



MAJI YA AMANI

Annual Analytical Progress Report

Project Name: Integrated Water Resources Management

Target Areas: Ruzizi Plain, DRC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the IRC-led Integrated Water Resources Management project (IWRM) consortium comprises also Stichting ZOA and Search for Common Ground as strategic partners. The project is implemented in DR Congo, South Kivu province, specifically in the Ruzizi plain, along the borders of both Rwanda and Burundi. The area is rich with natural resources, including water that provides a substantial opportunity for agriculture and household use, thereby creating a potential bond for communities divided along ethnic lines. If well exploited, the Ruzizi Plain would potentially be capable of feeding all of the total population in the plain and the nearby areas.

Targeting 28,800 beneficiaries, this multisector and multi-year project aims at contributing to the reduction of violence and the increase in stability for the *groupement* of Luberizi by (1) increasing access to land and reducing land conflict, (2) increasing access to safe potable and irrigation water and reducing water-related conflict, (3) ensuring equitable and inclusive access to income generation opportunities, and (4) increasing awareness of the population's pressure on natural resources.

Covering the period from January to December 2020, this report provides an analytical view on the progress made by the project during the period. Keeping in mind that the period under review was the fourth and last year of the project, the project team needed to ensure that some of the activities that had begun earlier were complete. An extension of some of the activities and approaches made to the watershed area were carried out, and a transition was made to ensure the community takes over responsibility and ownership over project achievements for sustainability to be visible after the project closes.

It's worth highlighting a few key achievements: to start with, in the Land tenure and area, the project made sure all the irrigated perimeter was successfully and efficiently secured by 219 group titles covering around 1,035 hectares and issued by the relevant states authorities. They were made available to the 3,045 co-owners and pertaining documentation and a co-management charter that was popularized on a large scale was signed by the farmers concerned. This greatly improved the safe and sustainable access of households to land in the irrigated and non-irrigated area, i.e., from 4.10% of households of all ethnic groups at the beginning of the project to 40.8% at the end of 2020, and people (including 46% women) improved their knowledge on how to claim their land rights.

Regarding access to water, the construction of a 70 m³ water tank in Nyamugali was completed. This increased access to drinking water for the population of Nyamugali and Sango, the most populated villages of Luberizi. Consequently, household access to drinking water in the *groupement* of Luberizi tremendously improved (from 0.6% to 99.5%). Beside the 28,800 inhabitants of the *groupement* of Luberizi, the project further improved the drinking water supply in five localities in the city of Sange (for the benefit of an additional 5,850 individuals), bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 34,650.

The endline survey showed that 88.6% of households stated that the influence of women in water management has increased, with a noticeable increase of hygiene management and a reduction of the distance to the water fetching point, thereby also reducing the risk of being assaulted on their way.

Among other key achievements in the area of Income Generating Activities, we should highlight the Farmer Integrated Plan approach. Households strongly recognize that the increase in local economic activities has a positive impact on security and social cohesion in their environment, with a proportion of 96.4% (including 48.7% women and 33.2% youth). The project facilitated and realized capacity building activities and funds mobilization through Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups with the objective to contribute to the promotion of livelihoods at the household level. During the reporting year, the project noted a great increase in funds mobilization, with around \$72,000 mobilized in savings, while a total amount of \$79,000 (against \$12,000 in 2019) were

distributed to members as credits throughout the year. The endline survey shows that 59.3% of farmers' agricultural production increased against 31% at mid-term thanks to the credit.

Apart from connecting farmers to the Equity bank to ensure access to credit, the proportion of farmers who apply improved agricultural practices thanks to project supervision has increased significantly and reached 81% towards the end of the project (against an expected target of 60%). In addition, 54.5% of the beneficiaries have improved their skills regarding improved agriculture and livestock practices

Regarding the population's awareness on pressure on limited resources, the project's interventions led to increased awareness of the community of the demographic pressure on natural resources in the area. They are taking actions to decrease it; all four targeted health facilities in the intervention area providing family planning (FP) services, which are youth-friendly and meet Ministry of Health and WHO standards, are currently technically supported by the project. 70.6% of people are aware that the available natural resources are insufficient to sustain the entire population of Luberizi continually and that they need to take actions.

