



General case study

Using livelihood analysis to mitigate conflict through the provision of community-based animal health services in Sudan and South Sudan

This case study is from an area where protracted crises were undermining livelihoods. FAO used community-based animal health services as an entry point to develop trust and generate dialogue in order to build social cohesion. The approach was rooted in a conflict-sensitive understanding of the context, and an in-depth livelihood analysis was used to inform programming. *Supporting livelihoods-based programming* is the first of the LEGS Principles.

Background

The Abyei Administrative Area (AAA) is a contested zone located on the border between South Sudan and Sudan. The Dinka Ngok (affiliated with South Sudan) and the Missiriyia (affiliated with Sudan) use its grazing land and water resources. In the past, access to natural resources was regulated by customary laws which helped to maintain and strengthen peaceful relations between the two groups. Over the past four decades, natural resource access has been increasingly contested, drawn along ethnic lines between the two communities. Frequent outbreaks of violence have led to a disengagement line being established and subsequent restrictions on pastoralist mobility affecting grazing patterns.

Process

Given the importance of livestock for the livelihoods of both communities, FAO identified an opportunity to improve inter-community relations and contribute to sustainable peace objectives. The technical delivery of community-based animal health veterinary services (embedded in an agricultural livelihood support strategy), included training youths interested in delivering animal health services, the initial provision of vaccines and drugs, and supervision. The cattle owners paid the community animal health workers (CAHWs) directly for their services, ensuring intervention sustainability. The community was also responsible for building the required cattle crushes.

The trust that was built among both communities was then followed up by peace workshops focused on sharing of natural resources. The process involved the following steps:

- Assessment of stakeholders and conflict drivers within the socio-ecological system
- Identification of a window of opportunity
- Implementation of community-based animal health services contributing to a peace agreement
- Strengthening a sustainable peace process

Outcomes

The initiative succeeded in:

- **Improving livestock health:** The community-based delivery of veterinary services provided immediate results, improving the health of both communities' livestock and reducing the risk of disease outbreak, especially for Missiriya animals coming from other regions. As a result of vaccinations against five identified common local diseases, livestock health improved and was protected from often fatal conditions.
- **Strengthening livelihoods:** Given the communities' strong reliance on livestock for dairy products, the animal health services offered by FAO protected their most important assets. This had a positive impact not only on the health of livestock, but on livelihoods, income and food security.
- **Improving conflict-sensitive programming:** The dialogue-based approach helped to build confidence among both communities, thereby reaching a deeper understanding of the root causes of the conflict, to better inform programming aimed at building long-term sustainable peace.
- **Sustaining peace between parties in conflict:** As a result of the peace agreement, Missiriya pastoralists were able to cross the buffer zone and access grazing areas in the southern AAA controlled by the Dinka Ngok community. This led to grazing opportunities being extended, benefiting both animal health and milk production.
- **Free movement of people:** Missiriya cattle herders were finally allowed to cross towards the Dinka Ngok controlled southern territory in search of water points and grazing. In addition, South Sudanese citizens were allowed to enter the northern side of the AAA. Lastly, travel was made possible towards Khartoum, allowing South Sudanese citizens to join relatives or access medical treatment.

Lessons learnt

The approach brought two communities in conflict together through their common assets and source of livelihoods, using livestock as an entry point to address tensions and improve peace. The effectiveness of this strategy was strengthened by the fact that the conflict was jeopardizing community livelihoods, including mobility for people and livestock. Following successful FAO-led dialogue and negotiation processes, which further strengthened the trust between community leaders and resulted in a peace agreement, effective veterinary services could be provided to both communities.

From a technical viewpoint, the delivery of veterinary services reduced the risk of livestock disease outbreaks, increased the quality and quantity of milk production and improved pastoralists' mobility and livelihoods. From a conflict mitigation perspective, the delivery of veterinary services contributed to reinforcing the credibility of FAO, especially with Dinka Ngok local authorities, who initially challenged FAO's approach. As a whole, confidence was boosted among FAO field staff, local authorities and communities, ultimately strengthening the resilience of livelihoods.

Source: FAO (2017) *Linking community-based animal health services with natural resource conflict mitigation in the Abyei Administrative Area*. Building resilience through dialogue and negotiation in a contested area between Sudan and South Sudan. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/i7422e/i7422e.pdf>

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