



Sustainable business in animal health service provision through training for veterinary paraprofessionals

The project was implemented by FAO with World Veterinary Association and HealthforAnimals in the Central and North-Eastern regions of Uganda from 2021 - 2023.

Objectives of the project

The overall project objective was to increase farm productivity of smallholder livestock farmers through reduced animal mortality and increased productivity of livestock assets by increasing smallholder farmers' access to quality animal health service provision through improved capacity of veterinary paraprofessionals to deliver animal health services and by addressing the key challenges propagating veterinary paraprofessionals' business instability.

Background

There is a significant gap between supply and demand for animal health and production services for livestock farmers. Private sector veterinary paraprofessionals (VPPs) play a vital role to fill this gap. VPPs serve a critical role of reaching smallholder farmers that do not have access to veterinarians for their livestock. However, they face a number of challenges due to lack of further training opportunities, remote and challenging work environments leading to little supervision and mentoring, besides weak veterinary input supply chains limiting access to quality veterinary pharmaceuticals. The project addressed these key bottlenecks.

What are the challenges to VPP service delivery?

- Gaps in initial training, in particular in business skills and preventive healthcare.
- Lack of continuous professional development opportunities to keep skills up to date.
- Gaps in the regulation of the animal health sector resulting in tension with veterinarians, competition from unqualified service providers, etc.
- Threats to a sustainable business model for private sector service providers.

There is a need to build a sustainable model for private sector service delivery, moving away from “fire-fighting” problems as they occur to developing a holistic set of service packages focussed on prevention of disease and improved productivity

Rural women represent 2/3 of low income livestock farmers. However only five percent of extension services reach women. Women VPPs are critical channels to reach female farmers - but they also face discrimination and sexual harassment.

Approaches to address this:

- Promote gender sensitive service delivery.
- Empowerment of women VPPs as key channels to reach women farmers.



Project implementation structure in Uganda

The project implementation structure comprised of National Advisory Committee, two training institutes (Buakalasa Agricultural College and National Animal Genetic Resources and Data Bank), a team of 26 mentors, a multi-stakeholder platform comprised of key stakeholder institutions in the livestock sector and animal health delivery sector in Uganda.

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) comprised of 10 nominated representatives of key stakeholder institutions including Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), National Drug Authority (NDA), Bukalasa Agricultural College (BAC), Uganda Veterinary Association (UVA), United Veterinary Paraprofessionals Association, two representatives from each of the project regions, female veterinary paraprofessionals, Uganda Veterinary Board (UVB) and Uganda Meat Producers Cooperative Union (UMPCU) representing farmers. The NAC provided overall oversight and support to the project team comprised of the Project Coordinator, Assistant Project Coordinator and short-term consultants.

The Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) is comprised of seven members representing MAAIF, UVA, UVPPA, private sector veterinary paraprofessionals, local government and livestock farmers.

Project activities

Pillar 1: Development of a supportive environment

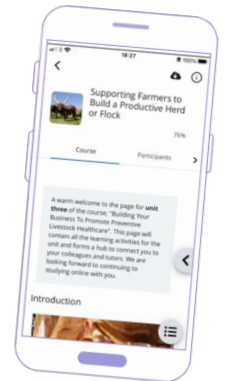
- A multistakeholder platform (MSP) comprised of 7 members representing key stakeholder institutions from the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, district local governments, livestock farmers, Veterinarians without borders, private veterinary practitioners, non-governmental organizations, Uganda Veterinary Association and United Veterinary Paraprofessional Association. The MSP was established to support of primary level livestock services to identify key bottlenecks within each country and develop tailored solutions.

Pillar 2: Competency recognition

- A country tailored veterinary paraprofessional competency framework was developed building on the [WOAH guidelines](#) and incorporated business skills, One Health and gender dimensions.
- The project engaged with the Uganda Veterinary Board and obtained accreditation of the course “growing your business through preventive healthcare” that was delivered to the VPPs. This is the basis of registration of trained VPPs, and recognition of training as continuous professional development (CPD).

Pillar 3: Continuous Professional Development

- CPD training for VPPs on business skills and preventive livestock animal healthcare.
- Online training through [FAO Virtual Learning Centres](#) and workshops led by **Bukalasa Agricultural College (BAC)** and **National Animal Genetic Resources Centre and Data Bank (NAGRC&DB)**
- Experienced mentors trained on ‘how to mentor’ and matched with VPPs to support them over a year as they develop their business.



Expected impacts - VPPs

- Improved quality of service provision.
- Strengthened VPP livelihoods through improved business sustainability.

Expected impacts - Farming community

- Improved access to quality preventive healthcare services.
- Strengthened livelihoods through improved animal health and productivity.
- Improved human health through reduction in zoonotic disease and antimicrobial use.