Last but not least, keeping in mind that the project was designed to serve as tool for cohesion among then rival ethnic groups in the implementation zone, the project team ensures that all the interventions are conflict sensitive by inclusively identifying partners and issues to be addressed throughout the project. Our activities generate community-based feedback that helps direct our interventions as well as that of the consortium. These interventions are planned and conducted in a way that takes conflict dynamics into thorough consideration. The detailed monitoring of the context and close contacts with local partners and other key stakeholders are important ingredients that help identify any potential event or development that calls for adaptations or interventions in relation to project activities to best avoid an escalation of tensions.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACEPSKILU	<i>Association des Consommateurs d'Eau potable de Sange et Luberizi</i> (in English : Association of Drinking Water Consumers of Sange and Luberizi)
ADCI	<i>Association pour le Développement Communautaire Intégrée</i> (in English: Integrated Community Development Association)
CCRCC	<i>Comité Consultatif de Règlement des Conflits Coutumiers</i> (in English: Consulting Committee for the Resolution of Customary Conflicts)
CIAP-DDRC	<i>Commission Interprovinciale d'Appui au Processus de Sensibilisation, Démobilisation et Réintégration Communautaire</i> (in English: Interprovincial Support Commission for the Process of Sensitization, Demobilization and Community Reintegration)
CICF	<i>Comité Intérimaire de Coordination Foncière</i> (in English: Interim Land Coordination Committee)
COOPAILU	<i>Coopérative Agricole des Usagers de l'Irrigation de Luberizi</i> (in English : Agricultural Cooperative of Irrigation Users of Luberizi)
COOSOPRODA	<i>Coopérative de Solidarité pour la Production des Denrées Alimentaires</i> (in English: Solidarity Cooperative for the Production of Food Commodities)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> (in English : Armed Forces of the DRC)
FP	Family Planning
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBVIMS	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ILC	Initiative pour un Leadership Cohésif
IMC	International Medical Corps
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MIS	Market Information System
MONUSCO	<i>Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo</i> (in English : United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAC	Post Abortion Care
PI	<i>Paysan Innovateur</i> (English: Innovative Farmer)
PIP	<i>Plan Intégré du Paysan</i> (English: Integrated Farmer's Plan)
PNC	<i>Police Nationale du Congo</i> (in English: National Police)
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health

STAREC	<i>Stabilisation et Reconstruction à l'Est du Congo</i> (in English : National Stabilization and Reconstruction Program)
TEP	<i>Tribune d'Expression Populaire</i> (in English: town hall meeting)
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENT

The year 2020 was marked by an overall slowing down of activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related prevention measures. The project team consistently monitored the situation to avoid any significant impact on project activities while ensuring the safety of beneficiaries, partners and project staff alike. Project activities were adapted to respect the government's preventive measures to address the COVID-19 crisis. Emphasis was placed on respecting preventive and protection measures, such as wearing face masks, regular hand washing or disinfection with hand sanitizing solutions and social distancing. In this regard, the local radio station "*Sauti ya Amani*" supported by the project was increasingly used for project related sensitization activities and allowed for the inclusion of risk messaging regarding COVID-19.

The restriction of people's movement between the cities of Uvira, Bukavu and Goma has had a considerable impact on the economic activities of populations, and more specifically on food imports. While economic activities have started to rebound since the third quarter of 2020 after the spread of the virus slowed down and preventive measures were gradually lifted, the economic recovery has been modest and uneven across different areas of the country.

With regards to security in 2020, the socio-political and security situation in the Ruzizi Plain and in the watershed area continued to be volatile. Several major incidents were reported during the reporting period. Though these incidents did not directly affect the implementation of the project, they had impacts on the context, and thus indirectly affected the project and its activities. For instance, a rise in urban crimes, including in burglary and carjacking, were noted. In addition, security incidents with potential and real impact on the implementation of activities included demonstrations, cases of foreign armed groups crossing the project zone and clashes with either armed groups or the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). Targeted acts of assassination, summary executions, robberies followed by burglaries, kidnappings for ransom, and demonstrations followed by barricades have also been reported. The project team consistently monitored the situation. If needed, movement and/or the implementation of activities were temporarily suspended to ensure the safety of project staff, partners and project materials.

