

Skills empowerment for alternative livelihood (SEAL-Karamoja)

Country/Region: Uganda / Africa

Timeframe/Status: Current phase I: November 2010 – October 2012

Needs: The Karamoja region is one of the least developed areas in Uganda with high levels of illiteracy, high infant mortality rates, high levels of malnutrition among under five year olds and a high prevalence of abject poverty (no disposable income). Karamoja has experienced decades of underdevelopment under colonial and post-colonial regimes, and policies aimed specifically at the region have mostly been restrictive in nature, focusing either on prohibiting the movement of pastoralists or seeking to remove weapons. The project aims to develop a model that responds to the needs of the Karamojong people. Special emphasis is thereby given to agri-business and agro-processing skills since the vast majority of the population of Karamoja are pastoralist. The skills training will lead to more competitive services and products offered in local and regional markets. Currently there are no technical vocational training institutions offering suitable vocational skills or entrepreneurship courses in Karamoja to address this challenge. The project is particularly keen to foster communities in which no training and educational opportunities have previously existed. The goal is to motivate women to make up 50 percent of the participants.



Objectives: The overall objective of the project is to create a sustainable environment that leads to employment and income opportunities for young men and women living in difficult conditions in three rural districts of Karamoja (Abim, Nakapiripirit and Moroto). The project contributes to poverty reduction through adopted skills and entrepreneurship training, which enhances income generation potential of the rural young adults, both men and women. Swisscontact (SC) with its principal partners will contribute to the improvement of employability and thereby providing sustainable livelihoods of young adults from rural Karamoja through building up of practical skills and support to small business start-ups.

Target groups: The youth – young unemployed men and women.

Focus / Activities: Public Private Dialogue and Cooperation: Networks and linkages between local government, rural communities and local markets are established and strengthened. Capacity Building of Local Partners: Capacity of local partners and associates is enhanced to render services. Local Skills Development: A range of locally demanded technical, entrepreneurial and life skills are identified and corresponding curricula are developed. Skills training programmes are implemented.

Human and Financial Resources: 7 staff employed (1 international, 6 nationals)
Budget phase I: € 588'357, financed by EU

Results: The project started in November 2009. Project staff has been recruited, trained, and office in Moroto is set up. Learning Groups have been set up and skills training has started in jewellery making, car washing, bicycle assembly and repair, hair dressing, weaving and tailoring in three districts. Swisscontact Germany and Swisscontact Uganda signed a Memorandum of Understanding and the latter carried out several missions to Karamoja, with the following achievements:

- a) The project office in Moroto is operational
- b) Stakeholder (Strategic planning workshop) held in Moroto attended by all stake holders
- c) Partnership agreements with KDDS and Arid Land signed
- d) Awareness workshops in Abim, Moroto conducted in 11 sub-counties
- e) Networking meetings with Local Government, Civic Society and other GOs and NGOs operating in Karamoja held
- f) Potential skill trainings with market opportunities have been identified in at least 12 trades and training started
- g) 12 trades identified, 280 trained, 70 supported and 25% have started small businesses

Particularities: The Karamoja region lays in the North–Eastern part of Uganda and covers about 10% of the country with about 1 million population and semi-arid climate. NGOs funding has ameliorated the promotion of peace & basics services to the community, but despite of the investment, the region

is still characterised by degraded environment, poor agricultural production with frequent failures and limited marketing opportunities. Furthermore, the area is characterized by highest rate of unemployment, least educated and highest drop out rate of students from all levels of school (primary, secondary and higher institutions). The project targets all of these groups in the community, by training them in their localities. Some of these trainings are yielding results in that some beneficiaries are starting to operate small businesses that generate income.

Implementing agency: Swisscontact

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Special Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities: Our target group is mainly vulnerable people in the region, therefore VET alone cannot solve their problems. However, other components like start-up capital, a saving culture and commitment to the skills acquired, can generate income.

The market for VET skills in some trades/skills is limited, hence limiting the opportunities of training. This also raises the cost of training of the few who can be absorbed by the centers.

The SEAL project is developing skills in the areas analyzed with a potential market. This has been addressed by setting learning/training centers, group demonstration centers, hands on training in a modular system and a product development approach - all these are pursued to increase levels of creativity and innovations.

The region will remain donor dependant for some good years due to other factors which cannot be addressed by SEAL project.

Useful Tools, Documents, Resources: http://swisscontact.ch/english/pages/PR_Dn/PR_Dn_097.php