

Study validating the appropriateness and accuracy of the project design

FOR THE PROJECT:	<i>PROMOTING RESILIENCE TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES OF GEDAREF STATE</i>
IMPLEMENTED BY:	<i>CHILD DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (CDF)</i>
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SAMPLED COMMUNITIES:	<i>GEDAREF LOCALITY: ELGENIENA, ALTADAMON, ALSADAGA ALGALABAT LOCALITY: KASSAB, ALSARRAF</i>
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Introduction:

Child Development Foundation (CDF) has received fund from EU to implement food security project in 2 localities in Gedaref State, and to improve the design quality of the project, CDF conducted baseline survey in the project targeted area. After completing the baseline survey, its results will be used to revisit the project logical framework design, examine its activities, results, and see how they are logically contributing to each other.

The purpose of this study is to confirm the project appropriateness to its beneficiaries and locations, and ensure that the proposed activities are relevant to the proposed beneficiaries and areas.

In order to conduct this study, a participatory method has been used, and a wide range of stakeholders including CDF staff and beneficiaries have been consulted. Qualitative and quantitative data that produced by the baseline survey is utilized to demonstrate and validate all the sections of this report.

The project overall Objective is to promote resilience of vulnerable communities, particularly women and youth, to increase food security in targeted locations in Gedaref State. Specific objective is to improve food production, access to food and nutritional status of vulnerable groups (particularly women and girls) through diversification of food production system and increase of household income through additional and new livelihood options. This will target strengthen social protection safety nets at a local level to better address household food insecurity.

The project was designed to directly target 6000 beneficiary households in 10 communities' from two localities of Gedaref State namely Gedaref and West Galabat, and to validate the beneficiaries' figures, the study will check each activity and confirm the relevant target for each.

The report follows similar structure for all results and activities. For results the report provides need assessment and expected impact, and for each activity package, the report provides recommendation on the implementation and how to measure its progress.

The validity of the selected areas:

Gedaref and Wes Algalabat localities have been chosen by CDF as target localities for their project. Gedaref locality has a population of 331,000 (19% of total population), Western Galabat is the adjacent locality with a population of 113,000 (9.5% of total state population).

The selection of target groups and identification of locations for implementation of this action was done based on literature review, and extensive community consultation.

The baseline assessment that CDF has conducted recently provided plenty of data that support CDF selection, and to achieve that, extensive focus group discussions, meetings and interviews (that covered State Ministries of agriculture and education; localities level government departments and authorities as well as community leaders and Ma'an network of local NGOs) have been organized.

Reasons for selecting the 2 localities:

High vulnerability and food insecurity: The baseline survey results showed high vulnerability rates and food insecurity in both localities, as the overall percentage of households that suffered from food gap/shortage in the last 3 months was 77% of the sample and in Gedaref locality the rate was 55% while it was 22% in Algalabat locality, and the percentage of unemployed households' heads was 50%, which is very high. The food insecurity of the people living in the 2 localities is evidenced by the low percentage of household that are self-sufficient from food (cereals), as only 11% of respondents reported that they are self-sufficient.

Stability of the people: The baseline survey results showed that 84% of male heads of households living in their communities, and only 4 % are living somewhere else, while all females are living in the area and no one is living outside, and such project to be successful it need to target people who are stable to enable CDF and its partners to reach them by resilience and development interventions.

The validity and the appropriateness of the project results:

To validate the appropriateness of these results, concise need assessment presented below, and its data was obtained from the baseline survey, the key informants' interviews and the FGDs. For each result, its validity is determined by the gap that will be addressed by the implementation of the result and the impact that expected to be achieved at the end of the project.

Result 1: The immediate effects of shocks for chronically food insecure people are reduced:

This result is expected to contribute to increasing the ability of targeted food insecure communities to deal with difficult economic circumstances by providing them with cash grants to enable them survive the hunger or lean period and specific approach of nutrition awareness.

