



INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

(MAJI YA AMANI)

Quarterly Narrative Progress Report

(April –June 2020)

Project Name: Integrated Water Resources Management

Target Areas: Ruzizi Plain (DRC)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maji Ya Amani (IWRM) is a project funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ruzizi plains, South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is implemented by the IRC-led consortium comprising IRC, Stichting ZOA and Search for Common Ground. The interventions of this multisector project aim at contributing to the reduction of violence and the increase in stability in the groupement of Luberizi (with a total of 28,800 beneficiaries) by (1) increasing access to land and reduction of land conflict, (2) increasing access to safe drinking water and irrigation water and reduction of water related conflicts, (3) equitable and inclusive access to income generation opportunities, and (4) increasing awareness of population pressure on the limited natural resources.

The intervention zone, Luberizi groupement, is located in the Ruzizi plains which is situated along a part of the eastern border with Rwanda and Burundi. The Ruzizi plains is rich with natural resources including water that provides substantial opportunity for agriculture and household use thereby creating a potential bond for communities divided along ethnic lines. It's said that, if well exploited, the Ruzizi Plains would potentially be capable of feeding all of the total population in the plains and Burundi and Rwanda. However, the Ruzizi plain is also unfortunately rife with divisions along ethnic lines, socio-political and security contexts, thereby increasing the challenges faced by this project when conflicts arise.

The project recently saw a number of changes in terms of priority activities to enhance sustainability during the fourth year. Project activities were extended to the Luberizi watershed, making it a requirement to have a watershed management committee with a multi-year watershed management plan; the initiation of Integrated Farmers' Plan; start of the rice production's first season using the newly and fully operational rehabilitated irrigation system. Furthermore, COOPAILU has taken the lead in mobilizing the community in order to minimize risks that may hamper normal operation of the irrigation infrastructures.

This report provides an update on project achievements including on the extension of project activities to the watershed, extension of the rehabilitation on the main canal in Luberizi irrigated perimeter for the remaining 6.5 km, handover of the different infrastructures (dam, main canal and the drinking water supply network) capacity building for the different community structures (radio Sauti Ya Amani, COOPAILU, etc.) and reinforcement of sustainability, the donor approval for the construction of a reservoir in Nyamugali.

Furthermore, the report gives an update on social cohesion and conflict management activities (including through mediation and awareness activities), agricultural and value chain activities, economic and recovery activities with a focus on how farmers and small income generating activities for youths and village savings and loan association (VSLA) members are linked to the market and financial institutions.

Last but not least, this report explains how the project is coping in a context affected by Covid-19 and security issues; how it upholds continued interactions/collaboration with the state officials and STAREC.

ACCRONYMS

ACEP	: Association des Consommateurs d'Eau potable de Sange et Luberizi
COOPAILU	: Coopérative Agricole des Usagers de l'Irrigation de Luberizi
DRC	: Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	: Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
GBV	: Gender-Based Violence
I4S/ISSSS	: International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
IFP	: Integrated farmer's Plan
IRC	: International Rescue Committee
IWRM	: Integrated Water Resources Management
MONUSCO	: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
MyA	: Maji Ya Amani (Water for Peace)
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PAC	: Post Abortion Care
IFs	: Innovative Farmers
PNC	: Police Nationale du Congo
SFCG	: Search for Common Ground
SGBV	: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SNHR	: Service National d'Hydraulique Rurale
SRH	: Sexual and Reproductive Health
STAREC	: Programme de Stabilisation et de Reconstruction des zones sortant des Conflits Armés
STAREC	: Stabilisation et Reconstruction à l'Est du Congo
TEP	: Tribune d'Expression Populaire-
VSLA	: Village Savings and Loans Associations
WASH	: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENT

Overall, the socio-political and security situation in the Ruzizi Plain and in the Watershed area continued to be characterized as volatile and subject to potential sudden changes. Indeed, many cases of murder, abduction, robbery, and rape, kidnappings with liberation against ransom have become a source of income for armed groups. In addition, cattle thefts continued to create exchanges of fire between the thieves and the military. During the reporting period, the security incidents recorded were the following: 7 cases of abductions/kidnapping, 6 cases of cattle smuggling, 3 murders cases, 12 cases of car high-jacking, reported crossing of armed groups and natural disasters (heavy rains that destroyed the bridge between Sange and Uvira, and landslides on the road to Lemera). The context was also marked by demonstrations following the conviction of the former Chief of Staff of the Head of State, Vital Kamerhe, a native of Walungu¹.

The intervention zone, Luberizi groupement, is located in the Ruzizi plains which is situated along a part of the eastern border with Rwanda and Burundi. During the elections in Burundi, in May 2020, there were reports of increased Burundian armed group movements in the project zone. With the change of regime and the sudden death of President Pierre Nkurunziza, it is not sure how the new administration will direct its power with regards to regional security dynamics. Increased fighting in Itombwe (Haut Plateaux of Sud Kivu) and other surrounding areas since May are reportedly related to the elections in Burundi. The project keeps monitoring the context and the situation.

