

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF AFRICARE¹ IN KABIIRA VILLAGE, KABALE, UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

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The study was conducted in Kabale, Uganda to assess the impact of Africare project in Kabiira village. To gather the information a qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews. The sampled was 15 households that were selected using stratified random sampling. Inductive and comparative analyse was employed to examine and discuss the data. Agriculture is the most important source of income in the community. Most of the respondents mentioned that they experienced high yields after Africare interventions because they got trainings about farming practices and soil conservation, and some inputs. They used the yield for household consumption and the surplus was sold in the market. On the other hand, some people explained that the ones that got more benefits from Africare activities were the ones with better living conditions. The groups supported by Africare was no longer functioning in the way that it was intended but Africare's work allows others NGO's to start working in Kabiira village.

Key words: Household, agriculture, africare project

INTRODUCTION

AfriCare

AfriCare is a non-profit, private charitable organization based in the United States established with the mission of improving the living conditions of Africans. It was founded in 1971. AfriCare extended its assistance to families and communities almost all over Africa for two and a half decades. AfriCare's areas of intervention include agriculture, water, environment, literacy, micro enterprises, health and emergency humanitarian aid. AfriCare also supports programs in private sector development and governance (AfriCare 1998). Due to high food insecurity prevalence in the Kabale District, AfriCare through securing funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had started a five-year project under Uganda Food Security Initiative (UFSI) from 1997 to 2001. It had targeted 71,000 beneficiaries in 106 villages in Kabale (Nyeko *et al.* 2006).

AfriCare followed different project strategies in Kabale such as Integrated approach to food security (mutual reinforcement of intervention), synergy effect with partnership, community approach (village action plan, community resource map, etc), partnership approach (target group or farmers), dissemination of technology through drama shows, training the community, farm field day, farmer to farmer visit, and farmer field school.

The components of AfriCare projects were: agricultural production and post harvest operation, agricultural marketing, community road construction/rehabilitation, natural resource management, and community nutrition and sanitation. The activities of AfriCare to realize those components include capacity building of farmers in areas of modern agronomic practices, marketing and management of small scale farm business, provision of improved seeds, soil and water conservation, improving road infrastructure/rehabilitation, pig multiplication and rabbit breeding (AfriCare Kabale Office Briefings 2006).

Various efforts have been exerted by different national and international organizations for the improvement of livelihood of small-scale farmers in marginalized conditions. Projects have been executed as instruments to realize developmental visions. However, most NGOs fail to fulfill their commitments of benefiting the poor being in trap of high administrative costs and corruptions. Even those NGOs which are believed to be successful, in finger counts, rarely made impact assessments once their projects phased-out and pulled out from the area. Hence, it demands to conduct impact assessments to enhance outreach in a wider geographic area with quality benefits in future activities.

Agriculture sector in Kabale, Uganda

Kabale (located in south-western Uganda) was for decades a key food-producing region in Uganda. In Kabale, the agricultural system was based on annual crops, with land holdings ranging 1-3 hectare. Farm size in Kabale District ranges from 0.3 to 2.4 hectare with 28.3% of house holdings having less than 1 hectare (Nyeko *et al.*, 2006). The most important crops are Irish potatoes, field peas, beans, sorghum, wheat, maize and vegetables. Perennial crops include bananas, cassava, and fruit trees. Temperate high value crops such as apples and grapes are being introduced. Dairy farming is also important. The high population pressure has pushed people to cultivate on very steep fragile

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hillsides, destroying contour bands, and to practice continuous cultivation with very short fallow periods (Nyeko *et al.*, 2006). Due to high population density estimated at 370 persons per square kilometre, intensive land cultivation and land fragmentation, soil degradation has continued to threaten food security in the district (The most of the farmers (96%) have observed decrease in crop yields over past 5 years (Alacho *et al.* 2000) .

In Kabale, according to Alacho *et al.*, 2000, 88% of the population was subsistence farmers with an average of 7.4 children per household. A high number of people feed at the household, yet only 34% owned or controlled less than 0.21ha and 87% claimed to be utilizing all the available land indicating absence of any form of crop rotation. 25% rented land to supplement what they owned. 97% of the households did not use chemical fertilizers and the majority (63%) relied on animal manure. A further indication of the chronic food insecurity in Kabale was shown by the persistent poor nutrition indices. Overall stunting rate of 47% while those who were underweight were 16.5%, malnutrition and food shortage (84%) were major household problems (Alacho *et al.* 2000).

AfriCare had done nothing with regard to impact assessment in Kabale on its previous interventions once it had pulled-out. This study strongly believed that conducting an assessment of the AfriCare's projects impact on the community will have a paramount value to AfriCare and other stakeholders to their future developmental activities.

