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REAL IMPACT: ETHIOPIA

PRODUCTIVE SAFETY NET PROGRAM PLUS


USAID’s **Real Impact** series highlights aspects of our water programming that support the Strategic Objectives of the USAID Water and Development Strategy. Each case provides insights to challenges faced, approaches used, and lessons learned.

CHALLENGE

Agriculture is the primary source of food and income for most Ethiopians, employing 84 percent of people in the country. But for several decades, Ethiopia has suffered from recurring food shortages that have led to malnutrition, disease, and famine. These food shortages are brought on and worsened by droughts, floods, and soil depletion caused by climate change.

Water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) issues also impact millions of Ethiopians. Just 49 percent of the population has access to safe water

PSNP PLUS



LOCATION: Ethiopia
DURATION: 2008-2011
FUNDING: \$15.9 million
IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:
 CARE

and just 21 percent has access to appropriate sanitation.

APPROACH

PSNP Plus, which was launched in 2008, targeted families who were receiving aid from the ongoing Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), launched by the Government of Ethiopia with support from nine donors to provide immediate aid to families most impacted by the food shortages. (During the period in which PSNP Plus was implemented, USAID provided 32 percent of the funding for PSNP. A consortium of donors including the United Nations World Food

Programme and the World Bank provided the remaining funds.) PSNP successfully alleviates immediate-term food insecurity for over 7 million people each year.

PSNP Plus was launched as a pilot project to test the best models for promoting graduation from this government assistance with the aim of eventually scaling up. It focused on building the resiliency and income-generating capacity of 47,414 households (237,070 people) in 12 districts, thus facilitating their graduation from PSNP assistance. It did so using an integrated approach that simultaneously built capacity, provided value chain support, and improved WASH.

Supporting Value Chains:

PSNP Plus worked to boost livelihoods by ensuring that farmers were engaged in lucrative value chains with access to water and other inputs and the knowledge to sustainably manage them. The program steered beneficiaries toward targeted value chains such as livestock fattening, honey, and cereals and provided training on increasing production, water management technologies, post-harvest handling, and marketing. It also provided value-chain specific technology and inputs to these beneficiaries

to help them deal with climate and water-related challenges. These inputs included drought-resistant seeds for cereal growers and rural boreholes for livestock marketers.

PSNP Plus also supported simple micro-irrigation schemes to improve water use and boost climate resiliency in Ethiopia, where only six percent of land is irrigated and most farmers rely on irregular rainfall to water crops. These micro-irrigation schemes varied depending on the value chain. For example, PSNP Plus introduced manually drilled wells for use by cereal growers and manual water pumps for use by vegetable growers.

Improving WASH: While PSNP Plus had initially been conceived as a food and livelihoods program, less than a year into the program's implementation, in August 2009, it became clear that addressing WASH was necessary to facilitating graduation from government assistance. WASH was not only a health issue, but a livelihood issue because people in the targeted areas were spending immense amounts of time collecting water for household consumption – time that could be spent on productive activities such as education, developing businesses, childcare, cooking, household maintenance, and agriculture.

“Ever since my involvement in the project, my life has changed ... I make decisions in the household, I am confident now.”

– PSNP Plus Beneficiary

Furthermore, waterborne diseases were common, which negatively impacted the labor capacity of PSNP Plus beneficiaries and forced them to spend large portions of their incomes on treatment. In its second year, PSNP Plus set out to improve WASH for 54,510 individuals.

PSNP Plus partners started by rehabilitating access roads and mobilizing construction materials with participation by communities. They then built, developed, expanded, or rehabilitated wells, boreholes, natural springs, and reservoirs. PSNP Plus also improved sanitation by building latrines, focusing especially on schools in order to decrease dropout rates due to sanitation issues. To aid with sustainability, the program supported municipal water and sanitation committees comprised of community members that oversee maintenance of the infrastructure, with technical training, tools, and spare parts. Small water user fees of \$0.26 per month were collected to cover the maintenance costs. The program also held targeted sanitation and hygiene trainings.

Boosting Sustainability: In order to further promote self-reliance and to encourage gender equality, PSNP Plus facilitated the formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), small groups of community members who work together to collectively pool their savings and plan community improvements. The program trained VSLA members on conflict resolution, savings methodology, financial literacy, record keeping, income generation, resource allocation, and gender roles. VSLAs not only gave members – two-thirds of



whom were women – increased access to savings and credit, but they also facilitated important community dialogues about water issues. VSLA members worked together to address community development concerns and assign work for tasks like cleaning and maintaining water springs, cleaning the village, and promoting the use of household latrines. By facilitating this community engagement, VSLAs also boosted the sustainability of the program’s other initiatives.

