

**BAR KOBALA BASELINE SURVEY**  
Bondo District

30<sup>th</sup> November – 16<sup>th</sup> December

**2008**



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The baseline survey was conducted between 29<sup>th</sup> November - 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008 with the objective to follow up on the activities of the Bar Kobala women's group by determining the successes and the constraints faced by them. A questionnaire was adopted for the survey to get in-depth information on four major areas and the questionnaire was administered on a one-on-one basis.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Bar Kobala women's group, was formulated based on a program for reclaiming women's land rights, empowerment promotion, creating wealth and ending poverty at a household level. Bar Kobala women's group, has a total number of 37 registered members.

The women group resolved to embark on specific economic activities after attending a training workshop, which was held in Kisumu from 4th -5th August 2008. The activities deliberated on by the group were; reclaiming land and enhancing food production through farming all the land, buying and selling of seeds and grains, building Posho-Mills, capacity enhancement and exchange visits.

The baseline survey, which was conducted on 29th November -16th December 2008, was seeking to make a follow up on these activities by trying to determine the successes and the constraints faced by the women group. A questionnaire was adopted for the survey to obtain in-depth information on four major areas and the questionnaire was to be administered on a one-on-one basis.

The following broad segments were categorised:-

1. Household identification and composition
2. Information on livelihoods
3. Access to land, services and technology use
4. Group activities

## 2.0 HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

### 2.1 Age

The survey revealed that the ages of the household heads ranged between 30years to 90years.

*Table 1: Household heads and age range.*

Household	Years (30-90 years)
7	30-39 yrs
6	40-49 yrs
8	50-59yrs
5	60-69yrs
4	70-79yrs
1	90yrs

Source: survey data November-December 2008

### 2.2 Head of Household

According to the survey, men, except for cases where the woman was widowed therefore automatically becoming the head of the household, head most of the households. Out of the thirty-five households covered by the survey, men were heading twenty-three of them. Women following the deaths of their spouses were heading the remaining twelve households.

### 2.3 Education level of household heads

The survey revealed that out of the 35 household heads: 1 never had any formal education; 13 attended primary level of education but had to drop out due to lack of finances; 12 managed to complete primary level of education; 5 attended school up to secondary level but dropped out before finishing; 1 completed secondary level; and 4 proceeded higher studies i.e. colleges and university.

## 2.4 Main Occupation

Subsistence farming is the main occupation for most household heads. The other occupations are entrepreneurship, teaching, taxi driving, masonry, carpentry, electrification and tailoring.

Table 2: Number of people in household

Household	Under 15years	Household	15-34years
1	9 members	1	6 adults
2	8 children	1	5 Adults
4	7 children	3	4 Adults
2	6 children	6	3 Adults
2	5 children	17	2 adults
4	4 children	6	1 adult
8	3 children	1	No children
7	2 children		
2	1 child each		
3	None under 15years		

Source: survey data November-December 2008

**2.5 Above 60 years of age:** Those who fell under this category were mainly the respondents who had attained the age of 60 and their living spouses.

## 3.0 OWNERSHIP OF LAND

### ***3.1 Land ownership***

The survey revealed that land was mainly owned by men. Traditionally, the men inherit land from their fathers. In cases whereby there are many sons in the home, the land is divided amongst the accordingly. Traditionally, women do not inherit land from their fathers in the region. They are apportioned land to cultivate by virtue of being married in that family. However, there are a few instances whereby a woman may have the land to her name. This happens when the woman is widowed, thereby leaving her to inherit her husband's portion of land. The other instance is when she buys land away from her matrimonial home.

According to the survey, only eight respondents own land with title deeds to their names. Eighteen respondents said that they own land through their husbands and late husbands. Eight respondents were relying on family land, meaning that even the land cultivated belonged to their fathers-in-law. In such circumstances, there was not a definite division of land amongst the male members of the family. One respondent was relying on land that belongs to her son.

