

End of Project Report

Submitted to: Haella Stichting

By

SUPPORT TRUST FOR AFRICA DEVELOPMENT

on

Economic Empowerment of South Sudanese Women and Girls' Indigenous Networks in Central Equatoria State Through Livelihood Skills Trainings.



Rock City Training Centre , Juba

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29 August, 2021

Table of Content

List of Tables.....	
List of abbreviation and acronyms	2
Acknowledgement.....	3
Executive Summary	3
1.0 Project Background.....	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2. Inception Stage- Consultative Meeting with the Women Group.....	4
2.0 Launching of the project activities.....	5
2.1 Basic business skills training for women and girls	6
2.2. Training women and girls in reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap making.....	7
2.3. Awareness raising on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (S/RES/1325) on women, peace and security as well as issues of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)	8
3.0. Project achievements, effect or impact.....	9
3.1. Sustainability	9
3.2 Challenges faced during the project implementation.	
4.0 Lessons Learnt, Conclusion and Recommendation	9
4.1 Lessons Learnt	10
4.2 Conclusion	10
4.3 Recommendation	10

List of abbreviation and acronyms

COVID-19	: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2)
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
IGAs	: Income Generating Activities
KII	: Key Informant Interviews
SGBV	: Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV).
SME	: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

- STAD : Support Trust for Africa Development
TOR : Terms of Reference
UNSCR 1325 : United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Acknowledgement

First off, we would like to say a big thank you to Haella Foundation for this grant.

In the same measure, we deeply thank all the members of the women group who sacrificed their time to attend these workshops, it's our humble hope and desire that your knowledge be increased through this project to better equip you to support yourself, your family and the entire communities as a whole

We also in the same measure would like to acknowledge and thank all STAD members in the various capacities for their excellent performance (despite their very busy and tiring schedules) in ensuring that this project becomes a reality.

Executive Summary

Background: The Haella Stichting in the Netherlands launched an out of the box competition (at the beginning of the year (2021) about women's' rights, with a strict condition stressing that "nothing about women without women!"

The Support Trust for African Development (STAD) was among the lucky winners for this grant and by it, STAD main focus was to contribute to poverty reduction by strengthening indigenous women and girls with basic entrepreneurship skills in Juba, Central Equatoria Region.

The specific objective of the project included;

- Training women and girls in basic business skills such as simple basic bookkeeping practices, opening accounts and savings, gathering information about new needs and government policies & some income generating activities (IGA).
- Training women and girls in reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap making
- Raising awareness on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (S/RES/1325) on women, peace and security as well as issues of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

1.0 Project Background

1.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the year (2021), the Haella Stichting¹ in the Netherlands launched an out of the box competition about women's' rights, with a strict condition stressing that "nothing about women without women!" being an integral part of the proposal from applicants.

¹ <https://www.haella.nl/>

With COVID-19 ravaging economies with its effect ultimately trickling down to individual livelihoods, as characterized by loss of jobs, restrictions of movements, among others, the grant from Haella Stichting could not have come at a better time.

It's against this background that the Support Trust for African Development (STAD) responded, and this project was birthed out of a craving desire by STAD to mutually translate the lives of disadvantaged South Sudanese businesswomen with low education², and are therefore, unable to leverage social finance, advisory and enforcement support connections due to certain cultural social standings.

Through this fund, STAD sought to translate the unfavourable culture limiting women's performance as entrepreneurs by providing basic business skills and knowledge to improve their businesses. Additionally, STAD also sought to engage government policy makers, development partners and business community to address and develop legislations tackling skills, capital, conducive environment that address and supports vulnerable women in the indigenous small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sector.

Therefore, the project's main objective was to contribute to poverty reduction by strengthening indigenous women and girls with basic entrepreneurship skills in Juba, Central Equatoria Region.

The specific objectives of the project were;

- Training women and girls in basic business skills such as simple basic bookkeeping practices, opening accounts and savings, gathering information about new needs and government policies & some income generating activities (IGA).
- Training women and girls in reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap making
- Raising awareness on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (S/RES/1325) on women, peace and security as well as issues of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

1.2. Inception Stage- Consultative Meeting with the Women Group.

STAD Juba identified groups of South Sudanese women and girls who have for years struggled to provide for their families during and in post conflict by operating in indigenous small-scale businesses. **During the Implementation phase**, STAD Volunteers together with the facilitators carried out a pre- training need assessment to identify issues and background of the beneficiaries to ascertain or prepare a tailored training action.