The project team consistently monitored the situation to avoid significant impact on project activities. In fact, there were several security incidents this quarter that challenged the project planning. Clashes between the FARDC and armed groups impacted the planning of the mapping and land mediation process in the Watershed area where the project is conducting land mapping and land mediation. However, no project staff, partners or materials were directly affected by those incidents. The project also encountered resistance from several community members during the land mapping process in Mugule and Katala (Watershed area). This also had some impacts on the initial planning. The project has increased awareness through its radio programs and consultations with community leaders.

The key disturbance stemmed from measures taken by the national government to address the COVID-19 crisis. The project team undertook a strategic review to continue the project implementation. The project team prioritized certain activities that held the greatest potential to be of benefit during the crisis (e.g. community awareness through radio programming), while also adapting other activities that were no longer feasible, in their original format given the restrictions put into place to guarantee the safety of project staff, partners and beneficiaries.

¹ Kamanyola, where the project office is located, is part of the Walungu Territory.

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Hygiene promotion**

Hygiene promotion activities were partly impacted came to a halt following the outbreak of Covid-19, whose barrier measures prohibit gatherings of more than 20 people. Indeed, while the strategy of the community health club approach recommends holding weekly training sessions for members; this is not possible for the moment for safety reasons. Instead, with the team of health club facilitators, the nurses and the community relays of the hygiene committees, the project implemented a strategy adapted to the Covid-19 context by scheduling simple visits in the households, to sensitize the inhabitants on hygiene rules, as well as the prevention of Covid-19. It should be pointed out that this strategy works well and allowed to inform the beneficiaries, with the help of leaflets on the threat related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the barrier measures to be considered to protect themselves, etc.

Of the 4 firms contracted for the construction of the latrines, washing rooms and waste areas, 2 finished the work during the first quarter, and the provisional handover was made. For this second quarter, the companies that had not completed their work, including SGC and PJF, after drawing up a cost-free rider, resumed work, which will be completed during the next quarter. The work concerns the following works:

- 4 blocks of four latrines for primary schools in Rwenena, Luberizi, Bijoja and Vijana; a block of 3 doors at the CICF office and another of the same type at the Radio Sauti Ya Amani station.
- 4 blocks of a toilet associated with a washing room each, including 2 at the Mutarule health center and 2 others at the Rwenena health station;
- 2 medical waste management zones, including one zone at the Mutarule Health Center and another at the Rwenena health post.

- **Implementation of environmental mitigation measures :**

During this quarter, routine environmental mitigation measures activities continued by holding weekly and monthly working sessions with ACEP and the leaders of the sub-committees, tackling protection of hydraulic structures. An awareness-raising campaign on the management of water points was launched and focused on improving hygiene conditions at the standpipes and the prevention of Covid-19, while handwashing with soap and social distancing continued to be encouraged. In addition, an operational action plan for the implementation of the activity of tree planting was initiated.

Regarding payment for water monthly supply, the change from water payment, a lump-sum payment mode (1000 FC per month), to volume payment mode still poses application problems. Especially since, with the Covid-19, it is impossible to organize an AGM to validate the new pricing implemented since February 2020. This means that for the time being, the ACEP management is encouraging the ACEP management to multiply restricted meetings and the passage in different villages to meet the sub-committees; which was reiterated by the provincial Minister of Rural Development during his official visit to the CAPE office.

The recommendation that came out of the Pricing Workshop in February 2020 is that it would be important to update the household statistics in each village, i.e. if there is a new household created, this should be reported to ACEP, with an increase in the village fee. This is starting to be observed in some villages such as Mataba and Mutarule.

We encourage other villages such as Nyamugali-Sango; Nyakabere 2, Katekama, etc. to do the same, in order to help ACEP to mobilize more funds.

Construction of a reservoir in Nyamugali

After the donor gave his go-ahead for the construction of the reservoir in Nyamugali, the recruitment of a firm to contract for this activity is underway and construction activities should start shortly when the service sourcing process is complete.

- **Access to land: Land tenure**

a) Handover of land group titles to the community

The 219 land titles for farmers in the Luberizi irrigated perimeter initially made available under this project were officially handed to a total of 2,720 farmers in presence of the Governor for South Kivu. The event took place on June 27th, after the project supported the design of a notarized co-management document whereby farmers adhere to the principle that the land title is a collective good. Basic deeds have been drawn up and validated by the co-owners; the representatives of each group land title are designated by the co-owners by mutual agreement; and the internal regulations of the co-ownership are adopted by the co-owners.

b) Extension of the land tenure process within Luberizi irrigated area and to the watershed

The project has the mandate to extend land tenure experience to the watershed area during this last year. Two villages were identified for the pilot in this rural area. Land tenure for rural land is subject to a prior investigation by a state service officer: The investigation includes on-the-spot verification of the delimitation of the requested land; the identification of the persons who are there or carrying out any activity; the description of the premises and the inventory of what is actually there in terms of woods, forests, watercourses, roads, etc.; hearings of persons who verbally formulate their complaints or observations; and the recording and analysis of all relevant information gathered.

