RAPID INTERNAL EVALUATION OF AVSI’s SUPPORT TO FARMER GROUPS in IKWOTO and TORIT COUNTIES

I. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

This document is the result of a 2-day of action-reflection workshop with AVSI FSL staff (7 males, 2 females) working across Torit and Ikwoto county, and of 3 days of field interviews with 4 Farmer Groups (FGs) in Ikwoto county and 2 FGs in Torit county (4 male FG leaders, 1 female FG leader, and 1 female FG member). It was conducted at the end of the harvest season (November 2019), after more than one year of continuous support in the context of 3 resilience-oriented projects (2 AICS-funded, 1 FAO/EU-funded). It reviews the positive results and pending challenges of AVSI’s effort to support agriculture farming in the area.

Besides analyzing progresses, this reflection aimed to consolidate AVSI’s internal FSL M/E framework in a participatory and empirical way. The most tangible outputs of this sort of rapid internal evaluation are the following:

i) the formulation of the impact evaluation questionnaire, and related indicators, that best capture the advances, the expected progress, and the challenges highlighted by FSL staff and beneficiaries – questionnaire that will be used to measure the overall impact of AVSI’s support to agricultural farming in 2020, starting with a survey of all FGs in February of 2020;

ii) the sketch of AVSI’s actual model of implementation that is emerging from the combination of the 3 FSL projects conducted by AVSI in the area (along with the relative working hypothesis on what is working, what needs to be strengthened, and why);

iii) the identification of some lessons learned, in relation to both the design and implementation of activities enhancing agriculture farming in the South Sudanese context.

The rationale of this effort is that in a complex, multi-project intervention the results measured in terms of FGs’ volumes of production and income, important as they are, do not capture other essential, less expected changes that are indeed taking place, of which stand out:

i) crucial and immediate results such as the improved access to land, whereby FG members cultivate closer to their homes, which translate into improved protection for female farmers and their children;

ii) fundamental and long-term transformations such as the shift toward the demand for more sophisticated and productive support, in a partnership spirit, as opposed to basic one-shot assistance;

iii) a variety of multiplication effects such as the replication of newly acquired farming techniques in individual gardens, the spreading of vegetable farming among the communities, the replication of bull training, and the sharing of knowledge and provision of services to other farmers by the leading FGs.

All such changes deserve close scrutiny (reflection) and appropriate monitoring (ad-hoc M/E framework).
The participatory review of these preliminary findings gives the FSL staff (including some leading beneficiaries) the chance to formulate working hypothesis on what is functioning and how (a sort of Practice of Change, as opposed to the Theory of Change). This conversation is instrumental to the constitution of a common vocabulary, the building of a shared sense of direction, and the identification of well-founded concerns, all of which represent the “glue” of a MEAL plan in direct support of quality implementation.

II. OVERALL PROGRESS in AGRICULTURE FARMING

Interviews with both AVSI staff and beneficiaries have confirmed the accomplishment of a number of key results (milestones), at a pace that appears very much to be accelerating. In February 2020 AVSI will launch an appropriate survey to provide hard evidence for that. In the meantime, in the following are listed what was identified through a triangulation of interviews to AVSI staff, beneficiaries, and direct observation:

- **Interest in farming is increasing.** The spread of improved seeds (ex. short sorghum) and the provision of basic irrigation tools for vegetable farming is extending/multiplying farming production cycles, not only improving but redefining altogether livelihood opportunities in agriculture.
- **The pooling of resources among FG members is taking place.** FG members have underlined both the need for and the advantages of working as a group. As an example, they have reported that the work of several people is needed to take advantages of treadle pumps, and that by working as a group they managed to sell in the market while others FG members continued farming.
- **The size of land cultivated is being increased by up to 10 times, moving from substance to market-oriented farming, with positive effects rippling along the value chain** (both backward and forward linkages). Following months of support in the form of APFS, the introduction of ox-ploughs is leading several FGs to open new and much larger communal fields. As a result, FGs’ priorities are being redrawn, as they need to hire more casual workers, they are eager to know more about post-harvest handling (sorting, conservation, etc.), and they start gathering information on prices across markets, and the best timing for sale. Crucially, the training of ox-ploughs was conducted by a leading FG, who is explicitly diversifying its activity by acting as service provider (with aims to provide also good transportation services in the future), possibly paving the way to the founding of a cooperative.
- **Yields are increasing.** Preliminary findings show that the farmer groups cultivating larger fields of land in Ikwooto have doubled their yields of Sorghum in 2019 compared to 2018; Equally impressively, one FG of venerable farmers of Torit has planted in the same fields gnuts, in one section using traditional farming practices in the other productive farming practices, observing a 4-time difference.
- **Reproduction and multiplication are taking place at all levels.** Demo plots, possibly thanks to their small size, are being reproduced autonomously by FGs members and, even more remarkably, by non-supported community members. Trained oxen are combined with untrained oxen by the FGs, in an attempt to replicate the training at home. Seeds are being shared with other farmers, and community members are hired to work as casual laborers. FG leaders, are being consulted by community members regarding farming techniques.
- **Access to land and protection is improving remarkably.** Most farmers are reporting that the field of land cultivated in group is located much closer compared to their individual plots, which make them save between 1 and 2 hours of walk. Women and children are respectively the first direct and indirect beneficiary of this, as women are spared from walking alone far away from villages, and it is less likely that young children remain home unguarded.
- **Cost co-participation is well functioning, and viable instances of cost recovery emerges and are being tested.** The fostering of ox-ploughing was designed in a way to solicit a significant financial co-
participation from FGs, whereby AVSI contributes by providing ploughs and trainings, while the beneficiaries provide the oxen. In some cases, FGs had to pull together considerable resources to secure oxen. Due to the strong request of the community, the training of oxen was scaled up, in some cases doubled, compared to the targets initially planned. In return, the community proposed to take up the financial cost and the organization of meal preparation during the 3 weeks of ox training. Finally, most FGs have hired casual workers with their own resources.

- **Risk management, although not always un purpose is occurring.** FGs seems to be using both the seeds received and those produced in a variety of ways, all of which seems to aim at reducing the risks faced by farmers: some seeds were redistributed among FG members who have planted them in different gardens, some of which were spared by the flooding, to later return the seeds to the group; others seeds were shared with the “owner” of the land where the common garden was located, in a bid to minimize chances to be evicted; still others have supplied the community in an attempt to avoid the stealing of vegetables, which is expected to increase during the dry season.

### III. **EMERGING MODEL OF INTERVENTION (AVSI’s FG-LEAD APPROACH)**

Because AVSI implements different FSL projects in Torit and Ikwoto, it was able to compare, in some cases to combine, the so called “agropastoral farming school” (APFS) model and the “lead-farmer” model. Two are the main preliminary results that emerged from this experience: Firstly, both models have their merits and weak points: the APFS model, based on a rather small group gardens (or demo plot), seems easier for FGs and community members to replicate in their individual parcel of land; on the contrary, the second model, by taking advantage of key inputs such as the ox-plough, fosters communal farming and larger scale of production, which necessary pulls together FG members, and push them to deal with the conservation and marketing of crops (eventually processing). Secondly, the most promising results are occurring where the two models get integrated, influencing and reinforcing one another whereby:

i) farmers without experience of communal farming, or accustomed to cultivate very small gardens, are supported with the APFS until they express the desire to open larger fields to cultivate as a group, and thus graduate toward the lead-farmer model – crucially, those farmers are encouraged to make such step by the example and the support and service provided by the most advanced FGs;

ii) farmers with experience of communal farming are supported in cultivating even larger volumes through the provision of key inputs offered “in exchange” for the adoption of more productive farming techniques (small demo plots continue to be promoted with that aim), so as to make financially viable to reach more profitable markets, to sell produce but also to buy cheaper improved tools, opening new commercial route, bringing benefits to the entire value chain.

Moreover, and this is what AVSI is doing particularly in Ikwoto, the most successful FGs are encouraged to provide (initially heavily) subsidized services to support other less advanced FGs, in the production first (ex. training of oxen), in the commercialization later, and eventually in the processing afterward, in a bid to pave the way to the establishment of cooperatives. In this way the two models come together, whereby the APFS model ensures that the smallholders and less established groups of farmers, with no experience of communal farming, are included among the direct beneficiaries of the FSL response, while the development of the most established FGs is made to work also as a pulling factor for the growth of the more vulnerable FGs, and progressively for the entire value chain (this model may be referred to as a mixed approach, graduation model, or lead-FG model). In line with the need to bridge the gap between emergency
and development (nexus), with this model of intervention AVSI intends to obtain within a relatively short period time tangible results on both fronts: the strengthening of the market orientation of the most advanced farmer groups, and improvement of the food security conditions of the most vulnerable farmers.