Need Assessment:

- The baseline survey results and the discussion with people in the FGDs confirmed that considerable number of people live in the 2 localities is in need of support during the lean season, and also people confirmed that the period between June to November in each year as the most difficult period for poor people to access food.
- The data revealed that many households are vulnerable to shocks due to limited availability and high prices of food items which in turn limits access of the poor households to food. Percentage of household who afford buying food from the market was only 11% in the baseline survey results.
- Key informants from ministry of agriculture and ministry of social welfare mentioned that the employment opportunities that are traditionally available are linked and affected by the insecure agricultural production conditions, and the baseline survey found that the percentage of youth with vocational skills from both sexes is only 9%, which indicate vulnerable ability to cope with this situation by doing different type of work rather than farming.
- A significant proportion of households suffer from food gaps that extend beyond 3 months (77%), with difficulties in coping and an apparent inability to resort to food processing or other protective measures. In the FGDs communities also reported concerns about rising malnutrition in children, and the baseline survey showed that the death rate in children is 16%.
- The coping practices of people are also poor, and the baseline survey revealed that people are following different poor practices such as rely on less preferred and less expensive food (25%), borrow food or rely on help from friends or relatives (15%), limit the portion at mealtimes (13%), restrict consumption of adults in order for children to eat (16%), and reduced the number of meals during the day (31%).
- From the baseline survey it appeared that each household in Gedaref or Algalabat locality has an average of 3 children in school age. In Gedaref locality 12% of household don't send their children to school. Fees was the main reason that hindered people from sending their children to school 70%, some respondents mentioned that they need their children to work to contribute to family income 4%, and 2% mentioned that their children don't have birth certificates.
- Majority of people mentioned that they have children suffered from different diseases during the past year (71%), and it found that Malaria 28% and respiratory 34% diseases are the dominant diseases that affect children in both Gedaref and Algalabat locality, other diseases are diarrhea 17%, malnutrition 3%, and bilharzia 2% and 18% mentioned various diseases such as typhoid, allergy, and different type of unknown diseases that make fever, 19 % of those children not treated because the families don't have the money or because they didn't realize that their children are in urgent need of medical support. The mortality rate was high, and 16% of the households mentioned that they lost children during the past year.

Expected impact:

- This result is expected to reduce immediate effects of shocks for chronically food insecure people through granting cash to the most vulnerable households. Cash grants will facilitate access of the poor to food, save their livelihoods assets from being eroded to purchase highly priced lean period food requirements and facilitate recovery from shocks and buildup of self-reliance.
- Key informants from ministry of health (nutrition department) appreciate the idea of granting cash and added that the intervention will have direct impact on improving food security, by increasing household expenditure on food items, increasing the likelihood and quantity of household food stores and even increasing dietary diversity.
- From CDF similar project in Kassala State it appeared that granting cash has helped many families on their children's education, health and nutrition outcomes, and also some people utilized it to enhance the skills that they learned by the project (many people in Kassala mentioned that they spent the money in paying part of the initial cost of their work places). The literature review on cash grant confirmed that cash grants may help to create multiplier effects in the local economy, as monies are being spent in local markets and/or used for repaying debts.
- The discussion with key informants from private sector indicate that cash grant will post the local economy of the markets in the 2 localities and the size of the markets in Gedaref State will prevent any distortion that might be expected from distributing cash to people.
- Women in the FGDs believed that granting cash will help poor women to feel better and enable them to participate in community events, share food and borrow when in need because they had a capacity to repay, which is something will not be achieved in their normal life.
- Nutrition training when combined with cash grant is expected to rehabilitate the 3 % of malnourished children, enable families to sustain rehabilitation of these children at home on their own because they can use the money to buy food or medicine and utilize the skills they gained in the nutrition training and prevent malnutrition among other children in the community because the training will be built based on the community practices.

Activity package under the result:

This result includes only two activities:

- ✓ Give participants 500 cash grants divided into 2 installments over a period of 3 months.
- ✓ pilot a nutrition training component based on the positive deviance hearth approach among a small number of cash grant recipients

Tips and recommendations on implementing the cash grant:

- Cash should be granted during the lean season which is period between June to November.