The year 2020 also saw a significant reduction in International Rescue Committee (IRC) project staff and activities which have been undertaken since Q2. Between 1 January and 31 December 2020, the number of IRC staff reduced from 52 to 6 as agreed with the donor.

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Before going into detail on key achievements made by outcome and main sector, it is important to note that the project was able to organize only one steering committee meeting in December 2020, after all others had to be cancelled during the reporting period due to COVID-19 constraints. The meeting was preceded by a field visit to ensure that the steering committee's previous recommendations had been addressed. The South Kivu delegation was led by the Vice-Governor of the province with the participation of the four partner Provincial Technical Ministers and three Provincial Deputies. Other project administrative partners at provincial and territorial level including the Coordinator of the National Stabilization and Reconstruction Program (STAREC), community leaders and members, as well as members of the "IRC – Search for Common Ground (SFCG) – ZOA consortium" participated in the field visit. Beside some recommendations for improvement, the steering committee congratulated the Maji ya Amani project for its achievements and promised to support the project during the remaining period, to ensure that the achievements are more sustainable.

Outcome 1: INCREASED AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LAND AND REDUCTION OF CONFLICTS

Land tenure process

By 31 December 2020, the acquisition of 219 group titles has been completed (covering around 1,035 hectares of land) and made available at the project level in the irrigated area in Luberizi. The project has popularized the perimeter co-management charter on a large scale; all the 3,045 beneficiary households of the 219 group titles already have their basic act and 100% of unionist representatives are in place.

The project has greatly improved the safe and sustainable access of households to land in the irrigated and non-irrigated area, i.e., from 4.10% of households of all ethnic groups at the beginning of the project to 40.8% at the end of 2020. 86.8% (including 46% women) know how to claim their land rights against 70% at the baseline. Based on the success of the land security process, the land security process was scaled up and implemented in the catchment area throughout 2020. Two villages of Mugule and Katala in the *groupement* of Kigoma have been selected for this scaling-up.

Key achievements include the completed mapping process, and the establishment and reinforcement of eleven peace committees. Two *Comité Intérimaire de Coordination Foncière* (CICF) members from the Ruzizi Plain further joined the mediation teams in the watershed area to serve as mentors to the peace committee members of Mugule and Katala, and to increase collaboration between upstream and downstream committees and stakeholders. Members of the *brigade foncière* were included in the process to ensure the laws were applied accordingly. However, as recommended by the national expert in charge of the DRC land reform process, this institutional role is now devoted to the *Comité Consultatif de Règlement des Conflits Coutumiers* (CCRCC). Hence, the CCRCC received training and mentorship to build their capacities to better understand land law, as well as their respective responsibilities and roles in relation to it.

In accordance with the law on fundamental principles relating to agriculture, rural land cannot be subject to a registration certificate. A decentralized land management system on a customary basis consisting of a local land service, commonly referred to as the Community Land Register, has been put in place and reinforced: the Bafuliiru community land register. By the end of 2020, the publication of the results of participatory mapping in the watersheds (in the villages of Mugule and Katala) and in the irrigated area were completed. The project collected the signatures of forms that did not present any problem, and then resolved complaints and observed errors. A total of twelve Community Land Register officers were trained in mapping techniques and in electronic development of maps from GPS coordinates. The community land charter, which includes local customs, land tenure management, the acquisition and terms of transfer of land rights, has been developed in the chieftery of Bafuliiru. This is an important step towards establishing a basis for the implementation of the DRC land reform process and for future projects funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, such as TRIDE and others.

Continuous situation analyses following the land protection process in the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi revealed the existence of landless households (the indigenous pygmies (Batwa) communities being particularly affected), as well as some available community lands and unexploited lands. Hence, the project carried out an advocacy campaign to increase vulnerable landless households' access to land. This campaign aimed at local chiefs and state authorities (rural development services, division of the plan and the cadastral office), as well as the provincial government (Ministry of Land Affairs). Through a long process, a list of 297 vulnerable landless households, including 164 (55%) women-led and 14% Batwa households, and free land, which may be subject to distribution to these landless, were identified. This process is ongoing and will be finalized in 2021. Once again, this can be seen as a reference for future interventions funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands seeking equal access to land.

