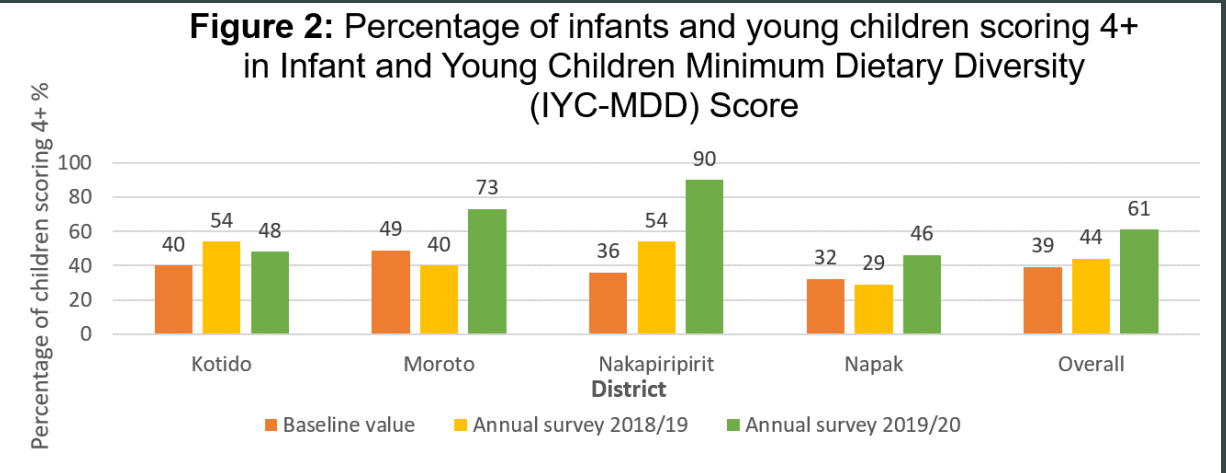
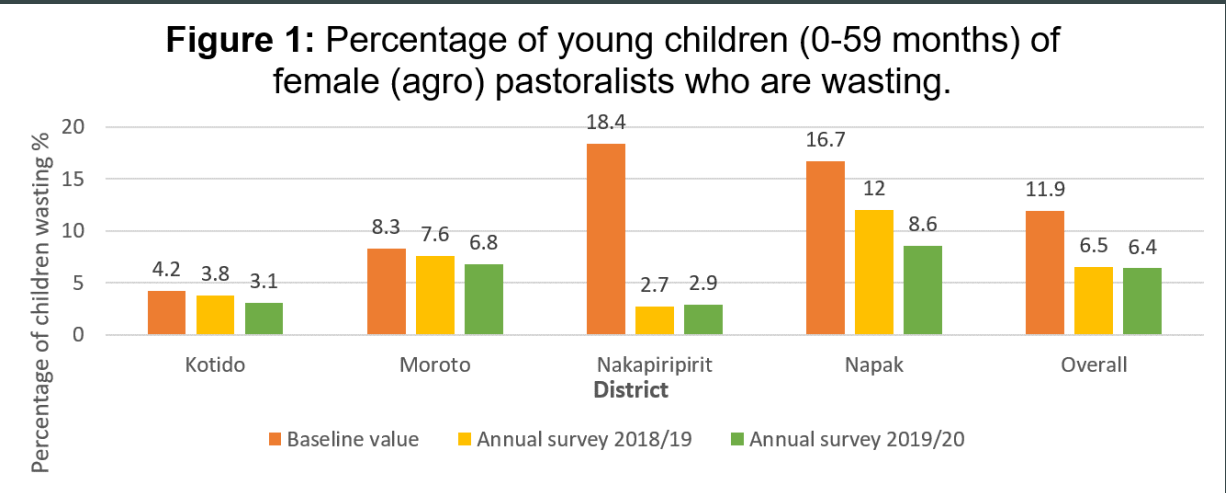
