



Fund for Innovation and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation et la transformation



VETERINARIANS WITHOUT BORDERS

Edible Insect Farming for Improved Nutrition and Income in South Sudan

Context

In 2022, South Sudan was ranked at the very bottom on the international Human Development Index (UNDP, 2022). Ongoing conflict, public health challenges and climate shocks have created conditions where more than two-thirds of the country's 8.9 million people required humanitarian assistance in 2022. These factors have severely affected people's livelihoods - women in particular.

The Innovative Solution

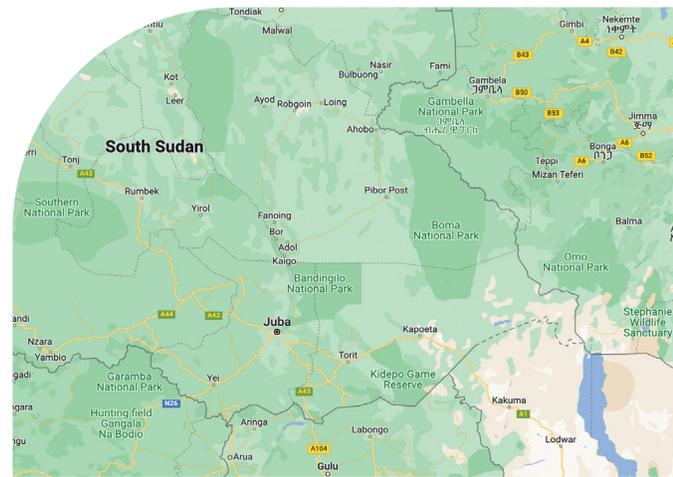
Supported by FIT, Veterinarians without Borders and their local partners Base Net tested an innovation solution aimed at enhancing food security and livelihoods through female-led farming of highly nutritious insect species that are traditionally consumed in South Sudan and suitable for rearing in confined spaces.

Advancing Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Strategy enabled the innovation to respond to gender-based needs in a proactive manner via gender sensitivity training, activity scheduling and women's empowerment initiatives within the local community. The Gender Expert also served as the Monitoring & Evaluation officer, developing tools to capture gender-based data.

The project focused on enhancing women's participation. For instance, flexibility in the timing of training schedules was agreed to in consultation with the women farmers' groups.

A Gender expert was hired to build both women and men capacity about gender knowledge and the integration of gender best practices in projects' activities. As such, participants acquired gender skills such as the use of gender-sensitive language, collection and analysis of gender-specific data, ensure that there is equal access to and utilization of services, and active involvement of women in decision making. The integration of women into steering processes led to a better outcome of the gender practices, which showed the reduction of cultural gender stereotypes within the communities like Obbo and Pambala of Magwi county.



COUNTRY
South Sudan

AMOUNT
\$242,787

TESTING PERIOD
10 months
Ended October 2022



GENDER RESPONSIVE (GE2)

THEME: LIVELIHOODS

Testing Framework

The pilot project aimed to test the hypothesis that insect farming is a practical means of advancing women's economic empowerment while improving food security and livelihoods for marginalized households. The pilot project targeted 200 farmers/households. A pre-post methodology was used to assess changes in the diets and incomes of participating households and communities. Household surveys evaluated dietary, nutritional, financial and gender equality changes while one-on-one interviews, FGDs, and key informant interviews with local leaders, and select participants were used to collate in-depth success stories.

Results and Impact

By the endline the average household income increased from \$20 (baseline) per harvesting season to \$70. The innovation increased the insect harvesting capacity of beneficiaries to a point where they all saw commercial value in edible insect farming. Beneficiaries embraced the new equipment for harvesting winged insects and reported that the technology was appropriate and simple to use compared to their traditional methods. Non-target community members showed interest in acquiring the equipment in preparation for the next season. The training on marketing, small scale business management and entrepreneurship helped change mindsets, mostly among the men who have always believed that selling edible insects generates minimal income and is therefore an activity for women.

Key Lessons

1. There was a specific edible insect species preferred by the target communities. This variety takes 8 months to mature which was outside of the innovation testing timeframe.
2. During initial meetings at project start-up, participants suggested pivoting the targeted species from house crickets to flying termites, leading to better buy-in and testing feasibility within the timeframe. This underscored the importance of localization and working with participants as partners.
3. Though communities harvest and eat wild cricket, the idea of farming insects needs time to be adopted. An expert in cricket farming would add value in a longer-term project.

'You know, many people who are not members of our group are also now interested in owning one of this equipment for their use, having seen the benefit'. - innovation participant, 43-year-old single mother of seven.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Base Net

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

200 farmers/households (174 women, 26 men)

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.