To increase secure access to land, the project notably supported two mechanisms for land conflict mediation: (1) peace committees in supported villages and (2) the CICF. During 2020, peace committees completed 474 conflict mediations in Luberizi and the watershed area. To support this process, the project organized eleven capacity building sessions for ten peace committees and created a coordination committee in the watershed area composed of 71 men and 30 women, while providing the means for the mediation of all land-related conflicts identified.

Regarding institutional strengthening of the land administration at territory level, the project is also currently in the process of constructing a building in Sange, which will be equipped before being handed over to the land administration. It will house offices for the securitization and cadastre services across the entire Uvira territory, and therefore, facilitate access for project beneficiaries to make requests for services related to the cadastre and land securitization.

Outcome 2: INCREASED ACCESS TO WATER AND REDUCTION OF CONFLICTS OVER WATER

Drinking water

In 2020, the construction of a 70m³ water tank in Munara was completed. This increased access to drinking water for the population of Nyamugali and Sango, the most populated villages of Luberizi. Consequently, household access to drinking water in the *groupement* of Luberizi tremendously improved (from 0.6% to 99.5%). Beside the 28,800 inhabitants of the *groupement* of Luberizi, the project further improved the drinking water supply in five localities in the city of Sange (for the benefit of an additional 5,850 individuals), bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 34,650.

The endline survey showed that 88.6% of households stated that the influence of women in water management has increased. The women stated that there is a considerable reduction in risks of being attacked while fetching water, and they attested a significant reduction in the burden linked to fetching drinking water.

Related to capacity building of *Association des Consommateurs d'Eau potable de Sange et Luberizi* (ACEPSKILU) and accountability in drinking water management, the following major achievements can be highlighted:

- Finalization of the construction and equipment of the ACEPSKILU office followed by its provisional acceptance;
- Dissemination of the administrative and financial procedures manual for ACEPSKILU;
- Equipping of ACEPSKILU with material necessary for the maintenance of the drinking water network, including the water analysis kit, one motorcycle and two bicycles, some reserve pipes and plumbing accessories.

Irrigation water

As with drinking water, the people of Luberizi also benefited from improved access to irrigation water thanks to the project, namely from 1.0% to 91.2%. However, despite this access to water to allow farmers to improve production, we do not observe a great craze like the one we expected to see for agricultural activity in the irrigated area. For this purpose, authorities at various levels have been contacted to support the sensitizations carried out by the project.

Key achievements include the following:

- The construction of the 6.5km long main canal in rubble stone masonry was ongoing;
- The irrigated perimeter of Luberizi was extended to the two remaining areas (blocks) Mukama and Majambere;
- Construction of the *Coopérative Agricole des Usagers de l'Irrigation de Luberizi* (COOPAILU) office: All structural works are completed with the finishing works in progress. Everything will be ready for the final reception before the end of the project;
- Control of runoff (water) that affects the good functioning of the main irrigation canal;
- Maintenance and optimization of the irrigation network;
- Formalization and capacity building of the sub-watershed management committee;
- Reinforcement of the irrigation infrastructure management capacities of COOPAILU and strengthening the organizational capacities of COOPAILU.

Outcome 3: INCREASED SAFE, SECURE, INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO INCOME GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES

Under this outcome, the project focused on improving livelihoods within the targeted communities, with a particular focus on the youth. More specifically, the project facilitated and realized capacity building activities and funds mobilization through Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups with the objective to contributed to the promotion of livelihoods at the household level.

In 2020, the project continued to support 996 women and youth members of the 40 VSLAs supported by the project, to further develop the habit of saving money and to encourage the running of small businesses or implementation of Income Generating Activities (IGAs). The project's endline survey showed that VSLA members used the credits received in their VSLAs to improve their agricultural production (purchase of inputs, seeds, fertilizers, use of labour, etc.), especially during the cropping season. During the reporting year, the project noted a great increase in funds mobilization, with around 72,000 USD mobilized in savings, while a total amount of 79,000 USD (against 12,000 USD in 2019) were distributed to members as credits throughout the year. In addition to increasing beneficiaries' financial capacities to face emergencies or changing circumstances, this credit also increased their economic activities, including agriculture activities or starting a new business. The endline survey showed that 59.3% of farmers' agricultural production increased against 31% at mid-term thanks to the credit.

Furthermore, the 40 VSLA groups were organized in five networks or clusters and revitalized with the support of focal points to become stronger and able to access important credits from microfinance institutions (MFIs).

