

SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN SOUTH DARFUR THRIVE IN MICRO IRRIGATION



Story by field staff-Ahmed Adam Omer

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Ahmed Abdalmageed Ibrahim 40 years old is a father of 13 children from three wives. Ahmed is a vegetable farmer in Kuli village, El Salam locality, approximately 40 kilometers west of Nyala the capital of South Darfur State.

Some of his children attend school not too far from the family's home, about half a kilometre away. Ahmed is a beneficiary of the Tadood project funded by UK's Government- Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by World Vision in Sudan's South Darfur region.

The project is implemented in partnership with a national NGO-Great Family Organization (GFO) and technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture and focuses on providing farmers with training on vegetable production through micro irrigation. Irrigation has really changed the face of farming as Ahmed notes.

“We used to only wait until the June-October season to grow the traditional crops i.e. sorghum, millet and groundnuts. Now with irrigation, when we are not growing sorghum, millet and groundnuts because they are out of season, we grow vegetables instead.”

Ahmed is one of the 330 farmers who received support in the form of a small irrigation pump, improved seeds like onion, okra, cucumber and tomato as well as fuel to power the irrigation pump.

Besides the material support, the farmers have been trained on micro irrigation agriculture, a concept Ahmed admits is relatively new to them.

So what has CHANGED?

The father of 13 says, after several trainings held by experts in the community, their mindsets on farming has been transformed.

“In the past we only grew sorghum, millet and groundnuts and the income was very little. But when World Vision started implementing the Tadood project in this village in 2014, we were introduced to other alternative crops to supplement the traditional crops we planted only once a year, Ahmed says”

This aspect of crop production alternation, Ahmed attributes to not only the training that enlightened them to realise irrigation is possible. Ahmed is also a member of his community's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) committee, which consists of four other farmers also supported by the project.

He donated 1.6-acre piece of his land so that the group could dig a well for irrigation activities. Ahmed and his group members have cultivated hot pepper, okra, onions and tomatoes in a four-acre piece of land.

The received improved certified seeds through the project, a departure from the previous use of local seeds that did not yield as much results.

In April of 2017, the group earned 22,800 Sudanese Pounds (£1810) after selling 533 kilogrammes of pepper they had planted in November 2016, £587 from sale of 60 boxes of tomatoes, £1389 from 50 sacs of onions and £2579 from 100 sacs of okra.

In total, the group earned £6365 from the April harvests. The group settled expenses like pesticide, fuel and paid wages for the labour they had hired on credit and then divided the remaining money equally. As at April 2017, the group had £1327 in their savings fund.

“I received £1184 which I spent mostly to pay school fees for my children in school, contributed my portion for replenishing the fuel and seeds for the next planting season.”

Ahmed also purchased **three male goats** from his share.

World Vision is part of a consortium of six international NGOs, led by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), implementing the Transition to Development (Tadood) project in South Darfur.

In Pictures: Women's vegetable group in Talila village, El Salaam locality.



After receiving training on vegetable production through micro-irrigation, 70-year-old Zahara from El Salaam locality said she feels she has gained the requisite skills to produce vegetables throughout the year. Zahara's group also received certified seeds for planting.



Magda helps with harvesting eggplants at the group farm.



Fatma from El Salaam locality in South Darfur comforts her three-year-old Sulatha. She is part of a women group supported by World Vision through funding from DFID to carry out vegetable production through micro irrigation.



Fatma and Magda combine efforts to pack the eggplants in readiness for transportation to the local market. The women have been growing vegetables through micro irrigation and selling at the local market for a good profit.



The women usually hire the services of a local transporter to transport their vegetable produce to the local market. On average, the women earn between £54 and £85 money they spend to take care of their family expenses.



45-year-old Khadija and her grandchild display some of the eggplants harvested from the group farm. The women are pleased that they have been able to diversify their diets and improve their children's nutrition.



Contact

World Vision Sudan

Al-Geraif Gharb, Al Manshia

Block #1 house 10 Khartoum East

P.O Box 15143 Khartoum Sudan

Tel. +2491557779308

www.wvi.org/Sudan