Most respondents claimed that they had no knowledge of the title deeds since their husbands do not discuss land issues with them. Even in cases whereby a woman is widowed, it is unlikely that she will have a title deed to her name because most of the land bear the name of their fathers-in-law. Interestingly, though land is virtually owned by the men, the survey revealed that the management of the farms was entirely for the women. The women determine what type of crops to be grown. They are also responsible for collecting farm sales from the buyers and they are the ones that control how the proceeds from the farms are used.

## 4.0 FARM ACTIVITIES

### **4.1 Livestock and Chicken Rearing**

The farmers mainly keep animals such as cows, goats and sheep. These livestock mainly belong to the men except in cases whereby the woman is widowed. Livestock is mainly kept to help the farmers in ploughing thus hardly sold. They can only be sold when there is a dire need for money. Chicken keeping is common but done in a small scale. The chicken is raised mainly to supplement the incomes from farming.

### **4.2 Types of Crops**

Farming is the main source of income. The crops mainly grown by the farmers due to their performance in the region include Maize, Beans, Sweet potatoes, Cassava, Millet, Sorghum, Groundnuts, Green grams (Dengu), Soya beans, Vegetables e.g.(Sukuma wiki, Kunde, Osuga, Cow peas, Mto) Fruits ( Mangoes, Pawpaw, Bananas, Avocado and Guavas). Maize, beans, sweet potatoes and cassava are grown all the year round (Opon and Chir). The other crops are seasonal.

### **4.3 Crop Production**

Most of the crops grown by the farmers are used for household consumption and the rest sold in the markets. The production of the crops varies greatly from one farmer to the other mainly because of the differences in the sizes of the farms. The farms range between 0.71 acres to 10 acres. The major crops are maize, beans, sweet potatoes and cassava. In a year, maize production ranges from as little as 5 sacks to as much as 60 sacks. Beans produced in a year ranges from as little as 10kg (5-goro goro) up to 15 sacks. Sweet potatoes are the third mainly grown food crop in the region and is not very easy to quantify in terms of sacks produced given that it is mainly used for household consumptions and a few taken to the markets.

### **4.4 Cultivation**

There was a significant correlation between the year the respondents started farming and the years after marriage. Notably, the exception was the few cases where the respondents were leaving away from their homes as they sought work in the urban areas. The years ranged between as early as 1953 up to as recent as 2008 with their respondents .In 1953-1958 (5), 1961-1969 (3), 1970-1979 (9), 1980-1989 (2), 1990-1999 (7), 2000-2008 (9).

### **4.5 Market**

The markets nearest to the respondents were namely, Ajigo, Bondo, Ndira, Manyuanda, Nyakongo and Ugunja. Ajigo market had 20 out of 35 respondents using it as their nearest market. The distance to the market ranged from 1/2km to 4kms, depending on where the homestead is situated. Bondo market was the second nearest market visited, with 7 respondents using it as their nearest market. The distance ranged from 2.5kms to 4.5kms. Ndira market had 5 respondents as their nearest market distance ranging between 0.5km to 2kms. Manyuanda, Nyakongo and Ugunja markets had 1 respondent each with the distances being 1.5kms, 2kms and 2.5kms respectively.

#### 4.6 Size of farms

The farms ranged between 0.5 acres to 10 acres with each respondent with the specified number of acres

Table 2: Acres and ownership

Acres	Respondents
10	1
6.5	1
6	1
4	1
3	9
2.5	1
1.5	1
1	7
3/4	1
0.71	1
Not specified	2

Source: survey data, November-December 2008

#### 4.7 Problems faced in farming

The major problems that were cited by the farmers according to the survey were:

- *Delay or lack of rainfall:* Sometimes the rains fail to come at the anticipated time, causing a lot of despair amongst the farmers because the crops are destroyed. There are other times that rainfall is very absent, causing a lot of hunger in the region.
- *Infertility of land:* Most of the farms are infertile because they have been used over the years without a break. Therefore, as much as the farmers try their best, the production of the food crops is usually low.
- *Lack of seeds/high costs of seeds:* Sometimes the farmers lack seeds because of the dry seasons with little or no rains at all meaning that either the crops dry up or they are too little to cater for seeds since the farmers mainly rely on the seeds from their farms.