The impact that this may bring to the farmers of Ikwoto county, which continue to be severely constrained by a poor access to profitable market, are expected to be significant, and will be monitored and reported thoroughly by AVSI in 2020.

FARMER SCHOOL MODEL

**STRENGTHS: direct impact on food security of most vulnerables**
- Intensive continuous production
- Closer to subsistence farmer mode of production (no need of much land, of major inputs other than human power, of previous experience of work in group)
- Easy to replicated by community at large (nearly by mere observation)
- Apt for testing (ex. with new plants)
- Faster direct impact on food security (although may not last long due to risks of downward pressure on prices)

**WEAKNESSES: limited or no improvement of market access (for all)**
- Time/human expensive for IPs
- Limited pull toward working as a group and increasing scale of production
- Not much pressure to deal with conservation, marketing, processing, i.e. does not alter much market access (i.e. limited inflow of fresh cash from other areas / break from poverty traps)
- Limited impact on demand for inputs or post-prod. services (i.e. on value chain)
- Risk of aid fatigue if repeated for long

LEAD FARMER MODEL

**STRENGTHS: improve access to markets (for all) and brings in “fresh cash”**
- Less time/human expensive for IPs
- Large scale fosters the spread of key inputs (ox-ploughs), and makes it viable to invest in means of transport (facilitated by the non-perishability of crops) leading to:
  1) strengthening of the value chain (from hiring of casual workers/ox-ploughs to contracting of post-prod. services) with benefits for all; 2) inflow of fresh cash (break of poverty trap)
- Be aware of complex prices changes and indirect effects (although often positive)

**WEAKNESSES: only indirect support to most vulnerables**
- Not very inclusive of/adapted to pure subsistence farmers
- An increasing share (may not be volume) of production may be sold in other communities (Uganda FS?), with losses for people not engaged in farming sector
- High financial cost per direct beneficiary (capital intensive support)

IV. LESSON LEARNED ON IMPLEMENTATION / TO CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON IN 2020

From the staff. Most of the comments voiced by AVSI FSL staff revolved around the need to:

**Provide continuous feedbacks to FGs through recurrent visits.** The need to provide more consistent support was stressed by AVSI FSL staff repeatedly. As replication and multiplication increase pace, the need for guidance and advice (the constitution of an embryonic extension service) is expected to grow – FGs are increasingly asking AVSI staff to visit individual gardens. Cost recovery, that can be
tested as the demand for advice increases, is still too weak to pay for the expansion of extension services).

**Set very clearly expectations with FGs** is crucial, especially in relation to the type of support that they will receive, for how long, and in return to what contribution from the community. This is even more important with FGs who have been already supported in the past, often with very emergency-oriented interventions, that provided lots of (basic) support, asking and soliciting little contribution from the community.

**Identify best ways to provide a demand-driven through discussion with FGs to, tailored support,** including but not exclusively during the beneficiary identification phase. In particular, together with the FGs, assess more carefully: i) previous experience of farming, and collective farming, including through direct observation of FG members’ individual gardens/plots; ii) the most apt number of farmers to form a FG, taking into account the eventuality of the FG graduation from basic APFS toward support to farm consolidation (lead-farmer); iii) previous experience of support – do not necessarily repeat the exact same support provided previously by other IPs unless it worked; iv) the most appropriate model of intervention (lead farmer vs. APFS – although AVSI’s view is that the demo plot is appropriate even to support more advanced farmers, of the size indicated by the FG; vi) basic inputs most required (ex. the opening of new land by vulnerable farmers may indeed require gumboots rather than just hoes).

**Pay attention to and strengthen FG’s governance** and keep an “organic” reality-based view about groups’ formation and governance (resisting project-targets, mechanistic views). In particular: i) consider the possibility to start supporting FG with a reduced number of members, as a means to encourage self-selection of additional members; ii) scrutiny FGs’ rules regarding penalties or exclusion of members not supporting the group appropriately and align aid modalities.

**Gain a firmer understanding over the quality of seeds,** especially the crop seeds distributed, as they do not seem to be always apt to the local conditions and have shown to be prone to pests and disease – additionally there have been repeated cases of distribution of rotten seeds.

**Continue exploring innovative ways to deal with the challenge posed by the most arid and more livestock-oriented areas of Ikwoto.** While AVSI is supporting with success the FGs located in the rather arid areas (yet farming communities) near the border with Uganda, support provided to the communities of Chahari payam, where livestock herding and cattle raids are common, it has not translated yet in tangible results. Innovative solutions will be tested there in 2020.

