

# REACHING THE MARKETS THROUGH COMMUNITY MARKETING COOPERATIVES

## THE CASE OF MOGOS COMMUNITY IN SOUTH SUDAN

Authors: <a href="#">Andrew Emilio</a> , Peter Sorro, <a href="#">Beauty Jiji</a> and <a href="#">Tesfaye Dargie</a>	
Country: <a href="#">SNV Sudan</a>	Portfolio : Kapoeta
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### CHALLENGE

#### Introduction to the Closed Community of Mogos

Mogos is a Toposa pastoral community located in the semi-arid county of Kapoeta East in Southern Sudan. Like most areas in Southern Sudan, it is remote and largely inaccessible to outsiders. The Toposa pastoralists depend on livestock production for their livelihoods. There is an extreme attachment to livestock among the Toposa and practice of selling animals is not common. But even if one desired to sell his animals there is no market in the area. Men and women from Mogos wishing to sell their animals have to walk for three days with their animals in order to reach the nearest livestock market in Kapoeta town. Even so, there is no guarantee that they will find a buyer. On account of the fear and inconvenience of walking another three days back with unsold animals, producers are forced to sell them at throw away prices or at times barter animals in exchange for food or clothes in Kapoeta town. This was the situation in Mogos before SNV Sudan in collaboration with a local capacity builder, Greater Kapoeta Cooperatives Development Agency, started working with Mogos Community to establish a livestock marketing cooperative in 2008.

### PARTNER

**Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency** is a local organisation that works with communities and farmers in promoting the livestock production and marketing in order to expand economic opportunities for poor pastoral households in Eastern Equatoria. Greater Kapoeta Cooperatives Development Agency has been at the forefront of developing primary livestock cooperative at community level.

### SNV METHOD

#### Role of SNV

1. **Building the capacity of Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency to enable them mobilise and train communities on the cooperative movement** - SNV supported the Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency to develop cooperative training materials, undertake community mobilisations and train communities on cooperative formation and membership development. Agency then worked with the Mogos community to mobilise people and register initial members for the Mogos cooperative
2. **Market research and establishing initial market linkages** – SNV undertook an initial market research to understand livestock marketing trends and challenges in Eastern Equatoria. The results of this research informed the marketing strategy that has been adopted by the Mogos cooperative. The research also identified potential markets and informed the initial contacts and linkages with potential buyers in Torit and Juba.
3. **Developing a local marketing strategy to increase access to markets** – SNV worked jointly with the Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency and the Mogos Cooperative leadership to assess the nature of problem facing the producers and came up with the idea of building capacity of local sales agents. These sales agents have largely improved the ease with which producers can now sell their animals.

4. **Supporting governance development and registration of primary cooperative** – SNV has worked with Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency to ensure that Mogos Cooperative has a strong and accountable leadership. The cooperative has now been registered by the government and is now a legal entity able to transact under its own name.
5. **SNV supported the cooperative members to participate at the State Farmers' Day organised by the State Ministry of Agriculture in Torit town** - This was an eye-opener for pastoralists from Mogos to see for themselves the value of their livestock. The Farmers' Day also provided an opportunity for the producers to meet with the real buyers and consumers.

#### SNV's add value

**Innovative marketing strategy** through capacity building of local sales agents – SNV suggested the use of local sales agents to interface between the producers and the buyers. The sales agents are able to sell large number of animals on behalf of producers. This has not only made it easier for producers to market their livestock, but has also improved prices for producers.

**Identifying and supporting Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency to establish market linkages in Torit and Juba towns** – Through its networks in Torit and Juba, SNV provided markets leads that have enabled linkages between the cooperative and regular buyers of livestock and livestock products.

#### OUTCOME

- Following a period of cooperative education and membership mobilisation campaign by Greater Kapoeta Cooperative Development Agency, there was a **surge in the membership of the newly formed Mogos Cooperative**. For instance within a period of less than eight months, the cooperative membership went up by over 26% from **116** (86 males and 30 females) to **157** (111 males and 46 females). Women, who usually control the sale of small livestock like sheep and goats, have been the most enthusiastic members of the group as they make up nearly 30% of all members of the cooperative.
- The appointment and training of sales agents by the cooperatives **created a ready local market for livestock** especially for the women who can now sell their animals locally through these sales agents. Community members are now motivated to join the cooperatives because livestock marketing is becoming easier and they can negotiate prices with their own trusted sales agents. For example, one of the sales agents from Mogos was given about 40 animals by the farmers to sell in Kapoeta on their behalf without cash upfront. This goes to show the mindset shift within the pastoralists' communities of Mogos.
- The Mogos cooperative is now **supporting about 6500 livestock producers** as a result of the cooperative campaigns and education facilitated by Greater Kapoeta Cooperatives Development Agency. The cooperative is now able to finance its own operations with minimal external support.
- The cooperative society has **established links with livestock buyers in Kapoeta, Torit and Juba towns**. The people of Mogos were able to sell more than **403 animals** through the cooperative between December 2008 and May 2009, generating about € 1900. **More than 3204 litres of milk** were also sold during the same period, bringing badly needed income to women who mostly handle the milk trade. The cooperative has established a livestock holding ground that will enhance quality of livestock sold to markets.
- Apart from providing sales outlets for their livestock and livestock products, the cooperatives **now employ about 10 people**.

## LESSONS LEARNED



Pastoralists believe in seeing results before they can commit to an action. They will also adopt approaches that are not too different from their normal practices more easily. In the case of Mogos cooperative, the producers quickly embraced the use of sales agents because they could readily relate to fact that the agents are people who live with

them and have been appointed with their consent to trade on their behalf. The fact that the sales agents are able to bring back more money than the producers were earning before has contributed to the increase in membership of the cooperative. Actions with quick wins are a sure way of encouraging and sustaining actions.

There is growing awareness among producers in Mogos of the role of government. Pastoralists are now demanding animal health services from the Directorate of Animal Resources and have petitioned government to open a nearby market and to open up road network to the region. These are signs of empowerment of a community previously believed to be hostile to selling its livestock.