



Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme Newsletter

2nd Quarter 2021 – Issue #2



Building food system resilience in protracted crises



Strengthening value chains for resilient livelihoods

On behalf of FAO, I am happy to present the second edition of the Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme (FNS-REPRO) newsletter. It brings you stories from the field, updates on recent events and project activities, media publications and background information related to this unique programme implemented by FAO and the Wageningen University & Research (WUR) in Somaliland, South Sudan and the Sudan.

The importance of the work of FNS-REPRO is underlined by the 2021 Global Report on Food Crises, which highlights the remarkably high severity and number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), driven by persistent conflict, pre-existing and COVID-19-related economic shocks, and weather extremes. The number is the highest in the report's

five-year existence. Unfortunately, FNS-REPRO's target countries are showing similar trends.

In 2020, nearly 75 percent of East Africa's 33 million people in Crisis or worse were in Ethiopia, South Sudan and the Sudan, with more than 9.5 million people internally displaced. In the IGAD region alone, there were more than 3.5 million children under 5 suffering from wasting. Enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable, even in complex and fragile environments, is key to reducing food insecurity and strengthening livelihoods.

Through building food system resilience in protracted crises, FNS-REPRO demonstrates that there can be better prospects for the most vulnerable even in a global context of increasing food insecurity. In this edition, we illustrate emerging progress towards building resilient livelihoods and food systems, and contributions to sustainable localized peace throughout our target areas.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Rein Paulsen

Director

FAO Office for Emergencies and Resilience

HIGHLIGHTS

- FNS-REPRO in 2021
- Learning Agenda and adaptive programming update
- Somaliland: Ahmed transforms traditional practices to keep cattle healthy during droughts
- South Sudan: Supporting public-private partnerships in sustainable foundation seed production
- The Sudan: Contributing to sustainable peace in North and East Darfur
- Steering committees: update on the third GPSC

FNS-REPRO in 2021



Pastoralist receives certified grass seeds for fodder production

To build resilient livelihoods and food systems and enable the programme to contribute to sustainable localized peace, FNS-REPRO is currently focusing on a few key strategic priorities.

These include:

Geographic scale up and reaching more beneficiaries

Across the programme, FNS-REPRO is increasing its reach and number of beneficiaries: thereby strengthening the selected value chains and enhancing the production of fodder, quality seeds and premium gum arabic. In South Sudan, FNS-REPRO will focus on expanding to new geographic areas. These will represent typical situations for protracted crises contexts, extending the programme's focus past hubs of stability, to areas characterized by recurrent conflict, displacement and return, cross-border contexts (including return management) and areas impacted by climate change. The programme ensures that all the major agro-ecologies are covered so as to maximize learning across regions and countries.

Enhancing partnerships with the private sector

A critical aspect for the success of FNS-REPRO is to guarantee a stable and reliable market for small-scale producers engaged in the selected value chains. FNS-REPRO intends to strengthen its partnerships with the private sector to close the supply/demand gap by contributing to the development of sustainable and fair value chains in areas characterized by protracted crises. This can take the form of supporting fair-trade contract farming agreements, building the capacity of smallholder farmers and cooperatives to produce reliably and at premium quality, supporting innovation and advocating for

private sector investment in FNS-REPRO value chains, among others.

An example is the partnership being formulated between FAO and Fair Factory for Manufacturing & Packing Gum Arabic (FOGA), a Dutch-Sudanese enterprise which sells fair and organic gum Arabic

Strengthening conflict sensitive programming and implementation along the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus

In many implementation areas, conflict is deep-rooted, and communities suffer from a lack of trust caused by years of protracted crisis. It is essential for FNS-REPRO to build trust while adopting a longer-term approach that looks at building capacities of communities on inclusive conflict prevention mechanisms. FNS-REPRO engages strategic local partners with expertise in peacebuilding and human security programme delivery.

With these partners, FNS-REPRO is working to:

- Enhance the peacebuilding and conflict resolution capacity of community-based mechanisms and local governance structures.
- Promote women's role and bridge the generation gap between elders and youth.
- Strengthen capacity and skills of traditional leaders and improve their engagement with local authorities.

Strengthening the linkages with and contributions to the Global Network Against Food Crisis (GNAFC)

The FNS-REPRO intervention strategy has been deliberately aligned with the GNAFC. This enables the programme to contribute to the Network's efforts to move beyond evidence, towards more coherent coordinated strategic investments across the HDP nexus.