- There are some existing experience of granting cash in the targeted localities by Zakat chamber in Gedaref (23% of respondents mentioned that they received cash grants from the Zakat chamber), so it is very important to review its experience and consider no duplication will be occurred.
- First step in implementing the cash grant should be the development of selection criteria, which should be done in consultation with relevant stakeholders including CBO members, and the following bullet points are proposed to be discussed later in the stakeholder consultation meeting:
 - ✓ The vulnerability of the person defined by the household income, only families with income less than 1 dollar per family member are eligible.
 - ✓ Priority will be given to individuals who can't afford two meals per day.
 - ✓ Women and youth heading household with more than 6 dependents will get higher concern, in addition to elderlies, orphans, and people with disabilities. The percentage of each group will be determined after the community screening that will be conducted by CDF.
 - ✓ Cash grants transfer also should consider the beneficiaries of the vocational trainings who are in critical need to start-up capital for their businesses, and the Village Saving and loans members, who have very low income, and they need external capital to support their business.
- Also before starting any cash granting, there are important factors that need to be considered by CDF such as:
 - ✓ Cost-effectiveness of the cash delivery. Choosing the most cost-effective modality will maximize the impact. Cash transfer through mobile phones seems to be the most effective method, and among the baseline survey respondents it appeared that 83% of people have mobile phones.
 - ✓ The possible impact on the local market as a result of the cash transfer. Questions like whether CDF knows the possible impact on the local markets or no? Whether they ensured sufficient supply of the necessary commodities (Food) in the markets? And did they consider the risk of contributing to, an inflation in the prices of key goods?.
 - ✓ Relevance and flexibility of the activity implementation. Issues like the linkages between the cash grant component and the project objectives, how to ensure this activity is going to meet the beneficiaries' priorities, and which is better for community, cash or other form of support
 - ✓ The cross cutting issues such as selecting the right modality that preferred by community, the needs of special groups like Pregnant and Lactating Women, the elderly, child headed households, the mainstreaming of protection (safety and equality in access) and gender (different needs and vulnerabilities of women, men, boys and girls).
 - ✓ Targeting and beneficiaries identification.

- ✓ Ensuring safe transfer of cash and low level of security risk, and questions like how CDF is going to ensure safe transfer with zero corruptions should be considered.
 - ✓ The capacity of CDF and its partner to deliver the cash grants successfully to their beneficiaries.
- Sensitization meetings should be organized with partners and CBOs members prior to the implementation, and the followings proposed to be part of the those meetings:
 - ✓ Community Development Committees of each community will stick to the agreed identification criteria and prepare a list for beneficiaries who are eligible to receive cash grants.
 - ✓ Each community will be given portion of the budgeted cash grants correspondent to their population.
 - ✓ The population of communities will be taken from the government statistics unit, and the portion percentage for each community will be determined by CDF based on the population statistics.
 - ✓ Meetings to explain the criteria should be organized with each CBO prior to beneficiaries' identification and selection.
- Introductory meeting with the beneficiary and husband to give brief advice and guidance on ways to use the cash grant to relive immediate food shortages and to sustain household food security over a longer time period is required when granting each family its cash installment.
- The first instalment of the cash grants (60 Euro's) should be distributed to the women beneficiaries and is delivered personally to them; husband and community leaders should be informed by the money transferred to any woman.
- Acknowledgment of receipt of the grant should be obtained in the form of mobile cash transfer bills or a signature or written confirmation by the community leader and the beneficiary in case of giving cash by hand.
- For the two transfer modalities chosen in these guidelines, CDF must monitor security and Corruption and define the circumstances that would justify a switch to in-kind or in hand distributions as appropriate. No switch is allowed without involving all stakeholders participated in the workshop.

Tips and recommendation on monitoring the activity implementation:

- For monitoring during the cash transfer, CDF staff must ensure the followings questions are answered:
 - ✓ Did people get the right amount of transfer?
 - ✓ Were transfers made on time?
 - ✓ What are people spending the cash transfer on?
 - ✓ Are the items that people want to buy available on the market?
 - ✓ Where and how far do people have to go to collect the cash transfer?
 - ✓ How far do people have to go to buy what they want, and in suitable quality?