✓ Participatory land mapping in the Luberizi irrigated perimeter

Within the framework of land tenure for small farmers in the Luberizi irrigated perimeter, during the reporting period a participatory mapping was planned in order to ascertain, clarify and recognize the local land rights of farmers. Thus, on an area of 117 hectares which would constitute the extension zone to the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi, 212 farmers covering an area of 99.17 ha. A surface area of nearly 49 hectares has been identified as communal spaces that can still be subject to a new allotment. Apart from these lands, which have been identified as belonging to the community and/or to the Congolese state, in oil green, areas covering an area of 11 + Ha belong to churches. However, the northern part, covering an area of 10+ Ha, was mapped twice: first as a land belonging to a community and then as land belonging to a church.

✓ Participatory land mapping in the catchment area

Land tenure security is practiced in two pilot villages: Mugule and Katala. In these villages, the plots and fields mapped from 24 April to 17 May 2020 cover 61.6% of 136 hectares of two avenues of Mugule (Bukere and Namuhuta) and 22.17% of 167 hectares of the first two avenues of Katala (Vijana and Bugegwa). Compared to this first harvest, most of the plots and fields mapped are mostly belonging to individuals (up to more than 75%) to families (up to more than 20%) and very few associations or even concessionaires own concessions in these two villages. Land ownership in the localities of Katala and Mugule remains endowed with indigenous (African) practices where an owner gradually hands over parts of his plot to his offspring. Thus access to the land most expressed in the mapped avenues of these two localities remains inheritance. However, we must not neglect modern practices of access to land, of which “purchase” is a part.

This type of access to land covers more than 210/585 mapped plots and highlights the current desire for land ownership by the inhabitants of Katala and Mugule. Thus, land tenure security would also affect access to land for vulnerable households.

• Access to Irrigation water

The project has carried out a series of activities contributing to secure access to irrigation water for conflict reduction. The following are the salient activities including some explanatory notes on the progress made. To start with, a feasibility study was conducted by an independent consultant during the period from end April up to end May; prior to any activity on the extension of the perimeter,

helping the project to clearly draw up the perimeter development map and make an evaluation of the cost necessary for this extension.

It was necessary to set up village committees for the sub-watershed management. This is of a paramount importance as sessions organized in this area helped to raise awareness on issues related to natural resource management. The same sessions held at village level brought out problems and possible solutions to the sub-watershed management. This matrix of problems and solutions led to the formulation of the watershed management and development plan.

In terms of maintenance of the hydro-agricultural infrastructures in place, the commitment of the community and COOPAILU allowed network optimization activities, mainly the cleaning of the secondary and tertiary canals, dam maintenance and mowing around the structures. The protection of the canal by planting vetiver on the main canal allows the control of runoff that attacks the banks of the main canal.

To enhance ownership and increase community involvement and input on the construction work for the main canal and the extension of the perimeter, a series of meetings were held with the participation of all levels. His Excellency the Provincial Minister of Planning led the exit meeting on June 27, held in Kamanyola.

This activity led to the selection of the companies that will build the main canal, the extension of the irrigated perimeter and the COOPAILU office. They are respectively ADIC asbl, Ets RAMSON and PJF that also worked on the rehabilitation of both dam and the main canal over a distance of 5Kms. To start the works and mobilize the participation of all stakeholders, the launching of the works was made on the behalf of His Excellency the Governor of the province by his delegate, the Vice-Governor on June 27th. It is also worth noting that, in an effort to improve project alignment, a STAREC mission (on June 24-27) visited the hydro-agricultural infrastructure being among the main connectors of the communities, to assess their contribution to stabilization and local development opportunities. The delegation recommended the project to do the following:

- ✓ Conduct a mapping of all the peace committees set up by other projects in the Bafuliru chiefdom and in the Plain and create coordination mechanism through collaboration between the peace committees and other pre-existing structures;
- ✓ For sustainability purposes and to ensure social ownership over project's achievements, proceed with handover of infrastructures built by the consortium to the community;
- ✓ Pursue capacity building for community structures and radio Sauti Ya Amani in order to improve the services they provide to their communities.