**Review and support FGs’ risk mitigation strategies.**

From the beneficiaries. The interviews with the FSL beneficiaries raise the following concerns:

**Share with FGs the need to strive for self-sufficiency/graduation from aid,** especially in relation to the provision of basic inputs, and align activities toward such end. “We will keep producing as long as we will be provided with seeds”, was reported, word by word, by an FG member asked about their plans for the future. It is revealing of a twofold risk: that support is provided by the IP with little consideration for sustainability (the entire production cycle must be strengthen, including the production of seeds, even if the projects include the distribution of seeds); that beneficiaries keep asking the same support, rather than meeting such needs with their own resources and shift their demands for support toward more productive and investment-like aid.
Going forward, AVSI top management is concerned about the risk of interrupting FGs support too early. In particular, FGs are saving resources to pay for greater expenses that their increased scale of cultivation requires (to hire people for weeding for instance, or to rent transportation to bring to the market produce hence sell at higher prices). They are still far (even the most advanced FGs are at least one production cycle away) from having the means to invest in mechanization or processing. In case some of the support were to be phased out, AVSI can try to counterbalance that, at least for a limited time, by leveraging its internal movements across bases to help the transport of produce, granting a still considerable support to FGs.

V. LESSON LEARNED ON PROGRAM DESIGN

The main preliminary lessons for the designers of projects of agricultural farming in the South Sudanese context are summarized in the following, and revolve around the notion of adopting a graduation approach:

Account for replication effects when setting targets for beneficiaries. A genuine graduation approach is first and foremost sensitive to the way the growth of FGs occurs, pushing back to the notion that sees, for instance, the number of FGs and FGs members constant throughout the duration of a project. As underlined even by FG members, it easier to jumpstart an FG with a limited number of members, and later growth by accepting in the group people who self-select themselves. More in general, once the interventions are successful, a number of processes kicks is multiplying a great deal the number of beneficiaries (the hiring of casual laborers spontaneously conducted by FGs, the autonomous replication of demo plots, to the extent that they are followed up by the IP staff, becomes additional beneficiaries reached). Far from being simply an accountability matter, exploiting the process of self-selection of such groups introduces a demand driven element to the group identification, potentially strengthening the soundness of the overall intervention. Timewise, consider that results are slow to materialize at the beginning, but later, thanks to duplication dynamics, they accelerate considerably.

Plan for implementation in batches. A genuine graduation approach is also very much aware that the need of FGs changes as they progress, in particular that the work to support recently established FGs is much more time/human intensive, possibly requiring around one field visit per week, whereas after the first one or two production cycles (around 9 months), FGs’ needs change significantly and remote or targeted support (ex. training of selected FGs leaders) can be considered sufficient. The maximization of limited resources, especially in terms of IPs’ staff, in the projects that extends over 2 years or more, suggest working in batches; given a certain number of recently established FGs that are targeted, half of them are supported the first (this set of FGs will be supported the second year following a less human intense aid modality), and the other half are supported the second year.

Be consistent with a graduation diversified approach. At all times keep distinguishing the two approaches to FG support. While in reality FGs may very well be in an intermediate condition, keep thinking about the existence of two groups of farmers (in particular those with and without direct and sustained experience of group farming) will help to design a sort of support that is not just fit to serve a mixed situation, i.e. only the few FGs that are in an intermediate condition. The most vulnerable, subsistence farmers do need basic items (i.e. gumboots to open new land without risk of hurting him or herself). On the other hand, established FGs needs to receive direct and tangible support to improve their access to market (even transport related).
VI. OUTLOOK OF AVSI FARMER GROUPS QUESTIONNAIRE

Crucially, special attention will be put in investigating key dynamics regarding how replication occurs / knowledge is shared: within FGs, across FGs, among FGs at different stage of development, with other market participants, and between supported FGs and unsupported FGs and community members.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/o3mydxe9y6hbm7k/NEW%20AVSI%20SURVEY.docx?dl=0
ANNEXES

A. INITIAL ASSESMENT OF TARGETED FARMER GROUPS IN IKWOTO

Background

Between March and May of 2019, AVSI conducted a rapid review of the farmer Groups (FGs) targeted for its FSL response in Ikwoto county as a means to establish a minimum baseline. 24 FGs were reviewed. Because two of such FGs were later substituted with other FGs, and because one of such FG is mostly focused on tree farming, the following document reports the main features of 21 FGs target by AVSI for its FSL response in the year 2019 and 2020.