FNS-REPRO contributes to the GNAFC by:

- **Understanding food crises** – Generating evidence-based information and analysis.
- **Strategic investment in food security and nutrition** – Leveraging strategic investments to prepare, prevent and respond to food crises.
- **Going beyond food** – Fostering political uptake and functional coordination across clusters and sectors to address other dimensions driving the food security crisis scenarios.

Learning agenda and adaptive programming update



At the conclusion of the adaptive programming event for Somaliland

FNS-REPRO's adaptive programming and implementation approach means that it can (purposefully!) change over time to improve how the programme fits with day-to-day and longer-term realities faced by communities on the ground. Given the complex contexts in the target areas, there is a need to be able to adapt to changes that affect beneficiaries to the FNS-REPRO outcomes and objectives. To enable this, FAO and WUR co-designed a programme-specific adaptive programming cycle, which considers the necessary processes, events, and donor requirements to make FNS-REPRO sufficiently flexible and adaptive.

The bulk of the learning and adaptive programming activities happen between May and September annually, through WUR-led country-based sense-making events. This year's events generated key insights and suggestions for improving the new annual plan based on FNS-REPRO generated information and studies. By August 2021, each country had a Community of Practice (CoP) established and managed in partnership with respective local universities and WUR's learning agenda focal points.

In addition, sense-making and annual review & planning meetings were held. These events answer, "why and what" needs to change in the next implementation cycle, and "how" FNS-REPRO will do that. By doing so, the programme can consolidate lessons learned, identify relevant priorities, and make changes to enable FNS-REPRO to become more effective, efficient, and relevant for its beneficiaries. These inputs will be incorporated and reflected in the revised Annual Plan (October 2021–September 2022), currently under development.

The Learning Agenda has produced several key knowledge products in the form of three food and seed system resilience assessment conceptual frameworks and a learning journey toolbox (for CoPs).

In addition, FAO, WUR and the Netherlands Food Partnership have jointly submitted FNS-REPRO related "game-changing solutions" to the *Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress*. The submission has been selected and the three teams have been invited to join the "Fighting Food Crises Along the Humanitarian- Development-Peace Nexus Coalition", coordinated by FAO, WFP and SIPRI.

Somaliland

Ahmed transforms traditional practices to keep cattle healthy during drought



FAO Representative in Somalia meets community members

Ahmed Warsame Ismail, 68 years old, lives in Lafweyne village (Hudun district, Sool region) – a village an estimated population of 2 500 households, who are predominantly pastoral communities. Ahmed and his wife Tusmo Abdulahi Ismail participated in the FNS-REPRO meetings and training held in the village.

He told our partners, "I am a father with three children. We have been rearing animals for a long time and I had no idea about natural resource management, especially fodder production," he added. "As nomadic pastoralists we keep moving with our livestock from one place to another in search of pasture and water for our livestock. This has helped me to change my mind and to get an idea about how to produce fodder which will enable me to feed my animals during the drought seasons. I'm glad this project has changed my way of thinking."

In April 2021, FAO Representative in Somalia, Etienne Peterschmitt visited FNS-REPRO project sites. FAO teams met with officials from the government and implementing partners in Erigavo, Sanaag region. FAO's commitment to partnering with the government led to discussions with the Governor of Sanaag Region on how to strengthen the relationship between FAO and local authorities through

the FNS-REPRO project. Meetings were also held with the Ministry of Livestock and Fishery Development.

Additionally, the teams visited implementing partners, Sanaag University and Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO) to receive updates and check on the progress made. Over the next few years, the project is targeting 20 000 households in Somaliland Sanaag and Sool regions.

South Sudan

Supporting public-private partnerships in sustainable foundation seed production



Maize (Longe-5) Foundation seed production in Yambio by Pro-Seed

Quality seed is an important catalyst for agricultural development. The availability of good quality Early Generation Seed, such as breeder and foundation seed, ensures that characteristics including purity, germination, vigour and yielding abilities are maintained in the varieties made available to farmers.

Currently, South Sudan lacks good quality foundation seed of key staple crop varieties like maize, sorghum, rice, beans, cassava, groundnuts and cowpeas, resulting in low volumes of certified and Quality Declared Seed, and consequent low yields. Additionally, the extensive use of recycled or saved seeds has contributed to widespread food insecurity in the country.

To support the establishment of sustainable public-private models for the effective supply of quality foundation crop seeds, including maize, sorghum and cowpea, in South Sudan, FNS-REPRO is supporting and encouraging partnerships between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and private seed companies and cooperatives. FAO is working to establish a strong and efficient seed sector to ensure resilient and sustainable food systems in South Sudan. Effective public-private partnerships in Early

Generation Seed production are paramount to encourage an adequate supply of quality foundation seed required to satisfy the needs for certified Quality Declared Seed production by private seed companies and out-growers.