- **Capacity building for COOPAILU**

During this second quarter, the project held five major activities to build capacity of COOPAILU, namely, (1) Sensitization of farmers on the co-management charter, (2) The workshop on cost recovery techniques, (3) A refresher workshop on leadership and good governance, (4) Sensitization on the elections of COOPAILU body leaders, (5) Collection of fees from farmers in the Luberizi irrigated perimeter. As a reminder, COOPAILU is on a rather important turning point which will determine its future with a strong emphasis on appropriation. . Indeed, the cooperative is getting the necessary technical accompaniment and capacity building to ensure they can successfully and sustainably manage irrigation water (including maintenance). This will be done through its capacity to collect the fees from the farmers of the rice perimeter who are beneficiaries of irrigation water permanently during all seasons without interruption on one hand. On the other hand, the elections of the leaders of the bodies was indeed a determining factor of good governance.

- **Increased IGA opportunities**

Activities relating to agricultural production consisted in support to farmers during the harvest, training of 18 Staffs of the partner associations, COOPAILU team; and four project staff on the management of the rice and the Intensive Rice System (SRI). It also consists in accompanying the farmers in the valorization and exploitation of the season C 2020. The training saw active participation and participants promised to apply the different techniques learnt in their farms.

The project teams are also providing support to farmers through visits to the farms. In Kagaragara blocks, rice is growing very well while in some other fields it's in maturation phase and harvest should start in a week or two. In Sango III area, however, project technicians realized that some of the fields does not evolve well because of the presence of diseases such as: brown spots, clariasis and drilling insects. Farmers were advised to apply curative fight against the diseases and that they should normally with treatment of seeds before sowing, the respect of the agricultural calendar and application of the different cultivation techniques.

- **Integrated Farmer Plan approach**

The introduction of the Integrated Farmer Plan (IFP) approach in the irrigated perimeter was effective during this reporting quarter. Preliminary activities (community sensitization, determination of the villages concerned with the approach, and selecting innovative farmers) were carried out to prepare a solid foundation for this approach; with the objective of transmitting a new vision that encourages beneficiaries to plan and invest in their future in order not only to increase income but also to strengthen social cohesion in the household.

- **Agricultural value chain**

This quarter, value chain activities have been negatively impacted by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought about reduction of the purchasing power of the small producers and the modification of the supply circuit. To help producers cope with the situation, the following activities were carried out.

- To be able to determine what technical support should be provided to farmers, an evaluation of rice yield in the Luberizi rice-growing perimeter was carried out for the B2020 season in accordance with qualitative and quantitative approaches. The final result, in compliance with the qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the overall average yield observed and calculated for paddy rice in the 7 blocks of the Luberizi rice perimeter was 6.5T/ha for fresh paddy and 6.2T/Ha for dry paddy.
- Four discussion rounds have been carried out so far in order to have the types of financial products adapted to small producers in Luberizi. The COOPEC KALUNDU (Micro-Finance Institution) and the EQUITY Bank are also, in parallel, having discussions with ZOA/ MyA project for this purpose. The signature of the partnership contract with either one is eagerly awaited and this should allow funding/supporting farmers with credits. Specifically for Equity Bank Bukavu, a financial service provision evaluation is underway in a view to sign a collaboration agreement. This is for the possible implementation of a guarantee fund in favor of small producers in Luberizi and other actors in the value chain and the facilitation of access to credit (investment/agricultural/marketing/inputs credits)
- To diversify production, a quick partial analysis of the milk market in the Bwegera, Nyamugali and Katekama sales sites while two sensitization sessions were held on the possibility of cultivating chilli in Luberizi and in Mutarule with APADEM and in Katekama with Mikono Ya Wajenzi. The other organizations CAPML, BDD and UCADI have also expressed interest if and only if the remunerative market is guaranteed. Also, an update of the contact with Gashora Farm Rwanda was made to ensure this potential marketing circuit is secured.

- **Erosion control within and beyond the Luberizi irrigated perimeter**

Using local labor, the project, through the Watershed Management users, ensured planting of 3,250 km of contour lines and 150 hectares of trees and groves for erosion control and pasture improvement are being planted by the basin users in the execution of the Multiannual Development Plan (PAP).

Additionally, 240 km of grass contour lines for the sustainable protection of the Tenge-Tenge hydro-agricultural works and 100 hectares of trees and groves, for erosion control and pasture improvement; are planted by the users of the Luberizi irrigated perimeter; 5,155 linear meters of cuttings were received and made available to the EPDE synergy partner in charge selected for the multiplication of fodder species.

Note also that some oil palm seedlings can be found along the irrigation canal as relining and the IPs used in the first place and other community members in the second place, taking into account gender and the representativeness of tribal and ethnic groups.