To promote entrepreneurship among young people, 40 youth groups benefited from cash transfers with the support of the project. To support them, a management committee of these youth groups was set up with the involvement and the support of local authorities, the provincial ministry in charge of youth and leaders of young people at the *groupement* level. Fifty young people (including 17 women) received training on the development of business plans oriented towards the marketing of sanitation products with the support of the project's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) component and the national water, hygiene and sanitation service. The youth groups received capital (USD 350 per

group) to implement their business plans, which were either linked to the strengthening existing small-sized enterprises or IGA, or the launch of new small-sized enterprises or IGA.

Results from the endline survey, households report a certain commitment to IGAs, including for women and youth: While in 2017 only 13.6% (incl. 6.4% women and 8.5% youth) were committed to IGAs, this number increased to 33% (incl. 24% women and 24.1% youth) in 2020.

Either in the perimeter or in the watershed, the implementation of the *Integrated Farmer's Plan (PIP Plan Intégré du Paysan (PIP))* approach is ongoing in 2020. A total number of 197 innovative farmers (*paysans innovateurs (PIs)*) have been selected and trained with other capacity building sessions (coaching, exchange visits, etc). They are visiting households and provide feedback on the way these are achieving their goals. 150 of them have been oriented on the VSLA approach and will soon be organized in groups. In Maji ya Amani, the PIP is operating at two levels, namely in increasing productivity, and in rational management of household income with the participation of women and girls. For more sustainability, the project is working with local implementing partners (ASCODER and IJED) which have been previously strengthened.

Moreover, the project continued supporting farmers through trainings and coaching. The 2,210 beneficiaries managed to achieve the following yield: On a total area of 598.23ha the total production was 4486.73 tons, with an average yield of 7.5tons per ha . Seed multiplication (within and outside the irrigated area) with agro-multipliers (10ha of rice and 2ha of maize) has been successfully completed. The proportion of farmers who apply improved agricultural practices thanks to project supervision has increased significantly and reached 81% towards the end of the project (against an expected target of 60%). In addition, 54.5% of the beneficiaries have improved their skills regarding improved agriculture and livestock practices (e.g., sustainable conservation, climate smart agriculture, demand-driven agriculture) on the production of crops and/or livestock products (identified value chains) in the last 24 months.

The contribution of credit to increasing their agricultural production is well recognized by 59.3% of households. Households strongly recognize that the increase in local economic activities has a positive impact on security and social cohesion in their environment, with a proportion of 96.4% (including 48.7% women and 33.2% youth).

However, we are still facing a challenge related to the respect of the agricultural calendar by rice producers in the irrigated perimeter. To address these, the project organized sensitization sessions through Sauti ya Amani radio, and plan to involve the provincial authorities.

Also, the perception of increased household income since the start of the project is not as strong as expected (27.4% of positive statements compared to the end-of-project target of 50%).

In relation to value chain development, the following key achievements were achieved in 2020:

- A market analysis for milk and pepper products was conducted, incl. mapping/cartography, screening, products and by-products, yield etc.;
- A Market Information System (MIS) has been set up. The neighbouring target markets are Bukavu, Luvungi, Sangé, Uvira and Kamanyola. The MIS will be made functional in next steps and will allow farmers and traders to make informed choice/decisions in their activities of purchasing products or selling their own products;
- A Teja hybrid chili pepper marketing contract signed between Gashora Farm and 64 market gardeners from Luberizi via the SOGEPA Company for 20ha of Teja dry pepper production fields.
- 5kg of Teja hybrid pepper seeds purchased from Gashora farm and made available as seed credit to market gardeners within the framework of the marketing of the pepper in Rwanda.