- *Affordability of fertilizers:* The prices of fertilizer are too costly for most of the farmers leaving them with no options but to farm without them. The local, cheaper form of fertilizer, 'mbolea', which is produced from animal waste, is not easily available as well because most of the farmers do not own many livestock.
- *Weeds:* there is a common weed called 'hayongo' that destroys crops at a high rate. The farmers usually do not know how to effectively deal with it before it destroys the crops.
- *Poor quality of seeds:* When the crops perform poorly, the seeds are bound to be of poor quality.
- *Pests:* Some insects and worms destroy the crops. Most farmers cannot afford insecticides.

#### **4.8 Other Problems**

The survey also revealed that besides the general problems faced, there were other problems that were individual based. These were:

- *Lack of finances:* Some farmers do have financial constraints hence they may not be able to prepare their farms and plant crops on time for the rains. They are also unable to pay for those who can plough the farms.
- *Animal destruction of farms:* There are those farms that are not well fenced therefore, grazing animals easily find their ways into them, destroying and eating the crops. Some areas also have many monkeys, birds and squirrels that destroy the crops.
- *Lack of cows to plough:* Some of the farmers do not own cows therefore; they rely on those that are hired. This can be very unreliable because they are not readily available on time due to their high demand.
- *Lack of tools:* Not all the farmers have farming tools. Either the tools are too old and few for the farming or they are simply not there. In this case the farmer is left with no option but to wait and borrow from the other farmers once they are through with their farms
- *Lack of labour:* Sometimes a farmer may not be in a position to work on his farm due to ill health, making them rely on outside labour. They are unable to afford the hiring of the farm labourers due to their exorbitant rates.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL SERVICES RECORDED

### **5.1 Loans**

The baseline survey revealed that the farmers mainly rely on the money from their farm sales for their farming activities. Most of them are very reluctant to apply for loans from any financial institutions due to their low-income status; with 19 out of 35, respondents earning less than 5000 Kshs per month. 12 respondents earn 5,001-10,000 Kshs per month, 3 respondents earn 10,001-20,000 Kshs per month and 1 respondent earns 20,001-30,000 Kshs per month.

Out of the 35 respondents, only 8 of them managed to apply and receive loans in the past five years, with the major source of finance being Kenya Women Finance Trust, followed by merry go round and Upendo Women Group.

The amounts loaned ranged from 500Ksh- 100,000Ksh.

The loans received by the respondents were put on various uses depending on the individual needs and priorities. The main uses recorded were:

- i) Farm inputs
- ii) Crop growing
- iii) Businesses
- iv) Paying of school fees
- v) Buying of livestock
- vi) Buying building equipments

### **5.2 Opening of a Bank Account**

Bar Kobala women group decided that it was very important to have a bank account, in order for them to excel in their businesses. They therefore agreed in a meeting that each member should contribute 1000Ksh each towards this realization. They opened an account with Equity bank in Bondo town. This account will be maintained through banking of the monies received from the group's business activities such as selling of crops. This will facilitate access to loans which in turn will facilitate businesses by the group

## 6.0 SALES

### **6.1 Maize**

Bar Kobala women's group, was financed by CLEAR in October 2008 and the group bought 80 sacks of maize. The maize was kept for a while waiting for an opportune time when the prices go high. It was later sold to various buyers. The profit gained is to be used for more maize selling business; some amount should be banked, while each member received a total amount of 1,300Ksh.

### **6.2 Beans**

The group members contributed 4kg of beans (2-goro goro) each from their farms and this was sold to various buyers. The sales brought a profit of 6,000Ksh. The money was then banked.