- **Extension of project activities and land mediation in Luberizi, Lemera and Kigoma**

As part of the 2020 work plan, the consortium decided to undertake the extension of the irrigated perimeter by 113 additional hectares. In doing so, the project conducted the mapping process and eventually Land mediation. Therefore, based on the experience acquired by the CICF (*Cadre Inclusif de Gestion des conflits et du fonciers*), the project worked with them to undertake these mediations. Between April and May, 23 conflicts were identified. All the conflicts opposing community members were successfully mediated, i.e. 17 of them. This process encountered no major obstacles compared to the initial process in 2018-2019. In fact, people have understood the importance of the mapping process and thus they were willing to have their conflicts settled so that they could have their lands secured with land titles. The remaining 6 conflicts relate to cases of illegal occupation of the State Reserves which is yet to be discussed by local administrative authorities.

During this quarter, the project conducted land mediation activities with the support of peace and mediation committees of Luberizi and Lemera/Kigoma. These activities were conducted as part of the extension of the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi (Ruzizi Plain) on the one hand, and as part of the land mapping process in the villages of Mugule and Katala in the *Chefferie des Baufuliru* (Watershed area) on the other hand. It is worth mentioning that the mediations in both Luberizi and the Watershed were conducted with the active involvement of the *Brigade Foncière of Luvungi* (the local representation of the Provincial Land Administration) and the *CICF -Cadre Inclusif de Gestion des conflits et du fonciers-* comprised of all the peace and mediation committees of the 8 villages of Luberizi.

- **Scaling-up of the land mapping process in the Watershed area (Mugule and Katala villages)**

After consultations with local authorities, the two villages of Mugule and Katala were selected as the pilot areas to scale-up the land mapping process based on the successful experience in Luberizi (2018-2019). Therefore we further built the capacities of the mediation committees of the two villages with the involvement of the IRC. They formed part of the 11 peace committees set up in the Watershed area in February 2020. The groups were further provided with equipment and tools (boots, waterproof clothes and decameters).

Four teams were set up, with 2 teams in each village. In each team, there are 2 mediation committee members, 2 cartographers and 1 member of the CICF. Based on the experience of the CICF, we brought two members of the CICF from the Ruzizi Plain to be part of the mediation teams in the Watershed area with the dual objectives of serving as mentors to the peace committee members of Mugule and Katala and also to increase collaboration between upstream and downstream committees and stakeholders.

The collaboration has so far been much appreciated and successful. In addition, other members of the mediation groups in each village support the process as needed, meaning in the event mediation would require several days, visits to the plots/farms and gatherings to discuss the issue, other members of the peace committees are mobilized to support. Finally, members of the *Brigade foncière* are also part of the process to

ensure the laws are applied. At the end of the mediations, the Acte d'Engagement (deeds of commitment) is reviewed and signed by local chiefs and the Brigade Foncière to ensure they are informed and they do agree.

Conflict type	Mugule Village		Katala Village	
	# conflicts identified	# conflicts mediated	# conflicts identified	# conflict mediated
Conflict related to farm boundaries	47	27	46	27
Farm Spoliation	8	4	15	8
Conflict related to farm overlaps	9	5	3	1
Double attribution of the same plot	2	1	5	2
Illegal sale	0	0	2	1
Inheritance	0	0	1	1
Stellionate	0	0	3	0
Farmer grows crops in a path leading to farms	0	0	1	1
Village boundary disputes	0	0	1	0
Total	66	37	77	41

As shown in the table above, 78 out of the 143 conflicts identified have been successfully mediated as of the end of the second quarter, i.e. 54% of all the conflicts identified in both villages. Peace committees are still working with the support of the CICE, local authorities and the Brigade Foncière with the facilitation of project staff who are based in the Watershed Area to lead this process.

• Community Conflicts Management

This quarter, the Peace Committees of the Ruzizi Plain and the Peace and Mediation Committees of the Watershed area successfully conducted meditations on several types of conflicts in their respective areas. Mediation on community conflicts was primarily related to disputes over farmer-herder feuds, access to drinking water and inheritance. In total, 67 conflicts were referred to Peace and Mediation Committees in the Ruzizi Plain and 55 conflicts were referred to the peace committees in the Watershed area; thus overall, 122 conflicts were successfully mediated by the Peace and Mediation Committees during this quarter. Peace Committees in the Watershed area are proving their usefulness as demonstrated by the impressive improvement from quarter 1 (18 conflicts mediated) to quarter 2 (55 conflicts mediated), representing a 300% increase. With continued support and coaching, Peace Committees will continue to play a critical role in the area. Indeed, the Peace and Mediation committees are regularly provided with coaching on active listening, non-violent communication and instruction on filling out conflict reporting forms.

