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SUMMARY OF LESSONS FROM THE PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDY

SWISSCONTACT AND ERYMAG

Boosting economic productivity through expanding agricultural trade networks

Lamwo, Palabek



The partnership between Swisscontact and Erymag, funded by USAID's Uthabiti Activity, aimed to boost economic activity in Lamwo District, Uganda, by expanding agricultural trade networks. The partnership sought to improve incomes, create jobs, and establish a sustainable trade network in Lamwo District.

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 representatives of Swisscontact and Erymag. These findings shed light on the partnership's emerging achievements in improving livelihoods and household well-being.

Emerging successes from the partnership

This learning activity revealed that the collaboration between Swisscontact and Erymag has enhanced market access for both refugee and host communities. Key insights from this partnership include:



The value of comprehensive training and support

Refugees and host communities expressed valuing trainings from Swisscontact and Erymag, which covered the full crop cycle, and included post-harvest handling techniques such as sorting, grading, and packaging, credited with improving business and increasing incomes.



Improved household well- being through increased incomes

Refugees and host communities shared that higher incomes enabled investments in education, healthcare, and basic needs, while strengthened market linkages improved living standards, quality of life, and overall wellbeing.



Enhanced feelings of resilience through capacity strengthening

An emphasis on farming as a business transformed farmers' mindsets, with trainings in financial literacy, budgeting, and record-keeping enabling informed decisions, efficient resource allocation, and pursuit of high-value opportunities to optimise returns.

Key factors that made this partnership a success



Integrated support services

The partnership provided integrated support services, including financial assistance, access to inputs, and assistance with market linkages. This holistic approach addressed multiple challenges faced by farmers, enhancing their productivity, profitability, and resilience to external shocks.



Community engagement and empowerment

Swisscontact and Erymag prioritised community engagement and empowerment, involving farmers in decision-making processes and providing them with opportunities to become active participants in the agricultural value chain. This participatory approach fostered ownership and sustainability, ensuring that interventions were tailored to local contexts and contribute to long-term development goals.

Lessons learnt from this partnership



The importance of training and capacity strengthening

Comprehensive training programs are essential for equipping agents and farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to improve agricultural practices, financial management, and market access. Investing in capacity-building initiatives contributes to the overall success and sustainability of interventions.



The value of market access

Facilitating market access and ensuring fair pricing mechanisms are crucial for enhancing farmer incomes and livelihoods. Aggregators like Erymag play a vital role in connecting farmers to markets, reducing transaction costs, and fostering trust within the value chain.



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