- ✓ Were people able to collect and use their cash transfer safely, without facing social, cultural or other barriers?
- ✓ Has the cash distribution had an effect on prices?
- ✓ Does the modality support achieving the program's specific objective?
- CDF, the project advisory group and CARE should be ready to address any problem or issue appeared during the monitoring of the cash transfer.
- CDF should conduct evaluation specifically for cash grant implementation, and the lessons from this evaluation should inform the implementation of the second installment of the cash grant.
- Cash grant should be measured by the number of people received grants, and by the percentage of people reported less food gap.

Tips and recommendation on implementing the nutrition training (Positive deviance hearth approach):

- Prior to any implementation, baseline data should be gathered on the positive deviant inquiry and KAP. The survey investigates the feeding, caring & health seeking practices of infants and young children and identifies positive deviant mothers. A KAP survey will also be carried out, focusing on core Infant and Young Children Feeding (IYCF) indicators.
- Training should be conducted to CDF staff, partners, nutrition department staff and community based trainers before starting the implementation.
- Women will be selected from the cash grant recipients, based on set criteria, through a participatory process, between the implementing partners and the target community leaders.
- The target of 180 women is better to be reduced because this is pilot and to ensure good quality it is better to work with smaller group. Proposed number is only 150 women (30 women in 5 communities).
- A number of 3 hearth sessions should be conducted by each CHV, each week for a period of 3 months in total. Each session lasts for 3 hours and includes nutrition education, cooking demonstrations & rehabilitation of malnourished children. Hearth sessions are attended by PD mother identified by the baseline survey. Key IYCF behavior change messages are disseminated during these sessions. The CHVs and PD mothers then conduct growth monitoring of children under-five years of age during monthly home visits to the beneficiaries.

Tips and recommendation on monitoring the activity implementation:

- Weekly meetings with CBTs and CHVs should be organized by CDF to ensure that problems are solved and lessons gathered, discussed and learned.
- The follow-up should continue for 6 months after completion of the training sessions to document outcome data and provide continued advice.

- The activity should be measured by the number of women received the trainings, number of women reported improvement in their children health, and percentage reduction in children death.
- Since it is pilot intervention, it is recommended to prepare a publication on the experience and impact of PD hearth nutrition programming in the target communities.

In general this result to be successful, it is recommended to increase its synergies with the other activities in the project such as implementing income generation activities, support of traditional farmers by provision of agricultural services, facilitation of microfinance to protect deterioration of livelihoods assets and precaution measures from the risk of rising food prices.

Result 2: Self-reliance through increase agricultural production, vocational training and promotion of a culture of saving and investment

This result expected to make the targeted beneficiaries self-sufficient by increasing their ability to produce adequate food and by diversifying people livelihood through VT and VSL.

Need Assessment:

- Although the primary job for the majority of people responded to the baseline survey was agriculture (30%), but most of them produce less than their consumption needs (89%), and the same percentage (89%) can't afford buying food from the market. People in the FGDs mentioned that *"farming is no longer adequate for them to survive"* and confirmed that their skills are limited and prevent them from doing alternative way of earning income.
- Among the baseline respondents, only 8 farmers have had access to extension services (6%), and the key informant from the ministry of agriculture (extension department) confirmed that the extension sector is weak and the staff lack facilities and means of transportation to access farmers in the field.
- Women who are primary subsistence farmers represent considerable part of the farmers in rain-fed sector - according to presentation by Gedaref based Zeinab women farmers development association – they work as seasonal wage laborers in mechanized farms and contribute up to 80% of the agricultural workforce in Gedaref yet women only hold 1% of the total registered land titles while another 5-6% of women hold land hold registered land titles in joint names, and from the baseline survey only (3%) of female respondents mentioned that they owned family land.
- The baseline survey revealed a serious lack of access to formal vocational skills (11% accessed training from government and the other received their skills either from their families or from the community) and because of their limited skills most to work as unskilled laborers and low daily wages.
- Access to credit services was dominant in the FGDs, and people mentioned that the formal micro-finance institutions require papers and grantees that they can't afford, and in the baseline survey, only 7% of the respondents have accessed loan, and among those who

accessed loan there was only 6 respondents managed to get loan from the formal microfinance institution.

