

African Women Rising Final Report

Permagarden Program

Grant Amount: \$50,000

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Program recap:

Northern Uganda is recovering from 20 years of conflict. While there has been peace since 2006, many people are still struggling with food security. This is especially true for the most vulnerable in the communities where we work – women who are widows, formerly abducted women and girls, girl mothers, child-headed households, HIV-positive, and grandmothers taking care of orphans. In addition, the area has experienced one of the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. Over one million refugees have fled South Sudan and crossed the border into Northern Uganda. These refugees are living in camps, supported by UNHCR and receiving food from WFP. As the UN system is overwhelmed by the number of refugees, food is often not enough to cover the needs.

The Permagarden program is designed to provide households with access to vegetable gardens that can produce food year-round to ensure an adequate and nutritious food supply. The desired outcome included directly serving 400 individuals during the grant period, 90% women and 75% South Sudanese refugees. The estimated indirect number of beneficiaries were estimated to 2,800, the overwhelming majority being young children.

What was accomplished in connection with this project? Please address each stated objective. If any project objectives were changed, please also explain the circumstances leading to the modification of the objective(s).

The objective was to provide 400 participants with training in how to start, maintain and protect a permagarden to ensure access to sufficient amounts of food. This objective has been fulfilled.

Close to 500 households participated in 3 separate trainings, each lasting for 3 days, on average 2 months apart. The trainings provided participants with knowledge in:

- Community resource walk & landscape mapping
- Water harvesting & control
- Biointensive soil preparation
- Planting techniques & management
- Water conservation
- Composting
- Botanical pesticides & fungicides and liquid fertilizers
- Organic materials, fertilizers & soil amendments sourced in the community
- Garden protection & upkeep

Each participant received tools and seeds to be able to start their own garden. Participants also had weekly visits by community mobilizers to help start and maintain the gardens. An agricultural extension agent provided bi-weekly visits for technical support and oversight.

Have the number of beneficiaries changed? To report this please refer to the original numbers in your grant proposal under *Number of women and girls Directly Impacted and Indirectly Impacted*.

The original number of beneficiaries were 400 directly impacted and 2,800 indirectly impacted. The number changed as we were able to increase the number of participants to 500 directly impacted and 3,500 indirectly impacted. The reason for this increase in number is due to the fact that people live very close together in the refugee camp and AWR staff were able to visit more beneficiaries than what is regularly accomplished in communities.

What challenges did you face in connection to this project? How did you address these challenges?

Many of the participants did not speak Acholi, the local language in Northern Uganda. We had a mix of Arabic and Acholi speaking participants. Our staff do not speak Arabic. We hired a number of refugees to work as translators and have also trained people within the camp to become permagarden community mobilizers, helping with the monitoring of the gardens.

Food distributions did on many occasions interfere with trainings. Distributions would often take longer than anticipated and participants would leave trainings to get access to food. We are working closely together with UNHCR and WFP to have a clear understanding of when and where distributions would take place but sometimes there was a lack of communication.

Access to materials for the garden, such as poles for fencing and manure ended up being more expensive than expected as we had to source from further away than expected. This also meant transport costs were higher. We were able to cover these costs with our general funding.

Many of the refugees move between the camp and their original homestead. We had to be flexible within the groups to make sure that participants who missed a training session were able to make it up in another group's training.

Is your organization or project situation different than presented in the approved proposal? For example, new executive director, significant project staff changes or NGO affiliation, loss of large funding, or other significant changes?

Since the proposal written in 2017 the organization has grown significantly. We now have a staff of 240 in Uganda and have also been able to hire a development director in the US. The Girls Education program has doubled in size, from 750 girls to 1,500 girls. The addition of 750 girls have been in Palabek Refugee Settlement Camp. We have expanded the number of adult literacy centers as well as micro finance groups.

What were the most important lessons learned?

To ensure continuation of the gardens we need to focus more on how to save and collect seeds. Hiring refugees as staff is extremely beneficial to the success of the program.

What has changed within your organization as a result of this project?

No changes, we have been doing perma gardens for a long time

Describe the unexpected events and outcomes, including unexpected benefits?

This is not necessarily an unexpected benefit, we see this repeatedly in all communities where we work, but increased access to food means increased social capital. The gardens provide meeting places for women and, a household that has extra food can help neighbors.

Did you change your strategy as a result of obstacles you encountered? How will you address these challenges in the future?

The overall strategy has not been changed. We simply have to be a bit more flexible in how and when we do trainings in the camp.

Approximately how many lives have been touched, both directly and indirectly, by the project?

500 directly and 3,500 indirectly

What are the measurements used to monitor success and how was this information measured (e.g., surveys, observation)? Be specific and include measurable results.

We look at access to food, how many meals per day a family consumes and increase in income. We also measure 25 different organic practices, such as do participants use mulch, swales, a compost etc.

Out of the 500 gardens, 450 used 20 or more of the different organic practices, making for extremely good gardens.

429 participants were able to completely cover the food shortage they experience. For most households, WFP food last three out of the four weeks it is supposed to cover. With the garden they were able to consume two meals per day, and to have a varied and nutritious diet.

48 participants experienced improvement in their diet but it was not enough to completely cover the food gap.

23 participants did not see any change.

It has been harder to get exact figures for additional income. At least 200 participants earn between 5,000 to 10,000 UG shillings (USD1.30-2.50) per week. However, many are trading vegetables and do not include the trade in their income. The most common items people bought were soap and salt.

If the project is ongoing, provide plans and expected results, including projected timeframe.

The program is continuing with new groups both in the camp and the host community. The total number of participants in the permagarden program this year is 4,000. We are hoping to reach 5,000 refugees in 2020 and at least 500 participants from the host community.

Provide a detailed list of all expenses incurred during the grant cycle which have been paid for with the Dining for Women grant,

Please see attachment

Did this grant and relationship with DFW assist your organization in obtaining other funding, partnerships with other organizations, or public recognition in some capacity?

I do believe the grant was helpful in securing additional funding. Having 500 gardens in the camp made us more visible to other organizations involved in livelihood programming in the area. UNHCR has been very pleased with the work we are doing and wants us to expand to more camps. We have started a great partnership with Trocaire, who are funding permagardens this year and in 2020.