It should be noted that the trends recorded during the previous reporting period in relation to community conflicts remain very similar:

- ✓ The two types of conflicts that were encountered the most were herder-agriculture feuds (50% for Quarter 2 compared vs 49% for Q1) and disputes over drinking water (33% for both Quarter 1 and Quarter 2);
- ✓ Farmer-herder conflicts remain the leading cause (50%) of tension and conflict in the target areas. Although Peace Committees have succeeded in mediating farmer-herder related conflicts, there is still substantial effort needed to provide widespread knowledge on means of prevention of conflict between farmers and herders as well as on proper management of cattle, grazing rights and agricultural land management;
- ✓ Disputes over drinking water are the second leading cause (33%) of conflict in the target areas and are found to arise largely as the consequence of people asking for the implementation and enforcement of the rules governing access to water and/or demanding transparency in the management of the fountains. Communities' increased requests and demands for social justice relating to disputes over drinking water are revealing of the impact of project activities in target sites. Community awareness sessions through radio programming, participatory theater as well as solidarity activities have been continuously conducted during the quarter around the management and access to water. The communities' increased emphasis on social justice is

indicative of such sessions' impacts on the way community members choose to settle their disputes;

- ✓ The third leading cause (7%) of conflict in the target areas is theft. The project team found that most security related incidents related in the project's implementation zones had a connection to economic livelihoods. This indicates that poverty and lack of economic opportunities remain some of the leading causes of tension in the project target areas. Additionally, a lack of livelihood opportunities also potentially encourages youth to join armed groups.

- **Capacity-building leadership and conflict transformation**

From June 23rd to July 4th, the project held a series of capacity building intended for the members of the Cooperative for Irrigation water Users (COOPAILU), the drinking water Users association Consumer Association ACEPSKILU) and state authorities in charge of their supervisions. Given the restrictive measures imposed as part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic (less than 20 people in each session), these training sessions were split into three, ensuring masks wearing as well.

In total, 54 people of whom 11 women (20%) participated in the sessions which took place in both Uvira (for State Authorities) and Luberizi (for COPAILU and ACEPSKILU). The modules focused on leadership as well as conflict transformation. The following topics were covered:

- ✓ Conflict transformation methods;
- ✓ Strategies to work with people beyond dividing lines, notably how to find common interests, understand their difference and find collaborative solutions;
- ✓ Methods and techniques to approach conflicts and difficult issues in a non-violent way while favoring dialogue and positive social change in the community;
- ✓ With regards to the training in leadership, participants have been equipped to interact positively and keep together their teams, collaborators and community members as a whole as an effort to preserve peace and address potential grievances.

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results shows that the level of knowledge of participants increased by 50% in average. In addition, participants stated that they were satisfied with the training.

- **Solidarity activities**

During the reporting period, the project supported one solidarity activity conducted in Nyamugali, Groupement of Luberizi. All the communities in the Groupement and the military had initiated community activities known as "Salongo" whereby they come together on Saturdays to do community work. Based on the fact that all the villages and communities are involved in such activities, the project decided to support. Therefore, we organized together with the community, on May 30th, a solidarity activity which brought together about 250 people to remove the sand which had accumulated on the main road (RN5) as a consequence of the heavy rains. This cross-cutting activity was a success given the great participation of all the communities and villages of the Groupement de Luberizi. Kindly note that this was an emergency, to avoid further flooding in the community. The work was organized so that small groups of people work together in dedicated spots at a time and hand-washing facilities were available and participants were encouraged to use them.

- **Participatory Theater**

Owing to the decision by national authorities to forbid gatherings of more than 20 people as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has adapted its Theater strategy by recording the plays and broadcasting them on the six partner radio stations across the project zones. Thus over the reporting period, 4 radio plays were recorded and broadcasted several times in order to reach the maximum people. The production of recorded plays followed almost the same process. In fact, actors conducted a pre-survey within the community in order to identify topical issues to be covered as part of the theater production. Theater is used to convey messages to ten community taking into account to needs. Thus, messages pertaining to *denunciation of sexual violence and Farmer-herder conflicts* were broadcasted in Luberizi on

June 22-23rd while in Lemera, topics exploited were *Awareness around land mapping and Illegal sales of lands/farms*.

- **Setting up and training of a new Theater group (Watershed area) and refresher training for the theater group of Luberizi**

As part of the extension of the project activities to the watershed area in April, the project set up and trained a new theater group in this area in order to support awareness around community issues. Moreover, during the same period, a capacity-building of the Luberizi Theater group was conducted in order to strengthen the capacities of the already existing group in Luberizi. These training sessions took place in Lemera (watershed) from April 25th to May 1st and in Luberizi from May 2nd to May 8th. The basics of participatory theater production and methodology were covered during these highly interactive and practical trainings. All the ethnic groups (Bafuliru, Barundi, Banyamulenge and Batwa) of the plains and of the watershed area are represented in the two theater groups. Overall, 30 actors of whom 11 girls (i.e. 37%), were trained in participatory theater in both the Ruzizi Plain and the Watershed Area. This training was successful based on the average percentage of increase in the knowledge (about 50%) in Lemera for the new group and (about 41%) in Luberizi.