- A guarantee fund of USD 70,000 at Equity Bank to facilitate access to agricultural credit for rice farmers in Luberizi.
- A line of credit of USD 34,428 has been opened at Equity Bank for one first agricultural credit trial to 79 rice farmers of Luberizi, members of COOPAILU and 14 of *Coopérative de Solidarité pour la Production des Denrées Alimentaires* (COOSOPRODA) for season A 2021. An amount of agricultural credit varying between USD 50 and USD 1,000 per eligible rice farmer per cropping season will be provided to the farmers in 2021.
- 110 individual bank accounts opened and operational for innovative farmers who are members of COOPAILU and COOSOPRODA;
- 79 out of 110 business plans validated, who will receive agricultural credit during season A 2021;
- Signature of a partnership contract between ZOA and Equity Bank to facilitate access to agricultural credit for small producers in Luberizi, who are members of supported cooperatives (with emphasis on agricultural inputs and payment of labour).
- Even though still at beginning of the process, 10 out of 210 innovative farmers in the Luberizi irrigated area have already been identified as eligible for agricultural credits. (on track);
- Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between COOPAILU & COOSOPRODA, clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the value chain, structure and governance, access to formal credit, investment in infrastructure and processing units, access to quality agricultural inputs, buoyant market and the PIP approach. This also included the setting up of a joint committee to monitor the MoU, including a consultation framework, two marketing plans on behalf of COOPAILU (paddy rice), ADCP Rwenena (grain maize) and market gardeners (pimento).
- A contract for the sale of paddy rice to “Ets Ephraim & Manassé” was developed.

Outcome 4: PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND START TAKING ACTIONS TO DECREASE IT

Regarding the project’s SRH promotion and GBV component, activities implemented in 2020 focused on contributing to the sustainability of the achievements made in previous years. This included refresher sessions for community leaders, health personnel and health service providers on topics developed in the past, follow-up-supervision and coaching actions accompanied by an exchange of experiences.

A review of case management tools was conducted in 2019 and involved health providers and voluntary psychosocial focal points. With the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and International Medical Corps (IMC), the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) was made more explicit and, since the beginning of 2020, it was used for assisted-data collection. This active learning method was carried out to demonstrate best practices to health care providers.

The project noted an increased awareness of the community over demographic pressure on natural resources. They are taking actions to decrease it: All four targeted health facilities in the intervention area providing family planning (FP) services, which are youth-friendly and meet Ministry of Health and WHO standards, are currently technically supported by the project (the support includes capacity building of staff). 70.6% of people are aware that the available natural resources are insufficient to sustain the entire population of Luberizi. Over the course of 2020, a total of 1,821 beneficiaries opted for and applied FP methods with the support of the project (compared with 735 in 2018 and 1,046 in 2019). Community mobilization activities were so successful that after a series of participatory theater events, about 600 women went to health centers the following day to seek family planning advice and support.

Additionally, three SRH facilities in the intervention area have been duly equipped this year and have at sufficient disposal materials and supplies to provide quality sexual and reproductive health services in appropriate spaces. In the supported SRH facilities, 45 reproductive health providers who were trained in 2019 have received refresher trainings (among them 9 in FP, 7 in Post Abortion Care (PAC) and 29 in GBV) and have increased clinical skills to provide quality SRH services. In addition, they are receiving monthly individualized FP, PAC and GBV coaching visits. Three of the four supported SRH providers offering clinical care for sexual assault survivors are consistently meeting 80% of the quality criteria. The project is providing additional support and coaching to the fourth health facility to improve the quality of care to meet the target of 80%.

SOCIAL COHESION, SECURITY GOVERNANCE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

In order to increase knowledge and skills in mediation, inclusive dialogue and conflict resolution, either conflicts in general, land disputes or those related to natural resource management, the project organized various training and support activities for local awareness-raising, mediation and conflict resolution structures (CICF, COPAILU, *Tribunes d'Expression Populaire* (TEPs), community dialogue sessions between farmers and herders, mediation and peace committees in the villages, intercommunity dialogues of young people, educational broadcasts on radio *Sauti ya Amani*, etc.).

Tribune d'Expression Populaire or town hall meetings (TEPs)

The project conducted four TEPs in 2020, engaging a total of 196 participants (137 women and 59 men). The TEPs are town hall-styled dialogue forums that aim to provide a platform for communities to engage directly with local and provincial authorities. By creating a space for horizontal, constructive dialogue between state actors and communities, the TEPs contributed to improved communication which helps to prevent and dispel misinformation and build a more cohesive relationship between communities and authorities. The topics of each TEP are determined through a participatory discussion where communities and authorities agree on the most relevant discussion points.