During the needs assessment, it was found out that, Entrepreneurial management practices was poor especially in records keeping and managerial decision-making processes. They lacked practical financial management skills including financial information and record keeping, cash flow and working capital management, and interpretation of financial information to influence management decisions among other financial business management practices. The financial record keeping in the Village Savings and Loan Association is weak and requires improvement including loan portfolio management.

Based on the needs assessment, the training program was designed, on the technical proposal.

² Statistical Yearbook, Southern Sudan 2009

Participatory approach was used because though the participants lacked enterprenual management skills or practices, they were in principle already practically practicing some of the governance and financial management practices rudimentarily. The training was intended to add onto already the knowledge they have acquired to improve their small scales business management

2.0 Launching of the project activities

The Launch was held on June 26, 2021 at Rock City Training Centre



A number of stakeholders including the Gender officer from the Royal Dutch Embassy in Juba.



The launching was attended by high level profiled dignitaries from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Professor from the University of Juba and Kampala International University Juba Branch, Director General from the Ministry of Environment, partners organizations like Humanity and Inclusion and the Chairpersons of Business Communities



Ms. Roselyn Mikaya from the Royal Netherlands Embassy and Mrs. Savia Aya Silvester, Director General from the Ministry of Environment, addressing the participants and invited guests

Purpose of the Launch component was aimed at presenting the Project to the beneficiaries and other Stakeholders the project objectives and scope of work. Being the first kind in nature, it was meant to prepare the women and girls to understand project requirements, background and what to expect and is expected from the group and individual participants responsibilities.

Project Trainings Sessions

2.1 Basic business skills training for women and girls..

The Business Skills training was conducted for three days in addition to the one-day training. This was undertaken by having a series of lectures by skilled and competent trainers. It covered areas of general business training, bookkeeping, generation of business idea, etc. The primary objective of the training was to equip the women and girls with basic business skills such as simple basic bookkeeping practices, opening accounts and savings, gathering information about new needs and government policies & some income generating activities (IGA)



Participant during business skills training. middle presenting what she has learnt .

2.2. Training women and girls in reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap making

This training was undertaken by first going through the theory part of the training; how ingredients are mixed and what proportions? Then the participants had to do it practically. This was done in small groups of 5 to enhance easy learning and understanding and also have micro-discussions in the process of practically making the liquid soap.



Participants' general knowledge of this objective was assessed qualitatively through undertaking FGD sessions. Majority of the participants reported that the training couldn't have come timely since most of the trainees were engaged in small-scale businesses. Overall the participants hinted that the training was very, timely and helpful as shown by the comment of this participant below;

“..... this training has come at the right time, now that there is corona everywhere, and the liquid soap is being used as part of the prevention, we are very happy to contribute to the prevention of this disease” Female Participant [34 years old]

Some have also hinted on producing soap for both their own home use as well as for sale in the market, as this participated narrated;

“.....the liquid has also an increased market and can be multipurpose. Beside selling it, I can also use part of it at home. Since this is a small-scale business, we may not have the capacity to only produce for the market, occasionally we also use it at home as well”, Female Participant [35 years old]

Due to logistical challenges, a training for sanitary pads was unfortunately not undertaken.

2.3. Awareness raising on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (S/RES/1325) on Women, Peace & Security and Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

These were delivered in a participatory way in form of lectures, presentations, focused group discussions, questions and answers. Occasionally women were grouped to encourage networking and the spirit of competition and cooperation among groups.

This training was specifically tailored to the needs of the target participants which among other things included; enhancing understanding on the different perspectives of women's business environment (success factors and challenges); how to minimize communication barriers, promoting trust building, sharing of knowledge and experiences among women as a necessity for businesses promotion; increase awareness and understanding on the concepts of Equality, Peace Building and Women Empowerment; increase awareness on the importance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (focusing on UNSCR 1325) and the SDGs as a tool for empowering women and promoting their participation in peace building, Conflict Resolution and public Administration; and, increasing awareness on the importance of women's participation in peace building and conflict Resolution at family, community and national levels.



