

Economic Empowerment knows no boundaries!

In a last mile community exists ‘Amadrici women and men group’ – Amadrici literally translating to ‘we are suffering’ in the madi dialect. Among the 333 SDCs in moyo and obongi districts and 83 in metu sub county thrives a group of men and women aged between 20 to 60 years that RICE West Nile supports.

The 30 membered (14 male, 16 female) is located in elegu village, pamujo parish in metu mountains. A group that has never claimed any support from any institution, organization acknowledges having limited their abilities to do more. The group has been saving and saved up to Ugandan shillings 12,000,000 with a star value of Ugandan shillings 1,000 in the last cycle. With majority of the members being farmers meant farming was inevitable. However, the only challenge has been farming without the best practices thus resulting into low yields, saving without a purpose resulting into no or minimal development.

In July 2020, Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment West Nile with support from European Union started implementing an economic empowerment project titled ‘Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment in Northern Uganda’. Moyo and Obongi districts being the target districts for the project enhanced community members chances of directly benefiting from the project since their sub county – Metu among three others (Lefori, Moyo and Palorinya) are targeted for the four years implementation. The project works through savings and development clusters (SDCs) targeting 333 across the project scope.



Left: Photo showing group members drying the second harvest of okra. Right: The group demo garden. – Photo credit: Rolex Aleku

In 2020 November, mapping of the SDCs was conducted and Amadrici women and men group emerged successful based on the project defined criteria. The following year in March 2021, the project started Enabling Rural Innovation (ERI) trainings with the SDC – ERI is an

expectation leveling and mind changing approach the project uses to broaden the thinking of the farmers.

The project supports SDCs with farm inputs and tools, trainings on ERI, local capacities



Photo above showing RICE West Nile project team interacting with the group members during a routine monitoring visit. – photo credit: Rolex Aleku.

for peace, farmer managed natural resource regeneration, among others. Upon completion of module III the groups are expected to establish demonstration gardens upon selecting a viable enterprise within their markets of sale. The demonstration gardens serve a purpose of being learning sites for the SDC members and other community members as well as economically empowering the SDCs.

“We are the food basket of our sub county, but our roads cannot allow us to bring our food items down to the markets...” – Mr Dralada expresses.

Being the first time for the group to receive any support from an organization, the trainings on ERI meant heaven on earth for the members with impacts of the new learnings of planting in lines, thorough market survey before choosing an enterprise etc. Members all have short term goals of growing rice, vegetables and long-term goals of educating their children, shifting from grass thatched to iron sheet roofed housing, and all members to own bicycles five years from now.



“When we started our group demo, everyone in the village was wondering whether we understand farming seasons ... now after one month we have Ugshs. 600,000/= ...”

- Group chairperson.

The members during a routine monitoring visit acknowledged that the trainings have brought huge cooperation among the group members, improved focus towards achieving goals among others.

After collectively taking care of the demonstration garden, in their first harvest they got 12 bags of okra which did not stay in their store for two days. A trader approached and bought all the 12 bags each at Ugshs. 50,000/= earning them Ugshs. 600,000/= and she still needed more which she got from the group members. The market for okra is readily available in South Sudan which is about 40 kilometers from the group location. This has encouraged the members to harvest the balance which is estimated to be about Ugshs. 400,000/=.

The very excited group could not believe the best practices in the shortest time earned them the amount of money which they plan to use for acquiring group assets. They remained grateful to RICE West Nile for the knowledge and skills offered.