IMPACT

Enhanced Agricultural Capacity:

PSNP Plus trained thousands of households to better manage water resources, engage with markets, and boost productivity. The program trained 37,191 households on post-production technologies, 17,896 households on post-harvest handling, and 35,994 households on improved production techniques.

Improved Sanitation and Hygiene:

PSNP Plus built 2,804 community latrines, including 11 Ventilated Improved Pit latrines in schools that provided almost 2,000 students with safe sanitation. The program also provided training on sanitation and hygiene to over 14,000 people, 49 percent of whom are women. These accomplishments led to a significant drop in water-related health risks, increased attendance of girls in schools, and reduced school dropout rates across the board.

Increased Access to Safe Water:

PSNP Plus rehabilitated, expanded, or developed 13 natural springs; coordinated the drilling or labor of 20 boreholes or shallow wells; and con-



structed nine reservoirs. The program also constructed over 400 water distribution points, exceeding targets by 440 percent. Consequently, there was a decrease in incidents of diarrhea. The municipal water and sanitation committees are now managing the water schemes themselves, ensuring that the gains are sustainable.

Increased Savings and Resilience:

As a result of PSNP Plus, over 2,000 VSLA groups were established with 36,989 members. These VSLAs mobilized a total of \$317,471 in savings, exceeding initial targets by 31 percent. These savings allowed members to cover the costs of school fees, day-to-day expenses, and health services. According to the project’s Longitudinal Impact Study, VSLA membership significantly improved members’ self-sufficiency and resilience to drought. More than 86 percent of VSLA members successfully graduated from PSNP assistance by the end of the program.

Women Empowered: PSNP Plus activities enhanced the status of women. VSLAs allowed members, mostly women, to have increased control over their finances. In a PSNP Plus gender impact study, women reported

significant increases in self-esteem and confidence as a result of participation in VSLAs. The value chain interventions also created more employment opportunities for women while the program’s WASH interventions reduced the amount of time women spent collecting water. One female PSNP Plus beneficiary said the project empowered her in her daily life. “Ever since my involvement in the project, my life has changed ... I make decisions in the household, I am confident now.”

Sustainable Income Increased:

PSNP Plus’ efforts to support value chains, improve water management, and build capacity yielded significant increases in household income. Over \$2.4 million worth of assets was transferred to PSNP Plus households, 13 percent over the target.

Graduation Facilitated: PSNP Plus successfully graduated over 4,820 households from government assistance. A follow-on project, Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development (GRAD) was launched in 2012 to build on PSNP Plus’ gains and help 50,000 households graduate from PSNP assistance.

KEYWORDS

Agriculture
VSLA
Value Chain
Food Security

Sanitation
Climate Change
WASH
Irrigation



Photo Credit: Reta Assegid, USAID/Ethiopia

LESSONS LEARNED

Because PSNP Plus was a pilot program, it consistently and intensely monitored the impacts of and setbacks faced by each of the program's components. The findings of the program's evaluations have been used to inform both the design of the follow-on GRAD program and the livelihood-boosting strategies employed by both the Government of Ethiopia and private sector partners in Ethiopia. Some of the key lessons were:

- ◆ Safe access to WASH is a necessary condition for livelihood and food security initiatives to succeed.
- ◆ Households that participated in multiple complementary value chains and had diversified sources of income were more successful than those engaged in just one value chain.
- ◆ Close coordination with the local government fosters an enabling environment and is necessary for sustainable implementation of microfinance and value chain initiatives.
- ◆ Graduation from government assistance in Ethiopia requires a protracted, long-term commitment and will generally take at least four to five years.
- ◆ An integrated approach is necessary. PSNP Plus implementers found that households needed additional health, WASH, climate change adaptation, nutrition, and women's empowerment support to ensure the success of economic and agricultural initiatives.
- ◆ Conducting detailed and timely value chain assessments is key to determining which value chains have potential. Climate change, local market variations, presence of private partners, and productive infrastructure all influence a value chain's success.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn more about PSNP Plus, visit:

PSNP Plus Leaflet:

<http://edu.care.org/Documents/P+%20leaflet.pdf>

CARE Talk on PSNP:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWEvv2eur4U>

PSNP Plus Final Evaluation Report:

http://edu.care.org/Documents/PSNP%20Plus_Final%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf