Veterinarians Without Borders
North America

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PROJECT BRIEF:

Edible Insect Farming for Improved Nutrition & Incomes in South Sudan (FIT)

January - October 2022

LOCATION: South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria State (Torit and Magwi) and Jonglei State (Twic East)

OBJECTIVE: To test the hypothesis that insect farming is a practical means of advancing women's economic empowerment while improving food security and livelihoods for marginalized households.

REACH**:** 200 households (approximately 1,200 people)

FUNDING PARTNERS: Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Department of Fund for Innovation & Transformation (FIT)

BACKGROUND:

South Sudan is facing a food security and livelihoods crisis, exacerbated by environmental challenges such as flooding, severe droughts, and the depletion of natural food resources. Traditional food sources, including bush meat and wild animals, have significantly declined, while domestic livestock is rarely slaughtered, as it is considered a prized asset and often serves as a marker of wealth and social status.

To cope with dwindling protein sources, communities in Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei states have turned to harvesting edible insects. However, this practice is largely informal and unstructured, with harvesting typically conducted at night—an activity predominantly undertaken by women and youth. This exposes them to significant risks of gender-based violence and other safety concerns.

In addition, harvesters lack the knowledge and skills required for insect rearing, semi-domestication, and indoor farming, which could significantly increase safety and productivity.

Recognizing these challenges, Veterinarians Without Borders (VWB) leveraged its expertise and success in insect farming projects in Kenya, Uganda, and Southeast Asia, and implemented the FIT project together with local NGO, Basenet.

The FIT project provided a sustainable, innovative solution to improve nutrition, reduce malnutrition, and create new economic opportunities for vulnerable households.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The FIT project was a research initiative aimed at addressing malnutrition and gender-related challenges in South Sudan through the production and marketing of edible insects. The project focused on building the capacity of target groups in insect rearing, production techniques, and the dietary and economic benefits of edible insects.

Activities included training beneficiaries on insect farming and consumption, food preparation, processing for value addition, and business and entrepreneurship skills. Through these efforts, the project supported the creation of sustainable livelihoods while improving nutrition and reducing malnutrition-related diseases among under-five children.

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Key Achievements:

Reached 200 households (1,200 people) across Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei states.

Distributed harvesting equipment and provided training on advanced insect harvesting techniques and value addition methods.

99% of participating households reported earning an average monthly income of $27 from insect sales, compared to a baseline of $8, enabling them to meet daily basic needs.

99% of households reported a reduction in malnutrition-related diseases among children under five, compared to a baseline malnutrition rate of 40%.

100% of participants gained new knowledge on nutrition and the prevention of malnutrition in children.

100% of participants adopted improved harvesting and processing techniques, including frying and sun-drying white ants for better nutrition, taste, consumer acceptability, and shelf life.

For more information about our work in South Sudan or to support similar initiatives, visit www.vwb.org.