



Profile: Fudiah Fullah

By Olivia Acland

Fudiah Fullah says that each time she prays, she thanks God for four things. First, she is free of a skin disease that plagued her for months with a high fever and itchy skin and dizziness. Second, she thanks God for her happy marital relationship, which was once turbulent and abusive. Third, she is grateful to have enough food to feed her children. And finally, she thanks God for the SATISFY project. “Because it was that project which made all these things possible.”

SATISFY is a World Vision project supported by the Government of Canada in several villages near the southern coast of Sierra Leone to address financial and food insecurity. The project ran from 2012 to 2017. Project participants were organized into savings groups of up to 25 members and taught how to administer small loans. Most of the participants were women.

At the first few meetings Fullah was shaking and sweating. Her skin disease was getting worse. The savings group loaned her enough money to take a taxi to the hospital and cover her medical bill. After a few days in the hospital she was healthy again. “Had it not been for the fund, there would have been no way,” she says. “I’d still be suffering from that sickness.”

Each group of women also received five male goats and twelve female goats. Vets came to the village to teach them how to look after goats and identify when they had illnesses. The vets returned monthly to check up on the animals.

Five years later, the flock of goats belonging to Fullah's group has grown to sixty-five. Fullah reports any sicknesses to vets in Bo. The women have learned to keep pregnant goats separate from the rest of the flock to ensure the health of their kids. Small sheds have been built for the goats to sleep in.

Fullah says that goat keeping is a lucrative business. When the goats are six months old the women take them to market. One goat fetches between \$30 and \$50 US. This is good money in a country where most people survive on less than \$1.50 a day. With an initial loan from the Savings Group, Fullah now has an additional small but steady income from selling canned foods in the market.

Before the loan scheme and the goat breeding, Fullah and her husband were barely managing to feed their four children. "When we had no money we used to quarrel so much," she says, "I used to sometimes leave the house for a week because he was shouting at me."

With less financial stress and her mind at ease, Fullah says she feels proud to be able to look after her family at last.

The SATISFY project is featured in new research commissioned by the Canadian Food Security Policy Group (FSPG), a coalition of civil society organizations seeking to improve Canada's food security work overseas. The SATISFY project is featured as one of six independently researched case studies in West Africa that demonstrate how support for agriculture in rural communities can improve livelihoods, promote gender equality and build climate resilience.

To read the SATISFY case study, and other reports from the Food Security Policy Group's research project, please visit <https://ccic.ca/leaders-in-the-field>

Olivia Acland writes about Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo for The Economist.