Thanks to the combination and integration of different projects (2 AICS projects, 1 FAO/EU project), AVSI came to adopt an ambitious model of intervention that targets the most established farmers as much as the most vulnerable ones, in a synergic manner. The development of the most established farmers groups, in fact, is encouraged in a way that supports also the growth of the farmer groups composed by smallholders. As an example, the most advanced farmers are strongly encouraged to provide ox-ploughing services to smallholder farmers. In line with the actual needs of farmers, the two model of interventions are also blended with regard to the establishment of small demo plots to review productive agronomics practices, which is done even with the most advanced groups. Following the Nexus approach, that intends to bridge the gap between the emergency and development response, with this model AVSI intends to obtain within a relatively short period time tangible results on both fronts: the strengthening of the market orientation of the most advanced farmer groups, and improvement of the food security conditions of the most vulnerable farmers.

AVSI regards this mixed model as best fitted to deal with the reality of Ikwoto. In fact, in a context of emergency, in the past years the support to FGs, other than agricultural basic inputs, has targeted repeatedly the same FGs, widening the gaps between those and the rest of Ikwoto farmers. Moreover, such more supported FGs tended to be located all near Ugandan, where they sell their produce, providing little relief to the food security conditions of the families of Ikwoto county, or of EES for all that matters. The evidence of this was shown by AVSI in its latest multi-sector household survey of Ikwoto, which reveals that 70% of farmers are in fact vulnerable smallholder farmers (cultivating less than 1 hectare of land, insufficient to meet food security needs) and that farmers working in group or on a common filed of significant size are to be found only near the Ugandan border (Bira and Tseretenia/Lofus) or ikwoto Town.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of HH</th>
<th>Hatire</th>
<th>Imotong</th>
<th>Bira</th>
<th>Isole</th>
<th>Ikwoto Town</th>
<th>Tseretenia</th>
<th>Chahari</th>
<th>Chorokol</th>
<th>Highland communities</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUAL LAND</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and less than 1 Ha.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating also</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMON LAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median size of the common land (Feddans)

|            | 3       | 3       | 6      | 3       | 16      | 10      | 3       | 4       | 5       | 3      |

Main features of the FGs

By reviewing the major characteristics of the 21 FGs, three categories can be distinguished. On one hand 7 “established” FGs show a longer life span as a group, clearly have received more consistently support by NGOs, and focus on crop production, on a medium scale. On the opposite side of the spectrum, another 7 FGs, which can be referred as “vulnerable”, comprise smallholder farmers without experience of group work or engaged merely in vegetable farming at a minute scale. To avoid suggesting a firm separation among the two mentioned groups, a third set of FGs is being identified, characterized for having worked already for some time and as a group but still cultivating a small filed of land. These should be regarded as tendencies, as exact data for any given FGs may reflect some imprecisions. However, overall, it is fair to say that, the FGs targeted by AVSI reflect and represent the different set of FGs located in the different corners of the Ikwoto, that they all had a very poor harvest in 2018, and whose level of productivity remain low across the board (for both established and vulnerable FGs). It will be against this baseline that progress will be measured in early 2020 first, and late 2020 thereafter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification and characteristics of FGs sets</th>
<th>Vulnerable FGs</th>
<th>Intermediate FGs</th>
<th>Established FGs</th>
<th>Average/Total among 21 FGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of FGs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FGs located near the border or Ikwoto Town</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average N° of years working as a group</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FGs cultivating in a ‘common’ field</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FGs recently supported by AVSI or other NGOs</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FGs with experience of ox-ploughing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average N° of Feddans cultivated (if reported &gt;0)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Feddans cultivated by the entire set of FGs</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>104.0</td>
<td>115.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average yields Sorghum in kg for 1 Feddans of land cultivated (2018)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>107.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N° of FGs targeted for additional non-FAO support (AICS1/AICS3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average N° of plant types cultivated (if reported &gt;0)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FGs cultivating vegetables</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below are reported the cultivations put in place by FGs on April 2019 (empty cells show no production of that plant occurred). Reflecting their fear for another year of dry spell, but possibly also their inexperienced agronomic practices, FGs main concerns were related to the drought and pests and diseases. Measuring how this perception changes, along with many other regarding the quality of the demand of support