Study Objectives

The aim of the study or field visit was to assess the impact of Africare's activities in the Kabiira village. The objectives of the study are i) to assess the household and farm characteristics and ii) to evaluate the impact of Africare intervention in Kabiira village.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

Kabiira is a small village situated on one of the hills surrounding Lake Bunyonyi not far from Kabale in South-Western Uganda. The village consists of about 200 households and the main income source is farming. Even though not everyone is a full-time farmer, everyone has a garden where they grow crops for own consumption. Steep slopes and fragmented land characterize the area. Obviously there was a problem with soil erosion during rainfall and since the water-source was far away there were problems with drought in the dry-season.

Sampling design and procedure

The sample size was 30 households with 5 non-members (did not get direct benefit from AfriCare). Of the respondents seven were women and the rest men. Convenience sampling strategy was used to select the respondents who were available at that meeting. However, responders were picked from different segments of the population, defined by the stratifying criteria; women, men, members and non-members, therefore sampling technique could be considered as stratified random sampling. The names of the people correspondent to each stratum were named and picked the respondents randomly from there.

Data collection method

A questionnaire survey was conducted to obtain quantitative and qualitative information. Structured interview was carried out to gather social demographic data. The aim was to ask the same questions to all the respondents so that we would be able to compare them with each other.

Semi-structured interview was done for the rest of the interview. This method made it possible to vary the sequence of the questions and add additional questions making the interview more as a normal floating conversation. The questions used were bigger and more general in their frame of reference than in a structured interview, which opens for the respondent to elaborate on the topics that were presented (Bryman 2001).

Analytical Tools

Descriptive statistics were utilized for the social demographic data using the Microsoft Excel software. Comparative analysis was made to see how the farmers sustained themselves before the intervention by AfriCare and after. Comparative method also used to estimate the difference in livelihood between members of the Kabiira production group and non-members. In development studies it is common to use both the inductive and deductive analysis. When there is little knowledge about the issue that is to be addressed it can be useful to employ an explorative analysis of empirical data. In this study data was got from having a number of interviews with the different stakeholders. In that sense this study employed the inductive analysis. But on the other hand some pre-determined expectations before started writing the questionnaires because of the briefing with AfriCare beforehand. This might implicate that also used a deductive analysis to the issue (Mikkelsen 2005).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessing the household and farm characteristics in Kabiira

The total number of respondents interviewed was 15 with a composition of 7 women and 8 men. Out of these, 10 (66.67%) were members of the AfriCare production group of which 6 were female. The rest were non-members of which only one was female. All the respondents were above 22 years of age with the mean age being 45.13 years. The oldest was 75 years old (Figure 1).

Age class of the respondents (Years)

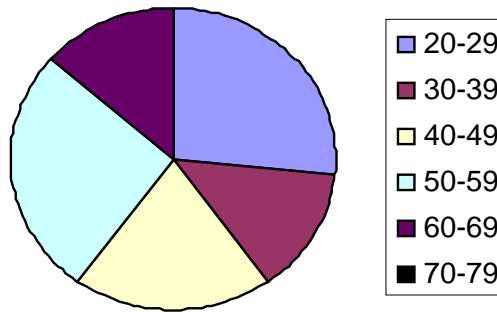


Figure 1: Age class of respondents

All the respondents interviewed were married and were in monogamous families. The average household size was 6.93 people with the smallest family being 4 and the biggest being 10 (Figure 2)



Figure 2: Household population sizes of the respondents

The average household land size was 3.03 acres. Of the 15 respondents, 4 were totally illiterate. Seven respondents had attended school up to primary level although only 2 of them had not gotten beyond primary four. Only one respondent had attended secondary education up to class 4 and none was learned beyond this. Thirteen of the respondents (86.67%) reported agriculture as the main source of income for their households with the other two still regarded as the alternative source of income. Households of 5 respondents (33.3%) had no alternative source of income in addition to agriculture. Petty trading in household merchandise was the main alternative source of income (20%) followed by tailoring and farming (each 13.3%) and lastly building construction, local brewing and charcoal burning (each 6.67%).

All respondents claimed to have available market for their agricultural produce although they reported fluctuation of prices, transportation difficulties and competition as the main market related problems. Inaccessibility to water for household use was reported as the biggest communal problem as by all the respondents. There was generally a poor reinvestment into the agricultural activities. Eleven of the respondents (73.3%) were members of a credit and savings scheme with two of them being in a formal one and the rest in informal ones. All respondents cited the problem of high interest rates and lack of assured income among other problems which have led to many of them avoid credit schemes and loans.

Evaluation of the Impact of AfriCare's Intervention in Kabiira

Accessibility

AfriCare has made an impact on many things in Kabiira but one of the things that everyone interviewed mentioned was road construction. AfriCare assisted the local governments with machines and other equipment for road constructions. Respondents revealed that now the road reached to places it did not reach before and it helped them reaching the market in Kabale.