Focused Group Discussions and Evaluation of the training session

Overall the training was deemed valuable by respondents as this participant narrated;

“...the retraining by the other woman was so good and practical, if possible, she should also come back again to teach us more. I really have enjoyed her sessions very much”, Female Participant [42 years old]

3.0. Project achievements, effect (s) and or impact.

These are the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term change(s) produced or likely to be produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, after the project was implemented. Specifically, the evaluator asked the following questions; (i) What has happened as a result of the project? (ii) What real difference has the project made to the beneficiaries? and, (iii) How many people have been affected?

The project intended to contribute to poverty reduction by strengthening indigenous women and girls with basic entrepreneurship skills in Juba, Central Equatoria Region. Therefore, the immediate project impact is that all respondents (43 women) reported their satisfaction of the project in terms of the knowledge they had received, and this would suggestively mean that the intervention changed their lives in a positive way. These they said would enable them to operate their business better in terms of attracting customers, having good bookkeeping ethics, among others. Since the measurement of project's impact normally takes a long time, so it's definitely not possible to possible to examine this impact at the present state

3.1 Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. To establish the sustainability of the project, respondents were asked; (i) To what extent will the benefits of the project continue after donor funding ceased? (ii) What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? and, (iii) Was there a clearly defined exit strategy and to what extent did it contribute to sustainability?

At the moment, the project will continue in the sense of participants putting what they have been taught to work. This project mainly targeted about 50 members of a women's group (43 turned up regularly). Since most of the trainings are tailored to the end of these group of participants, STAD will occasionally be able to do refreshers trainings to the participants as a way of ensuring sustainability of the project. And now with the slight easing of the COVID-19 restriction, the participants will be able to go back to their daily routines. At the same time, STAD will continue to look for funding opportunities to augment the gains that have been made by the Haëlla Fund to prevent it from being reversed.

3.2 Challenges faced during the project implementation.

- Frequent lockdown as a result of increased cases of COVID-19
- Women and Girls being disrupted by multiple funerals because of Covid19.
- High taxes and transporting materials from Neighbouring countries.
- Drastic Fluctuation of the country's currency affected budget lines as per proposal.
- Instability in the Country disrupted attendance and implementation of activities for instance multiple protests and insecurity, tensions creation fears among citizens.
- The attendance was not consistent in numbers due distance from the training centre, weather -rains, frequent deaths of relatives as a result of Covid19 and illnesses.

4.0 Lessons Learnt, Conclusion and Recommendation

4.1 Lessons Learnt

These included the following

- Involvement of community members in the project was key in promoting ownership, sustainability and efficiency of the entire project.
- Being flexibility in these COVID-19 times was also a plus in terms of implementing the project due to the restricted movements and following of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Involvement of skilled and experienced trainers with vast knowledge in their respective areas of training thus facilitating the smooth project implementation
- Since some to the training contents were basically tailored to the needs of the women with limited levels of education, we believe they can be sustainable as it would be easy to hire trainers to do them in future projects
- Three days basic is inadequate for detailed content required for business skills training
- In adequate training materials which could not be provided by the facilitator.

4.2 Conclusion

This project was aimed at contributing to poverty reduction by strengthening indigenous women and girls with basic entrepreneurship skills in Juba, Central Equatoria Region. Since most of the participants were mainly engaged in small-scale businesses, whose activities were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the preventive measures like lockdowns which prevented participants' capacity to earn income, this motivated participants to fully engage in this project as they believed the new knowledge would allow them to strategize on how best to undertaken their businesses in the prevailing situation.

Despite encountering some basic challenges like weather disruptions which occasionally interrupted participants from coming to the events, it can be arguably said, it has achieved most of its set objectives It has empowered the target group on key business knowledge on how to carry out their day-to-day businesses. They have also undergone awareness raising on the UNSCR 1325 resolution and thus, have knowledge and information on women, peace and security.

4.3 Recommendation

- More in depth trainings be organized and followed by mentoring and coaching to ensure practical applicability.
- Haëlla Foundation to support such trainings for these groups to improve their business skills.
- STAD to work through a licensed company to procure a start-up kit to help the group do more trainings on their own.