Expected Impact:

- As it mentioned above, farming represent the main livelihood patterns for the majority of the baseline survey respondents, and therefore extension services as well as training on diversified farming techniques shall increase productivity as well as production of small landholding farmers.
- Vocational training (such as food processing, women hand crafts, harvesting skills, metal work, plumbing, electrical work, auto mechanic, agro-processing, etc.) to women and youths {and start up grants (only in some cases)} shall help the individuals find skills and knowledge to earn income.
- Establishment of VSLAs creates opportunity for poor to become their own bankers through small loans and engage in small income generation projects. VSLAs increase household income and reduce food insecurity due to the utilization of loans and savings for activities that support increased availability and improved access to household food items. In addition, evidence from EU funded and joint CDF implemented Kassala food security projects shows that VSLAs can also contribute to food security through improvements in health, and help maintain food stability for home consumption during times of need as lower percentage of those involved on business through VSLA loans spent less on required food due to increased income and started spending on other livelihoods requirements for example health, education or even cellphones for facilitating linkage to markets. Beyond food security, VSLAs have other important benefits to members. They are a powerful means of empowering women, youth and other vulnerable groups in the population, by offering confidence building and group support, and can help address social norms that impede access to finance and market opportunities. Moreover, VSLAs can be used as platforms for health and nutrition messaging, adult education (REFLECT) and advocacy for better government services. Communities targeted in Kassala EU funded project and implemented by CDF in partnership with CARE have on their own established literacy classes linked to VSLAs as they perceive illiteracy as a constraint for several livelihoods improvement processes and in particular an obstacle for managing VSLAs or business or learning for better livelihoods. These experiences will be reflected through Gedaref and Kassala project communities through exchange visits and information/ experience sharing.

Activity package under the result: This result includes the following activities:

- Establishment of 350 women farms and provision of extension services for women farmers in collaboration with related government department
- Providing vocational training for an estimated 1,200 women and youth
- Establishment of 300 VSLA including sensitization, mobilization, training and group formation

Tips and recommendations on implementing the farming activities:

- The extension services should be provided in close collaboration with related government departments.
- In order to help government extension staff to access the targeted farmers, the project should facilitate their task by support their equipment and transportation.
- The selection of women farmers should be in participation with CBOs and high involvement of women from the target communities.
- In order to empower the women farmers in the target communities, there is a need to train more female CAEWs. This will strengthen the extension messages that women farmers receive as they will interact easily and more positively with female agricultural extension workers.
- In order to ensure good quality, the target number of women farms is advised to be reduced from 350 to 300 farms.
- The trained women should also be trained on gender equality and women empowerment.

Tips and recommendation on monitoring the activity:

- Database of the beneficiaries should be prepared, and information related to women income, production and productivity should be collected from the beginning in order to track the progress of each of them.
- The progress on the implementation should be measured by the number of farms supported, and the percentage of women reported increased production or productivity.

Tips and recommendations on implementing the VTs:

- Prior to the trainings, labor market should be assessed to confirm the final list of vocational skills that is needed in the community.
- Communities should be sensitized about the activity, and clear criteria of selection should be prepared with CBOs members.
- The acceptance of beneficiaries to be enrolled in any type of VT should be done after individual interviews with each applicant, and a questionnaire should be prepared to gather personal data about the applicant, and should be filled by the applicant him/her self. Data about the applicant's age, academic background, current job, current income, and vocational interest, are required to accept the applicant and to determine the type of training that fit with his/her interest.
- Any applicant should be informed that the project support will depend on their seriousness and commitment to the training.
- Marketing the skills that vocational training beneficiaries will received should be highly considered, and it was mentioned as obstacle to those community members who received VT from the government. Also the VT duration and the quality of teachers should be assessed by CDF before enrolling people in any VT.

Tips and recommendation on monitoring the implementation:

VT tracking sheet should be developed and filled by data from the VT beneficiaries prior to the training, the developed sheet should be updated by the regular monitoring visit.

Progressed of VT should be measured by the number of people trained and graduated, and the percentage of employment (employability rate).