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2 Still, the size of the land cultivated for these groups, excluding 2 larger FGs, does not surpasses the 3 Ha.
coming from the FGs going forward, hopefully away from emergency types of requests, toward more resilience-oriented objective, is also among the key objectives of the M/E framework put in place by AVSI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tot of Feddans cultivated</th>
<th>Vulnerable FGs</th>
<th>Intermediate FGs</th>
<th>Established FGs</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>104.0</td>
<td>115.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simsim</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow peas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-nuts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeon peas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okra</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collard (sukuma)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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Finally, it is worth mentioning that the FGs were surveyed with regard to their views on the obstacles impeding the South Sudanese returnees to come back, starting from the experience of their family members who are still living in Uganda. 10 FGs have reported having many of their members still living in the refugee camps. 80% of FGs reported that the lack of food security is what concerns the most their relatives, access to education being another, though less important, concern.
B. 2020 M/E REFLECTIONS CALENDAR, ALIGNED WITH PERIODS OF LOW FARMING

January 2020

- Review of the main results emerging from the analysis of all data collected so far: i) rapid survey of 22 FGs of Ikwoto, ii) monthly results of communal land farming during 2019 harvest season (Sept to November) for 14 FG and overall crop stock at early December for 5 FGs, iii) survey of 1-year Ikwoto Town’s market (February, May, August, November), iv) school nutrition survey
- Review of AVSI’s mixed “farming school” and “lead farmer”, graduation approach
- Corroboration of AVSI Farmer Groups Survey with FSL team and testing on the field (Isohe)
- Launch of AVSI Farmer Groups Survey

June 2020

- Review of main results of AVSI Farmer Groups Survey (along with new multi-sector survey?)
- Review of main progress and challenges of the first part of 2020 (first season)
- Focus on lessons learned on Torit FSL activities

Oct 2020?

- TBD

C. LARGER FSL M/E FRAMEWORK

1) AVSI’s Internal M/E Framework
   a. AVSI Farmer Groups survey (focused on FG, plus additional info on community replication)
   b. AVSI Household Multi-sector survey (to monitor and evaluate trends and impact on the entire community)
   c. (forthcoming) Other activity specific survey (such as Alternative Livelihood Activities and Livestock Herder survey)
   d. AVSI Markets survey (focused not only on price in the markets, but also on the origins of marketed produce, and the potential difference between farmers’ prices of sale and consumers’ purchasing price)

2) Project Specific Monitoring required by donors (currently, of particular relevance CIIS)
   a. Daily activity form
   b. …. TBC

3) External Source of Monitoring (for triangulation)
   a. WFP/FAO-led FSNMS (every six months)
   b. Resilience oriented occasional survey funded by donors
   c. PfRR’s surveys?
D. UNDERLINING NOTIONS

There are a couple of notions that underpins much of what is written in this document. The first one is the notion of value chain. In brief, the idea is that by fostering the production of something (ex. cultivation) the demand for the inputs required in that production should increase too (ex. the contracting of someone who provide ox-ploughing services) and the same should occur for the demand of goods or services involved in the sale of what is produced (for instance the renting of a Landcruiser to bring crops from Ikwoto to Kapoeta). Crucially, things can be shaped in a way to leverage such linkages along the value chain to the benefit of the local economy (for instance one does so when opts for giving money to a local provider of services, for instance to someone to open new land with an ox-plough, rather than buying a tractor or hire an Ugandan company, we are definitely doing so, especially if that local service provider is incentivized to reinvest or spend locally the profits obtained.). The notion of value chain has very little to do with that of “added value”, which refers to the fact, for instance, that by processing crops one adds value and thus can make higher profits than by selling raw, unprocessed materials.

The second notion is that of poverty trap, for which there are several causes, but one of this is certainly limited access to (profitable) market. Basically the idea is that people do not produce more than subsistence level simply because there are not people with money who could buy such additional production (or at least not enough people, or at the price that makes it interesting for who is producing). It is a trap because even if one boosts the production with aid (like with FSL projects) the lack of buyers will make sure that, after a while, the only result will be a reduction in prices, reducing even further incentives for production to increase. This is certainly a dynamic that characterize Ikwoto, and that calls for supporting farmers in reaching other more profitable markets (for instance Uganda, Torit, or Kapoeta). In absence of such support, and lacking any program of local purchasing of food to use in the FFE program, by giving direct support to the most advanced farmers we are supporting those who are more likely to reach a volume of operation that permits to rent transportation means and thus actually reach more profitable markets. By making sure that those more advanced farmers are involved in the support to the least advanced FGs we are encouraging them to consider selling not only their production but also that of the other less advanced famers s (bought at a fair price).

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