

CASE STUDY 18

IMPROVING FOOD PRODUCING IN MIDDLE BOSNIA

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Sector: Forestry

CONTEXT

The socialist systems that governed Bosnia and Herzegovina (as a part of former Yugoslavia) over nearly fifty years provided food security, employment and income for rural people. However, this was at unsustainable cost levels. Two decades ago, after the collapse of the socialist system, Bosnia and Herzegovina entered into a period of great turmoil that damaged rural livelihoods. There was a significant impact on food production when land management changed from large scale operations by state agencies to very small scale farming run by private farmers. The small and economically unsustainable plots are now seen as one of the main constraints for food security, as well as for employment and income for rural citizens.

In addition to this problem, the private farmers have limited skills and resources to transform their farms into prosperous ventures. The macro economic environment changed from being closed and protected to a liberal open market economy with competitive food imports.

In response to this, SNV has, in the last three years, focused simultaneously on increasing the competitiveness of small scale farmers and creating an enabling environment, aiming to improve rural livelihoods by generating additional production, employment and income for rural people. SNV's activities were carried out under the "umbrella" of the forestry sector, the sector most familiar with food production.

The geographic focus of SNVs activities was the Middle Bosnia area with Travnik municipality as a "Focal Client". This area consists of 12 municipalities with a population of 400,000 people. This rural area has a large percentage of unused land. Approximately 50,000 people are unemployed, most of these are with limited education and skills. They have very often a small piece of land for self-subsistence. As a result of this, only a few firms or farms generate income from land use.

Regarding the fact that majority of the local communities within the Travnik municipalities are situated in rural areas, appropriate and efficient land use is one of the most important factors for rural development and increase of income and employment. This implies that there is a direct need for improvement in present land management, especially with regard to small private land property.

Based on interviews with municipal staff and other stakeholders conducted by SNV, there are many gaps preventing the achievement of efficient land use. The main obstacles can be summarised as follows:

- decreased awareness about food producing potential in the area through wild growing (Non-Timber-Forest-Products and cultivation);
- low level of relevant theoretical and practical knowledge of stakeholders;
- non-conducive environment for rural investments;
- weak presence in the market.

CLIENT

The focal client of SNVs intervention was Travnik municipality. The Travnik municipality is a unit of the local governance and Capital of the Central Bosnia Canton. Under the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other relevant legislation, the municipality is responsible for creating and implementing the community development policy.

SNV had cooperated with Travnik before and has good relationships with the municipality. Travnik municipality has demonstrated strong willingness to be directly involved and responsible with regard to the problems in its territory.

Aiming to improve the situation, SNV together with the municipality, made a direct link with the following multi-sector actors, which can play a significant role for the success of the intervention:

- Local Communities in Bila Valley;
- Pharmamed (Private Company);
- Association "Organsko" in Federal Bosnia & Herzegovina;
- Organska proizvodnja Herceg (Private Company);
- Cantonal Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture;
- Strik Consulting (Private Consultancy); and
- Individual consultants.

The SNVs intervention consisted of several parallel activities which focused on reducing the identified gaps. The logic of the intervention is presented in the table below:

Targeted gap	SNVs intervention	Result
Decreased awareness of the rural people	Delivering of brochure	4000 households got the awareness brochure
Low theory expert knowledge	Delivering of brochure	4000 households got the brochure with information and knowledge
Low practical expert knowledge	Establishing Initial Training centre (green house)	Practical exercises for 100 people (till now)
Low business knowledge	Business trainings for the managers	50 managers from the region improve their business knowledge.
Not enabling environment	Facilitation of food certification service in the area	Certification service in the area established (within "Pharmamed" company)
Week presence in the market	Facilitation of regional FAIR organisation	Connections among 50 producers in the region
Week presence in the market	Promotion of the benefits of products registration in Health Institute	Regional producers started the registration aiming to extend their market.

These SNV's interventions contributed to improved services to citizens by the Municipality and the other actors. The improvements relate to:

- Expert knowledge required for land use;
- Practical demonstration of small land use;
- Certification of products;
- Connecting local producers with the market;
- Increased market access through an inclusive business approach;
- A higher level of engagement of local people in the different stages of value chain.

In addition to these, a major result was the connection of multi-sectors actors that participated in the implementation of the projects and who are now continuing to collaborate with the aim of improving livelihoods in the area.

Bosnia & Herzegovina lacks data which could be useful for qualitative impact assessment. We made an assessment based on a logical estimation derived from achieved outcomes.

This estimation states that Production, Income and Employment in the area will be further increased due to the increased awareness and improved relevant capacities of thousands rural people in the area. Also, increased market access for the local products and improved enabling environment related to certification of the products are impacts following the assignments.

INTERVENTION LOGIC AND METHODS

OUTCOME

IMPACT

LESSONS LEARNED

Evidence of the most relevant assessment of impact comes from the private sector. One entrepreneur saw his turn over and demand grow resulting in an increase of income with 50% and the employment of 30 additional seasonal employees.

The municipality can now support people who want to improve their land use, which facilitates farmers to increase their effectiveness and efficiency of land use and increased income from the plots.

The strongest point in the case was the very **close collaboration and flexibility** with the main stakeholders and people who were interested in achieving the results. SNV interventions were guided by requests and demands from the field. In other words, the plan was adapted to new circumstances while implementing, as very often SNV or the Clients are not aware during the project design what the best intervention will be.

Another point to note is that is that all SNV interventions were linked with **concrete, practical demonstrations** (e.g. small pilot projects). An example is the green house training centre that provided much stronger relevance and visibility for the people of the entire project.

SNV interventions were aimed at achieving visible short-term results in addition to the long term results. An example of this was the case of one private company (Organska proizvodnja Herceg) that participated in all of the all phases of project implementation. These phases provided direct and visible benefit (e.g. participation in a fair where the company can sell its products and make business contacts directly).

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the projects is of no doubt. Many of the project's footprints are now visible and these will point towards significant sustainability regarding the key project components.

The sustainable results of the project are the thousands of now educated rural citizens able to improve their land use, improved services of the municipality, an established training centre, certification services in the area and improved market access. These results are a compilation of the "soft" and "hard". They tackle different levels of governance (local communities, municipalities, canton, entity and state) and different groups of stakeholders (private business, government, rural people, NGOs, etc.). They provide a sound platform for the project results to last for a long period.

Standard data

Start and end of the contract:

- 01/01/2008-31/12/2010

Relevant Assignment Agreements:

- AA Bila Valey – Travnik municipality 2008
- AA BCDFE Travnik municipality 2009/10
- AA FAIR Travnik municipality 2010

SNV staff:

- Ernad Granić, Lead advisor and SNV Sarajevo team

Number of PP-days invested:

- SNV: 100 PPP days;
- LCB: 145 days;
- Client: 100 days.

The total financial resources invested:

- EUR 150,000

Client satisfaction and enhanced capacity scores:

- Satisfactory/very satisfactory (14/14)

Quotes:

Mr. Sead Herceg, the owner of "Organska proizvodnja Herceg" enterprise:

"As result of these SNV's activities my income increased by 50% and I need to employ 30 people more (seasonal employees) to meet new (higher) market demands".

Mrs. Elma Pružan, economic advisor at Travnik municipality:

"Now (after the SNV's interventions) the municipal administration is ready to qualitatively meet the requests coming from the people who want to improve living conditions by efficient use of their land".

Photos:



Practical training in Training centre



Delivering certificate to SNV for the contribution in organic producing



Fair in Travnik