Increased yields

Most of the respondents reported about increased yields after AfriCares intervention, the non-members said that they had learned about new farming practices from the members. The members also claimed that if they saw somebody farming in an inefficient way they would tell them a better way to do it. Only the members would get benefits like equipment and improved seeds from AfriCare. Many of the respondents were subsistence farmers before, but now they get a surplus that they can sell and therefore they can have their kids longer in school. Before many could only afford to have their kids in primary school but now many had them in secondary and even university. Some respondents said that in case of farming the members were today better of than the non members. On a general income level they didn't feel that the members were better off in the village because others might have had other sources of income that have made them better off.

Benefits

Many of the respondents explained that the people that got the biggest benefits form AfriCare was the ones that were best of in the village before AfriCare came. One of the richest men in the village was elected to be the chairman and the ones who had a lot of land would also get most of the equipment, pesticides and improved seeds. When AfriCare would give out for instance rabbits all of them would go to one person. One of the respondents told us that sometimes they would cultivate a lot of their land for AfriCare purposes but when the time for getting the seeds came, they would just get seeds for half the land size. Some respondents didn't have money to build the storages that AfriCare promoted. Field visit observed that there were big differences the living standard among the different farmers we visited. It seemed that the chairmen of the groups were better of in general than the normal members. After AfriCares intervention the hierarchy in the village stayed the same, and there was maybe an underlining of the structures that already existed. One person mentioned that being a member of AfriCare had given him more respect in the village.

Improvements

The biggest improvement has been skills about new farming practices and soil conservation techniques; crop rotation, trench digging, terracing, planting in rows, Calliandra trees and Elephant grass to prevent soil erosion and use as fodder, post-harvest handling, fertilizing skills and how to use organic fertilizer, pesticides and equipments such as watering cans, pesticides, spraying cans for pesticides and improved seeds, marketing skills, providing of livestock such as poultry, pigs and rabbits. Some of the farmers went on farmers exchange to other villages and learned about other crops and cultivations practices such as cassava growing.

Calliandra calothyrsus is fast growing nitrogen – fixing multipurpose tree species native to Central America and Mexico. It has been introduced by Africare in Kabiira where it is an important component of agro forestry systems. Calliandra provides variety of products and services including fodder, fuel wood, and stakes for climbing beans, techniques for soil erosion control and soil fertility improvement (Nyeko et al. 2006).

According to some of the members, AfriCare also created awareness about nutrition and this had been very beneficial for many of them. They also mentioned that they had been provided a health-centre where they would bring their children for weighing. It did not seem that this practice was continued after AfriCare left. One woman stated that they could not keep weighing their children when they didn't know why they were weighing them.

AfriCare had a positive impact on the village in the way that other NGO's has joined later picking up where they left. However we noticed some confusion among the farmers. Several people thought that NAADS (National Agricultural Advisor Services) and NAROV, two NGO's that has come after AfriCare, were sub-divisions of

AfriCare. Some even thought that AfriCare was still active in the region. They couldn't separate which benefits they got from whom.

Challenges

According to the respondents the biggest problem in the village is water shortage; most people live far away from the water source. AfriCare has created protected wells and also taught people how to build their own water tanks. But still lack of water sources is a big problem. Drought is also a big problem and most people don't have any strategies to handle this problem, they say it's beyond their control; they just have to wait until the rain comes. However some people mentioned that knowledge of how to time the planting is helping them reduce the problems with drought. Few respondents had problems with pests after AfriCare redrew from the village. When AfriCare was still around they would provide pesticides for the members and when they left some of them didn't have resources to keep on using pesticides on their land.

This study also encountered some other challenges for the farmers in Kabiira. In the rainy season, soil-erosion is a problem. AfriCare had trained people in trench digging to stop the water to run off with the soil so people report that this was not that a big problem anymore. Overgrazing was a big problem because of the land fragmentation. One respondent stated that "Our land might be so far away so we could not control other people letting their cattle graze on our plots. A future problem might be land scarcity because you can see that the plots were getting smaller and smaller and more scattered". Many people did not want to sell their land because they would like to give it to their kids or pay for dowry.

Many of the respondents were members of informal credit schemes. However, only a few of the respondents claimed to have used this credit for further investments in agricultural tools and land. None of the respondents had borrowed money from the bank because they were afraid of not being able to pay back the money, and maybe losing their land or house.

CONCLUSION

Most of the households were characterized by subsistence farming with small landholdings. Lack of access to credit facilities, marketing challenges, lack of alternative sources of income and lack of safe drinking water were among the problems. AfriCare did an impressive job in capacity building of farmers. The provision of improved varieties of seeds, construction of roads, storage facilities, nutrition and child care, poultry farming, Calliandra trees, and soil and water conservation were among the interventions.

All in all AfriCare had accomplished their objectives but this study didn't find all of their interventions sustainable. It became obvious that the production group was no longer functioning the way it was intended. They had internal conflicts and it didn't seem to be a priority to recruit new members. Many of the members joined (extension) NAADS when AfriCare redrew and some said that they just transferred to NAADS. Some claimed that after having benefited the most from AfriCare they either would gain more farming individually or joining the NAADS program.

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