- **Listening Club Activities**

This quarter, Listener Clubs received their monthly stipends that help them pay for radio batteries, communication and/or transportation fees when they have to facilitate events. Their main responsibilities is to conduct community awareness, listen and discuss programs that are broadcasted on the various radios, while also providing feedback on the content of such programs and suggest more topics for discussions that should be featured in the broadcasts. During the reporting period, these activities were conducted on a continuous basis. Listeners Clubs were associated to the planning process of solidarity events to be conducted across the project areas. Because the COVID-19 Pandemic disturbed the initial planning, more solidarity activities will be conducted over the next reporting period.

- **Support to Sauti Ya Amani community Radio Station**

In line with the project 2020 work-plan, a series of capacity-building and coaching were organized for Sauti Ya Amani Radio station. Indeed, from May 12th to May 31st, the project facilitated a three-week training for the 12 staff of the radio station in Luberizi. This training was a success improved the capacity of the community staff in the production of radio programs. It is worth mentioning that the new staff for the community radio were recruited in a manner to ensure Batwa are part of the staff. This training covered the following topics:

- ✓ Basics of journalism (definition, sources, information collection and checking, information processing, interview techniques, coverage and reporting, news casting...live vs recorded news presentation);
- ✓ Role and responsibility of a community-based radio station (peace, development, entertainment, local information, community ownership...);
- ✓ General concepts of conflicts (definition, stakeholders, conflict analysis techniques, the role of a journalist in a community with inter-community conflicts);
- ✓ Conflict-sensitive journalism (ethics, understanding the context, words and languages of peace and war, angles, information balancing, security of sources, politics and peace

- **Capitalizing on Sauti ya Amani community radio station to support project activities**

During this reporting period, seventeen (17) radio programs were produced to support the work of the consortium, notably the WASH Cluster (IRC), the land mapping in the watershed area gender-related issues, land conflicts and other topics covered by the consortium. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the number of participants for each program was reduced to the minimum while making sure as many communities as

possible were involved. All the programs were distributed to the 6 radios stations of the project area and broadcast several times.

- **Enhancing peaceful coexistence through comic Books**

The project has designed, produced and distributed comic books in Swahili and French to enhance peaceful cohabitation among community members. During this quarter, about 500 of the comic book copies were shared across communities; adding on to 3,500 copies shared over the previous reporting period. The remaining 2,000 comic books will be distributed as activities are organized in the coming quarters. The comic book covers the importance of peaceful coexistence and inclusive management of commons, especially secured access to lands and improved drinking water. It also covers the roles of women in conflict mediation and peace promotion. It further raises awareness about access to reproductive health and health services for women including Post-Exposure-Preventive kits (PEP) and treatments for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

- **Conflict Sensitivity and Monitoring**

The project ensures that project interventions are conflict sensitive by inclusively identifying partners and issues to be addressed throughout the project. Feedback mechanism is in place and helps direct and redirect our interventions based on the feedbacks and conflict dynamics. The detailed monitoring of the context and close contacts with local partners and other key stakeholders are important ingredients that help to identify any potential event or development that calls for adaptations or interventions in relation to project activities to best avoid an escalation of tensions. To contribute to the reduction of aggressiveness the selection of local labor is inclusive enough to allow room to every single ethnic group, especially as this is another income opportunities; in addition to being an effective unification tool for different ethnic groups, and especially the youths.

Over this reporting period, several analyses have been conducted and shared with the consortium, STAREC and the donor, and addressed farmer-herder conflicts as well as contextual challenges that may affect the project. The following are summaries of some of the analyses conducted during this quarter:

- **Farmer-Herder conflicts:** The project conducted a contextual analysis of farmer herder conflicts and how the different levels of responsibilities (state-institution, community-intercommunity and regional) factors impact farmer-herder dynamics in the project zones. It appears that the lack of a clear institutional framework, corruption, the lack of capacities of the local administrative bodies in charge of regulating access to land and the practice of cattle rearing are some of the institutional reasons for farmer herder conflicts. This analysis was conducted to trigger provincial authorities to direct more efforts in the improvement of the land and cattle rearing administration. In addition, a census of all the cattle (cow) owners of the Groupement de Luberizi, Kraals (Pasture areas), cattle managers and herdsmen of Luberizi. The findings of the census were presented to the consortium and to the delegation of STAREC which visited the project in June 2020. The database will support dialogues and the implementation of the agreement between Farmers and Herders.
- **Contextual factors that may impact the project and security in the South-Kivu Province: the project** conducted a donor briefing based on a contextual analysis which was shared with the consortium. The elections in Burundi and the sudden death of Pierre Nkurunziza, former head of State, a few weeks before the official end of his term, the conviction of the Vital Kamerhe, the former Chief of Staff of President Tshisekedi, a native of Walungu (South-Kivu) are some of the contextual factors that marked the second quarter of the project; calling for continued monitoring the situation; keeping in mind that any developments related to these events that may impact either the project of intercommunity dynamics in the plain or in the watershed area.