### **6.3 Growing of Pepper**

The survey has shown that Bar Kobala women group has embarked on growing of red pepper. Nyanza Farmers Limited officials visited the group as promised and they were educated on how to plant the red pepper by demonstrations on a specific farm. The group has a joint 1 acre farm of pepper which has left the seed bed and is already growing in the farm. The group members also have their individual pepper farms.

Once the pepper is ready for reaping, the Nyanza Farmers Limited officials have a ready market for them and the farmers will be given their cheques depending on the amount of kilograms. The group's pepper farm gains will then be used for developing the business and the rest banked.

## 7.0 CHALLENGES

### ***7.1 Changes that have been seen by respondents***

The baseline survey established that the respondents had noted many changes in their lives since joining Bar Kobala women Group. The changes recorded include the following:

All respondents agreed that they had gained so much knowledge that they had never known before on business, including the following:-

- They all said that the group had also given them a lot of exposure thereby changing their attitude towards life in general.
- They have learnt to network with other women from different regions.
- They have gained exposure by having the opportunity to travel to Uganda, which most of them had never imagined that they would reach.
- They are more enlightened on farming issues therefore, they are more confident to share and teach others that do not have the knowledge.
- The money they receive while attending the workshops has enabled them to buy personal things that they have not been able to buy due to scarcity of money.
- They can now run their businesses in a more efficient way through keeping records of money spent, profits and losses.

### ***7.2 Problems faced within and outside the group***

According to the survey, most respondents felt that the major problems facing them as a group were:

- a) Lack of finances to facilitate the desired business activities
- b) Most of the group members are in poor health and therefore may not be in a position to contribute towards the development of the group.
- c) The demands and responsibilities of the individual group members act as a hindrance to their commitment to the group.
- d) Shortages of rainfall have derailed the farming of crops and pepper.
- e) Lack of transportation means of their food crops to the various markets.
- f) Lack of storage facilities for the crops
- g) Markets for the farm products not readily available
- h) Delay of selling their crops due to low prices in the markets.
- i) Lack of farming tools

**7.3 The other problems that were cited by the respondents as affecting the group and needed to be addressed were as follows:**

*Punctuality:* Most members of the group fail to come in on time for the meetings and other group activities as agreed.

*Attendance:* Some of the members of the group do not give prior notice to their absence of the meetings, thereby causing lack of quorum.

*Commitment:* There are those members of the group that lack commitment. Whenever there is work to be done by the group and they are alerted in good time, some members choose not to show up. Others tend to come for meetings when they learn of upcoming seminars/workshops.

*Entitlement to allowances:* Some members felt that those members who may fail to attend workshops/seminars with genuine reasons should be entitled to allowances given to those in attendance.

*Collective responsibility:* All members felt that once they sit and pass resolutions as a group, members must oblige to those rules instead of some others back trucking and thereby causing many conflicts within. The proceedings of the meetings must be kept within the group instead of other members discussing them with non-members.

*Misconception over the chief goals of the group:* Some members of the group do not seem to understand the goals of the group, believing that it is a means of acquiring loans and other financial gains without hard work.

*Respect:* It was also noted by a number of members that some of them lacked respect for one another. They maintained that respect for one another was a key aspect to the success of the group.

*Gossip:* Some members noted that some of them indulged in cheap gossip, which was detrimental to the growth of the group.

*Financial recordings:* Some members of the group were of the view that the treasurer needed to be more transparent and should be giving the members a detailed account on a more regular base.

*Rules and regulations:* All members must follow the rules and regulations to the letter. Failure to do so should warrant a disciplinary measure.

*Lack of teamwork:* There is lack of the spirit of working together as a group. Some members have an attitude that some members should work more than the others do.

*Participation:* Some members attend meetings but fail to participate in any debates; therefore, their input towards the development of the group is not felt.