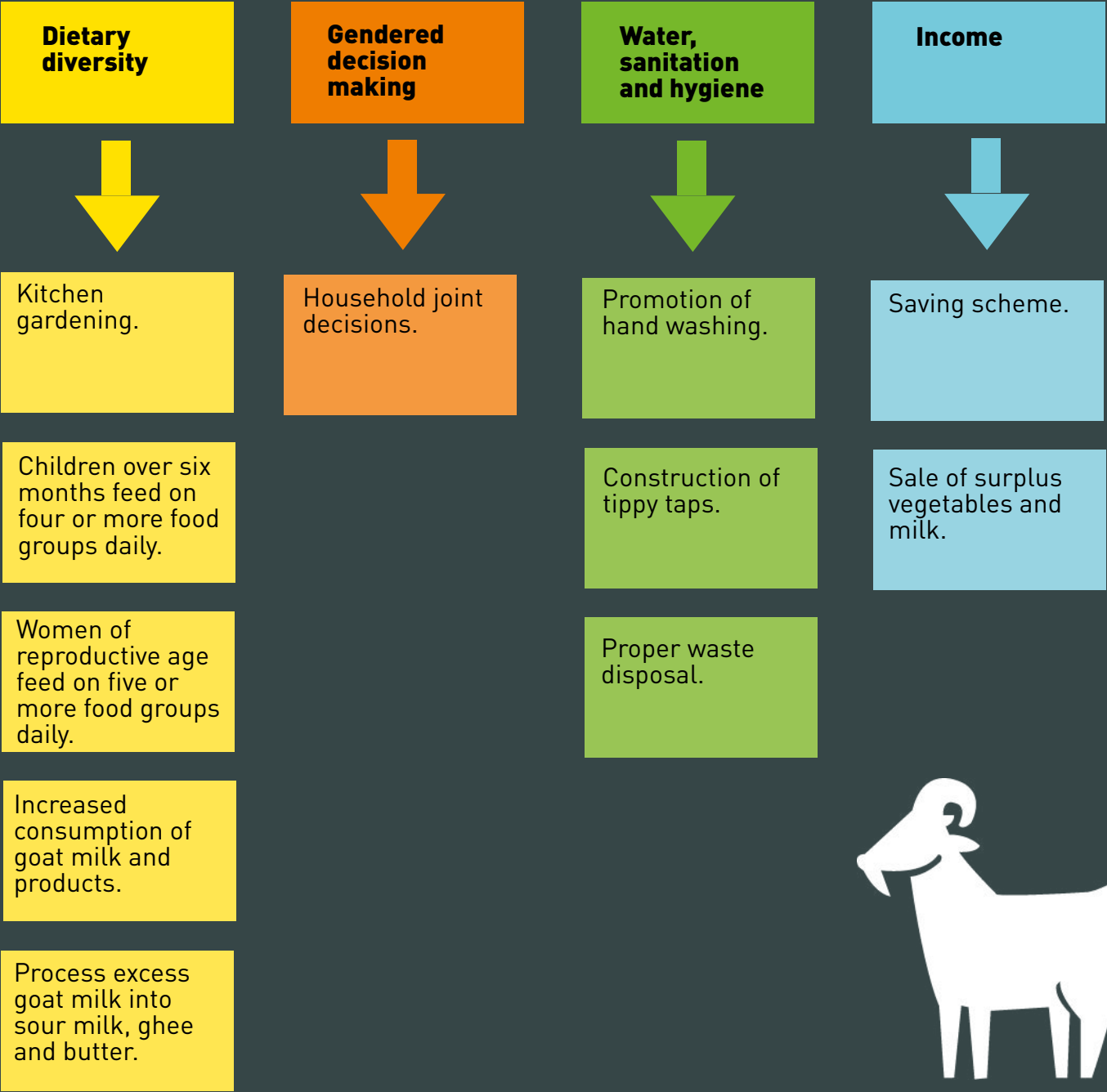
THE APPROACH