FARDC and PNC sensitization

Security Sector Reform is part of the overall project conflict mitigation strategy through SFCG. As part of the Maji Ya Amani project, the different Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and National Police (PNC) bases of Uvira territory regularly conduct awareness sessions. Based on the extension of work to the watershed area as part of the 2020 workplan, the FARDC and PNC bases were also involved. The objective of these sessions is to shift perceptions and attitudes of security actors, with an aim to bring about behavioural change using constructive and positive communication. The activity follows a participatory, dialogue-based methodology to ensure that participants can engage in a safe and controlled space. Most of these sessions are conducted jointly with civilians from the host community. These sessions serve also to conduct dialogue between communities and soldiers as they share their perspectives, challenges and find commonalities.

COVID-19 preventive measures disturbed the realisation of these awareness sessions. Nevertheless, over the reporting period 20 awareness sessions were conducted with the FARDC and the PNC reaching 531 soldiers and policemen. Of this group, 89 were women (i.e., 17%). The sensitizations are mainly conducted by peer soldiers within their camps or barracks. Occasionally, civilians are involved in these discussions. Topics covered include:

- Protection of the project infrastructures (irrigation/drinking water);
- Joint police and community activities;
- A police officer of the people;

- Construction of the water tank of Nyamugali: How can the FARDC contribute to the securitization of workers on the site.

In preparation for this activity, the project developed two facilitation guides and two image boxes (*boîtes à images*)¹. These tools help our staff guide a constructive conversation with the soldiers/police to steer discussions towards new perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes. While each session had its own specific theme (see above), generally, all centered around positive roles the FARDC/PNC can play within their communities.

Community dialogue sessions

a) Farmer-Herder Dialogue

As part of the 2020 workplan, a series of farmer-herder dialogues was planned. These were developed to enable discussions among farmers and herders to reduce violent conflicts related to animal straying. Farmer-herder conflicts and conflicts related to animals straying account for half of all the conflicts reported and mediated by the 18 peace committees. During this quarter, three dialogue sessions were organized, a farmer-only consultation, a herder-only consultation and an inter-group (farmer-herder) dialogue. In April 2020, an assessment of cattle-owners, kraal managers and herdsman was conducted to ensure all relevant parties are included in dialogue.

- *Farmer consultations*: This session brought together 60 farmers from across the villages of the groupement of Luberizi. Community leaders and state services in charge of agriculture were also involved. The session followed a participatory research and discussion approach which allowed participants to assess the shortfalls of the various existing provincial decrees and orders at the community level.
- *Herder consultations*: Herder consultations followed the same approach as the farmer consultations. This brought together about 60 cattle owners, kraal managers and herdsman in addition to community leaders.
- *Joint sessions (farmer-herder dialogue)*: During the joint session, each committee presented their assessment, analyses and recommendations from their individual sessions and subsequently discussed their assessment. This allowed for constructive dialogue while synthesizing views and taking joint actions.

b) Intercommunity Youth Dialogue

Following engagement with the youth of Luberizi throughout 2020, informal discussions led to intercommunity youth dialogues that were held in Uvira from 26 until 28 October 2020 and from 27 until 29 January 2021. A restitution session was also organized in Luberizi on 30 January 2021. Since the beginning of the project, this has been the first opportunity for youth from all the communities in Luberizi to sit and discuss their issues in a non-violent way. The dialogue followed a series of separate meetings with the youth of each community and intercommunity preparatory meetings that brought together youth leaders. The opening ceremony of both sessions were attended by the two opposed *chefs de groupement*, the *Administrateur du Territoire* and representatives from the Provincial Ministry of Youth. The dialogue centered around the theme: “*Pour que Demain soit Meilleur*” (in English: For a Better Tomorrow). A participatory approach combining role-plays, mixed community and intra-community discussion, breakout and plenary sessions enabled discussions around the following issues: (i) What are our dreams for Luberizi? (ii) What went wrong between the youth of Luberizi? (iii) Which commitments do we want to make for a better future? (iv) What do we ask other communities so that we live better together?

¹ These are pictorial situations that depict soldiers/police exhibiting positive behaviours, fulfilling in a superior way their duties, and working towards building social cohesion.

Overall, discussions were peaceful and respectful. Each ethnic group had the opportunity to express their viewpoints and state their positions without intimidation or fear. The assembly discussed the *Chefferie* dispute regarding the Ruzizi Plain. Although no agreement could be reached on this issue, the youth were able to freely discuss their diverging positions, which serves as a vitally important development. The participants agreed to use dialogue as their primary means of resolving conflict. In total, 120 youths participated in the sessions; women represented 30% of all participants.

