

Summary of lessons from the Partnership Case Study

SWISSCONTACT AND BIRYA INC.

Boosting incomes for farmers in the dried beans supply chain Nakivale, Isingiro



The collaboration between Swisscontact (market facilitator) and Biryia United Agencies Ltd (private sector actor) within the USAID-funded Uthabiti Activity aimed to tackle systemic challenges in the dried beans supply chain of the Nakivale settlement. Leveraging Biryia's processing expertise and investment, the partnership devised an inclusive business model centred on skills enhancement, input provision, and trade network enhancement. The primary goal was to boost incomes for farmers and agents involved in the dried bean supply chain.

This summary presents key insights from a learning activity conducted in March 2024, featuring focus group discussions (FGDs) with refugee and host community members, as well as interviews with Swisscontact and Biryia representatives. **The findings showcase the partnership's emerging achievements in improving livelihoods and household wellbeing.**

Emerging successes from the partnership

This learning activity revealed that the collaboration between Swisscontact and Biryia enhanced access to market linkages for both refugee and host communities.

Key insights from this partnership include:



Expanding livelihoods through market links

Continuous learning and access to markets boosted the capabilities of refugee and host-community households, leading to better business practices and higher incomes.



Improving household wellbeing through market links

Improved market connections raised household living standards, enabling families to afford schooling, diversify diets, and achieve better health outcomes.

“ They [Biryia] give good training that makes a transformation in the business, and now we are focused and seeing a lot in front, because we are getting extensive knowledge from different people, and we are getting awareness of how to do their business. **”**



Improved knowledge and negotiating power

Business knowledge enabled participants to secure fair prices, overcome exploitation by middlemen, and improve household incomes.



Increasing community wellness

Greater business participation reduced household stress and community conflicts, while also lowering GBV and alcohol use through engagement in productive activities.

Key factors that made this partnership a success



Close collaboration and localised presence

Close collaboration was attributed to the partnership's ability to respond and tailor services to the unique needs of those in settlements.



Effectiveness of the model and sustainability

The creation of market links resulted in farmers increasing production and adopting better agricultural methods, leading to higher yields and more grain collected at centres for Biryā, leading to sustainable growth.



Fostering trust through communication

Strong communication within the partnership enabled coordination, decision-making, and problem-solving that contributed to progress towards its goals, benefiting farmers and communities.

Lessons learnt from this partnership



Emphasise continuous learning and market access

Prioritise providing ongoing training and facilitating access to markets for refugees and host communities. This combination enhances their business capabilities and ultimately leads to improved incomes.



The importance of practical skills training

Offer practical skills training in various aspects of business and agriculture. This equips participants with the tools they need to enhance their businesses and farming practices, leading to sustainable growth.



The power of market knowledge and negotiation skills

Focus on facilitating market linkages and empowering refugees with negotiation skills. This helps them secure fair prices for their products and services, ultimately increasing their incomes.



The holistic impact of market-linkage support on households

Recognise the importance of improving livelihoods and household well-being. This includes supporting initiatives that enable refugees to afford their children's education, improve nutrition, and raise their overall standard of living.



The influence of market participation in mental wellbeing

Acknowledge the broader social impacts of economic empowerment initiatives. These may include reduced instances of gender-based violence and decreased alcohol consumption as individuals become more engaged in productive activities.