The project developed a Social Behaviour Change and Communication (SBCC) Strategy to increase awareness and knowledge on the importance of dietary diversity and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), which were identified as key gaps during the baseline survey. The main avenue of communication was the Nutrition Inner Circles (NICs), which are similar to Mother Care Group structures. Nutrition information was disseminated through short periodic trainings given to a total of 200 NICs, which were formed during the project period. The NIC model has proven effective in improving knowledge and subsequently reducing malnutrition in similar settings such as Zimbabwe.

Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials were developed with simple illustrated messages covering topics such as dietary diversity, malnutrition and WASH, and these were used during training sessions with the NICs. Radio was also used to disseminate information to a wider audience. A drama

script was developed in the local language covering various relevant topics to create awareness in the target audience.

Nutrition Officers, Field Agents, NIC leaders, Village Health Teams (VHTs), and the District Local Government (DLG) were involved in the activities. While the AfrII Nutrition Officers offered overall technical assistance in the districts, the Field Agents were the link between the project and the beneficiaries. The Field Agents who are based at the Sub-counties interacted directly with the NICs and facilitated the training sessions and demonstrations with the NICs. The VHTs, who are government structures based at the village level, were instrumental in supporting the NICs in their villages. The VHTs attended capacity building training in vegetable garden construction, nutrition, milk safety and WASH to enable them to carry on their work effectively. The District Local Government structures at the District and Sub-county levels offered technical guidance and supervision to the project during joint monitoring as well as during routine community activities.



RESULTS

Knowledge and attitudes

The annual household survey conducted in April 2021 showed an increase in the knowledge of beneficiaries from 54% during the baseline survey to 90% in 2020/2021. Similarly the attitude of mothers towards inclusion of goat milk in their diet improved from 48.1% to 88.1% while more children (23.6% to 34.3%) consumed goat milk in the same period.

Impact level indicators

Wasting in young children (0-59 months), infant and young child minimum dietary (IYCF-MDD) score, and Minimum Dietary Diversity for

women (MDD-W) all showed positive trends and improvement during the project life cycle.

The results noted could be attributed to the SBCC strategy that was used to train beneficiaries. The promotion of key-hole gardens also ensured that vegetables were available to improve the dietary diversity of beneficiaries. By September 2020, at least 952 kitchen gardens had been constructed by the women in the four districts of operation. There was also noticeable improvement of hygiene as latrine construction was widely adopted by NIC members.

“The vegetables will be a big help to me in feeding my children.”

Ngangun Jokomina from Namalu watering a kitchen garden she has built with support from the Livestock for Livelihoods project.



“I am growing green grams, cow peas and onions in the kitchen garden. I use manure from the goats to fertilise the garden.”

Chilla Anyese is a Lead Mother for a Nutrition Inner Circle in Kotido, Karamoja.

LESSONS

Key among the lessons learnt was the importance of leveraging partner experiences. Through consultations with stakeholders and partners with previous experience in SBCC in the region, we were able to tap into their experiences and avoid re-inventing the wheel. We involved Caritas-NUYOK in the training of Lead Mothers, VHTs and Field Officers on key-hole gardens since they had previous experience in this area. We also involved Save the Children in training of Field Officers in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Through such collaborations we were able to save time and resources in developing new material. We also shared the new project IEC materials with messaging on dietary diversity and the importance of goat milk with partners such as the ICAN project. The video on dietary diversity and WASH was shared widely with partners for use in their activities.

We also learnt the importance of involving existing structures and cultures in the successful implementation of projects. The involvement of cultural leaders such as elders was not very strong and yet they are very influential in the community. In addition, VHTs who are part of the government structure were not incorporated in the original project design, which was a major shortcoming as they

were critical for project implementation since they are familiar with the project implementation structures and would have been key avenues for project sustainability.

Recommendations

- In an area like Karamoja, sustainability of a livelihoods project highly depends on the availability of resources such as water. As such, future interventions should factor in such aspects during project design.
- Different kitchen garden designs should be adopted for different locations depending on the climate and availability of local materials.
- Involve cultural leaders, government structures such as VHTs, men and other resourceful people more.
- Consider different livelihood projects for different areas since adoption cannot be uniform across the project area.
- Logistics for beneficiaries should be standardised from sub-county level to district, regional and country level so that we reduce the dependency syndrome where beneficiaries compare the resources offered by different partners rather than concentrating on the knowledge being given for their development. We have advocated for this through partner coordination meetings and stakeholder meetings at all levels.

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

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