Below are the commitments made by the youth of Luberizi:

- Resort to dialogue as a means to solve all the conflicts and disputes that could arise among the youth and their respective communities;
- Organize regular dialogue sessions;
- Do their utmost to promote peace in their respective communities and live peacefully with all the communities;
- Avoid hatred and tribalism;
- Work together in the agricultural and cattle rearing sector.

Peace Forum

A peace retreat, organized by the project (SFCG), the *Initiative pour un Leadership Cohésif* (ILC), the *Association pour le Développement Communautaire Intégrée* (ADCI), and the *Commission Interprovinciale d'Appui au Processus de Sensibilisation, Démobilisation et Réintégration Communautaire* (CIAP-DDRC), took place from 14 to 16 September 2020 at the Catholic Seminary of Murhesa, near Bukavu, South Kivu. The retreat was held following two earlier retreats held in Kinshasa and Bukavu (Murhesa I) in October and December 2019. This retreat brought together leaders from armed coalitions and groups, tribal leaders and provincial and national government representatives. A declaration was adopted during the first Murhesa retreat. Yet concrete steps to ensure its effective implementation remained absent. Despite a fragile ceasefire observed from December 2019 to March 2020, fighting resumed again between armed groups in the Itombwe-Minembwe areas.

The main purpose of the Murhesa II retreat, therefore, was to assess reasons for the failure to implement the 2019 Murhesa resolutions and to identify realistic expectations moving forward. Building upon the experience of the first retreat, Murhesa II succeeded in securing high level participation of the national government. The Minister of Defense was sent as a dedicated representative of the Head of State. Provincial government was represented by the Provincial Minister of Interior, Security, Decentralization and Customary Affairs and the Vice-Chairman of the Provincial Assembly, as well as the heads of main security bodies (ANR, FARDC, PNC, SECAS). The meeting also included the participation of senior representatives of the Banyamulenge community and affiliated armed groups (Gumino, Twiganeho and Android).

Solidarity Activities

In 2020, 17 solidarity events were organized. These events brought together multiple categories of people around specific themes of interest. The goal of the solidarity activities was to offer an opportunity for individuals and groups to speak where they would not otherwise have the opportunity to collaborate, discuss and share ideas. Eight of these solidarity activities were organized together with the project listening clubs across the project zones. In addition, a series of sports events were also organized, which contributed towards the goal of bringing the youth of different villages and communities together to collaborate in a peaceful manner. Overall, 3,476 people (830 women and 2,646 men) participated in the eleven solidarity activities organized across the project zone in 2020.

PROJECT PERSPECTIVES FOR THE REMAINING PERIOD

1. Specific efforts will be made to ensure that any remaining activities are implemented, such as:
 - Undertake and implement corrections to the irrigation canal, and other activities in the watershed related to the PIP approach;
 - Finalize the construction and the handover of the reservoir of 70m³ in Munara to improve access to drinking water for population of Nyamugali and Sango villages (about 70% of the beneficiaries).
2. In addition, the project will focus on the following close-out activities and events:
 - Finalize the endline evaluation to assess the achievement of indicators, and organize validation sessions and restitution of its results;
 - Organize official handover ceremonies of the infrastructures built by the project to the Provincial Government, who in turn should transfer their management to the community structures set up or revitalized by the project for this purpose (i.e., ACEPSKILU for drinking water and COOPAILU for irrigation water);
 - Organize project closing ceremonies with key stakeholders and partners.
3. By the end of the reporting period, the expected project end date was 28 February 2021. However, during the last project monitoring visit by the Provincial Government and some MPs (led by the Vice-Governor of the Province) followed by the steering committee meeting in December 2020, one of the key recommendations was to request an extension of the project period. Almost all key stakeholders agreed that despite the many achievements made, there was still a need for an additional period of consolidation to strengthen the project's sustainability. For instance, this includes capacity building of the supported community structures to ensure proper management of the main infrastructures built by the project. In addition, this would also allow for the finalization of some important activities which may not be well closed and achieved at the end of February 2021. Hence, the consortium anticipates developing and submitting a No-Cost Extension request before the end of February 2021.