- **Economic recovery and development**

Under this sub-component, the project has been supporting 34 VSLAs composed of 850 members where women count for 72%. While Savings for the previous quarter had shifted from \$11,913,411 to \$ 26,470,588 with a corresponding rate in growth for the credit granted to members (from \$ 12,205,888 to \$ 17,352,940);

the total amount of savings for the quarter under review is \$50,693.750 with 80% given in loans to members that helped VSLA members implement 215 small income generating activities. There was a significant increase for both savings (233%) and loans (191%) compared to the previous quarter. Indeed, the period coincided with the harvest implying increase in income as they sell some of the harvest.

In addition, to promote entrepreneurship, youths benefitted from a strategic orientation on the daily monitoring and evaluation of the markets in the context of Covid-19. In this process, the youths and mentors met and discussed under the facilitation of focal points previously trained. Also, certificates were issued for their participation in the trainings on CEFÉ and L2E approaches.

Finally, the youth were connected to actors of the specialized markets of their choice as potential mentors. As such, the project facilitated face-to-face meetings between the leaders of the forty groups of young entrepreneurs and their potential mentors in full respect of covid-19 measures

- **GBV/FP/Reproductive Health**

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, GBV/SRH activities have been classified as life-saving activities according to the IRC contingency plan. In order to better adapt to the context and thus avoid the spread of pandemic while implementing activities, the project decided to put on hold gatherings and maintained street-by-street sensitization by the community Action groups along with community relays in each village and telephone exchanges with the health zone, the nurses in charge of the health centers supported by the project,. The community radio station Sauti Ya Amani played a role in carrying out sensitization and broadcasts on certain specific themes of the GBV/SRH component such as:.

- Prevention and mitigation measures against COVID-19.

- Continuity of services for the survivors of sexual violence and the management of contraceptive methods in health facilities, while strengthening infection prevention measures at the health center level.

Follow-up and coaching by telephone has been regular with orientations and exchanges on the implementation of GBV RH activities.

MONITORING PROGRESS

The project is routinely collecting and analyzing data through its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit, to determine whether or not the project activities are on track, to inform decision-making as to relevant actions to maintain or increase successes while identifying areas for improvement. We should note that, Covid-19 brought about limitations but the project was able to ensure follow up via the phone and, in some other contexts, through community relays to ensure the project gets the feedback and information needed.

GENDER AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

As usual, despite all the issues arising from the COVID-19 context and the difficulties to ensure the full participation, the project is making all efforts necessary to ensure participation and inclusion of women and marginalized groups. For instance, as the project is working on the extension of the main canal (irrigation infrastructure), it is our duty to ensure the participation of women, youths and Batwa to the activities to enhance equity in income gaining.

CHALLENGES

1. Given the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the monitoring for this quarter was mostly conducted online. It should also be noted that accurate data on participation level is difficult to collect when activities are conducted by community members themselves, i.e. the same people doing the awareness and mediations at the community level. Reporting on the number and type of conflicts identified has been privileged here;

2. Despite efforts made in the area, access to credit and the implementation of guarantee funds in favor of small producers, partner cooperatives supported by the MyA project and value chain actors are not yet effective;
3. From early March onwards, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a number of disruptions to project activity as all activities bringing many people together were forced to be put on hold, or be adapted to respect COVID-19 safety measures, especially community awareness-raising activities such as town hall meetings (“Tribunes d’Expression Populaires”), participatory theater, solidarity activities, coaching of Peace Committees, as well as listener club activities. The collaboration between the consortium partners and the security briefing provided to the project regularly to project staff significantly helped to prevent security incidents;
4. The reduction of project staff and delay in getting the 2020 workplan approved while this is the last year for this project and knowing that the project had set priority interventions for the year informed by the mid-term review;

LESSONS LEARNED

- (1) The donor decision to support construction of the additional reservoir in Nyamugali increased and renewed community eagerness to support the project as though the reiterated the commitment to serve them;
- (2) The Peace Committees recently set up in Watershed area have increasingly gained community recognition and are now considered trustworthy mechanisms for conflict prevention. The continued referral of conflicts to the committees even by local leaders (village chiefs) demonstrates favorable levels of trust from local communities who are calling upon them. Indeed, within less than 6 months of their installation in the watershed, they are believed to be true contributors to peace in their communities with regards to the number of conflicts mediated: while 18 conflicts were mediated during the first quarter, they have increased to 55 during the second quarter; which means that with the continuous support and structuring, they will be able to support peace and development in their respective areas.
- (3) Land tenure is a concern for every farmer though they may not overtly express it. Indeed, while the populations of Mugule and Katala in the watershed area who were reluctant at the beginning of the Land mapping process, they are now excited about it, to the extent that even when the project decided to stop the process owing to disturbances, they wrote letters to ask the consortium to resume committing to support the process.