The Sudan

Contributing to sustainable peace in North and East Darfur

Premised on the need to contribute to sustainable localized peace, FNS-REPRO pays keen attention to the local context and communities' needs to contribute more effectively towards addressing the drivers of resource-based conflicts. Water-related conflicts, land disputes, especially between farmers and pastoralists, and other socio-political issues are some of the key drivers of tensions, disputes and conflicts in North and East Darfur states.

The direct and/or indirect negative impacts of these drivers on food systems could potentially undermine the attainment of FNS-REPRO objectives and perpetuate a cycle of food insecurity and malnutrition. As a result, several interventions are being undertaken to enhance the programme's contributions to local peace. These interventions include, among others, capacity development initiatives, facilitation of inclusive processes at community level and provision of services to ensure increased availability of resources.



Local administrators participate in the conflict resolution training

In May 2021, 13 local administrative leaders from North Darfur state were trained in conflict resolution by the University of El Fasher's Peace Institute in collaboration with the FAO team. Additionally, from 2 to 4 August 2021, a conflict sensitivity training using FAO's Programme Clinic approach was held for 17 participants comprising FAO personnel and implementing partners from North and East Darfur states. The conflict resolution training improved capacity for more effective engagement in the management

of resource-based conflicts while deliberations during the Programme Clinic led to the development of recommendations for conflict-sensitive programming. At community level, natural resource management and peacebuilding committees have been established to support community-level peace processes.

These committees are also being supported to develop peacebuilding consultative frameworks. Furthermore, water yards are being rehabilitated with the aim of reducing scarcity and associated disputes. So far, three dialogues have been held to find lasting solutions to farmer-herder conflicts in Eyal Amin, Gabir (Tiawesha locality) and Brouch (Ummkadada locality), and the demarcation of livestock routes is ongoing. These interventions have improved prospects for collaboration and natural resource sharing for more resilient livelihoods in North and East Darfur.

Steering committees: update on the third GPSC

The third meeting of the Global Programme Steering Committee (GPSC) was held virtually on 10 June 2021, attended by representatives from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FAO, WUR and representatives of national governments from the ministry responsible for the programme activities. Considering the outcomes and recommendations from the national level steering committees (held in April and May 2021), FAO Representatives from all target countries presented the programme's milestones, key issues and trends related to the implementation context and priorities for the coming months.

Links with other relevant programmes supported by the Netherlands (i.e., A3-SEED in South Sudan and the NUFFIC programmes) were highlighted, as well as other donor-funded initiatives in all three countries. Other elements discussed included private sector collaboration, update on conflict situation in target areas and FNS-REPRO's contribution to the UN Food Systems Summit Action Track 5.

The GPSC concluded that currently there is no need for a major realignment of the programme. The programme is on track after some earlier delays, mostly due to COVID-19 and resulting restrictions and challenges, however it is getting up to speed.

Lastly, the GPSC reiterated the importance and opportunities for FNS-REPRO to contribute to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2417, the HDP nexus, the Food Systems Summit, as well as the Global Network Against Food Crises.

FNS-REPRO – useful links

- FNS-REPRO newsletter: 1st Quarter 2021 – Issue #1 (www.fao.org/3/cb4385en/cb4385en.pdf)
- 2021 Global Report on Food Crises (www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC%202021%20050521%20med.pdf)
- Adaptive programming workshop in Somalia (<https://twitter.com/FAOSomalia/status/1418202528710230027>)
- The third GPSC on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/FAOemergencies/status/1403002369072263177?s=20>)
- FAO Resilience Analysis Report – the Sudan (www.fao.org/3/cb5199en/cb5199en.pdf)
- Multidimensional context analysis in South Sudan (www.fao.org/3/cb5275en/cb5275en.pdf)
- A learning journey guide for building food system resilience in protracted crises to improve food and nutrition outcomes (<https://edepot.wur.nl/543733>)
- Food-Gum Arabic system resilience assessment and facilitation tool (<https://edepot.wur.nl/548787>)
- Seed system resilience assessment and facilitation tool (<https://edepot.wur.nl/528796>)
- Food-fodder system resilience assessment and facilitation tool (<https://edepot.wur.nl/544801>)
- Building food system resilience and supporting sustainable peace – A story from Somaliland (www.interpeace.org/2021/05/food-system-resilience)

Funded by



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

Implemented in partnership with



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