Tips and recommendations on implementing VSLAs:

- The community based trainers (CBTs) approach proved high success in CDF project in Kassala, and recommended to be duplicated in Gedaref.
- CBTs should not only be trained on the VSL methodology, but also they should be trained in different businesses skills, financial education, M&E, gender equality and women empowerment, positive deviant hearth approach and REFLECT methodology for adult education.
- Selection of CBTs should be after interviews to assess their numerical skills, and they should be linked by community. And JD for any CBT should be developed includes her/his responsibilities.

Tips and recommendation on monitoring the implementation:

- MIS should be developed and utilized. The MIS should include list of indicators that can measure the group members' satisfaction, the group financial health and the cost effectiveness of the VSL model.
- Progress should be monitored by the number of VSL beneficiaries, number of groups formed, and the percentage of members reported increased income.

Synergies between the activities under this result and other results are very important, and to ensure that:

- All VT trainings, farming support and credit services should focused on generating or increasing the household income. VSL groups should be entry point and foundation for all activities, and should be linked with nutrition and women empowerment.
- The vocational training program be designed to increase and diversify knowledge and skills among youth and women in target communities, allow participants to participate in the VSL and other credit schemes.
- In combination with the cash grant component it may encourage participants to start, small businesses and eventually have a positive impact on the growth of the local economy.

Result 3: Local institutions are strengthened to better address food insecurity:

This result is focus is on building the capacity of Local government authorities and institutions, community based organizations and local NGOs and the networks that will collaborate in implementing this action as a mechanism to ensure sustainability of initiatives introduced by the action.

Need Assessment:

- From the interviews with key informants from different government and none government institutions, it appeared that in Gedaref State one of the main limitations for food security and development programs remains the limited planning capacity of local authorities and service-delivery capacity at the state, locality and community levels.
- Discussions with target communities confirmed the existing of different committees and community bodies established for different reasons and some of them supported by the government and some by NGOs like ZOA, but none of them are registered or legalized, and their formation was not always transparent and democratic.
- Participation of women in existing groups was virtually absent, and the baseline survey evidenced this reality as only 8% of the females were aware about the existing of these CBOs and their participation was zero in its executive committees.
- Interviews with State Ministries reveal significant deficits in their capacity to access communities and maintain links to ensure proper planning.
- FGDs indicate clear inability to communicate with local government authorities.

Expected Impact:

- Strengthening the technical and managerial capacity of local government authorities in planning and service delivery is one of the expected impacts.
- Increasing the participation of women and youth in the development of their communities is a will be another impact.
- This result will strengthen the capacities of local government authorities and local NGOs to ensure sustainability of action initiatives. The sustainability will be ensured by strengthening the technical and management capacities of local nongovernmental organizations and actors, Local government authorities, vocational training partner centers and credit institutions to sustain VSLAs and vocational training initiatives introduced by the action.

Tips and recommendations on implementing the activities of the result:

- Staff from different ministries, project partners and CBO members should represent the main beneficiaries of this result.
- Involvement of stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring should be dealt with high seriousness, as the sustainability and the sense of ownership will not be achieved without active involvement of stakeholders.

- The engagement of the local government authorities will expose them to the various stages of project planning, management and evaluation, and this is a learning and capacity building
- Capacity building of government actors should focus on areas that are directly beneficial to the action. This includes delivery of a series of training sessions and discussions on specific topics related to VSL and vocational training.
- Formation and legalization of CBOs should start with awareness-raising and sensitization, followed by identifying existing leadership in the respective communities. Transparent election is important to ensure having strong members for the CBOs.
- Participation of women in the CBOs elections should be conditional to continue supporting communities by the project services.
- Linking the CBO to existing networks and local governmental authorities should be strategic area of concern from CDF and its partners.
- An Advisory Committee represents all stakeholders will be the best way to ensuring ownership and sustainability.

Tips and recommendation on monitoring the implementation:

- Regular meetings for the advisory committee, the CBOs, partners should be attended by CDF relevant staff, and regular review to the CBOs meeting minutes is important to ensure the culture of documentation is built within all members.
- Progress should be monitored by the number of CBOs formed and obtained HAC certificate, the number of trainings provided, the number of advisory committee meetings, and the percentage of women participation in the elected CBOs.