



INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

(MAJI YA AMANI)

Quarterly Narrative Progress Report

(July –September 2020)

Project Name: Integrated Water Resources Management

Target Areas: Ruzizi Plain (DRC)

Reporting Period: July- September2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the IRC-led Maji Ya Amani consortium comprising IRC, Stichting ZOA and Search for Common Ground is implementing the Integrated Water Resources Management project in the Ruzizi plain in South Kivu, DRC. The multisector and multi-year project aims 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 potable and irrigation water and reduction of water related conflict, (3) equitable and inclusive access to income generation opportunities, and (4) increasing awareness of population pressure on natural resources.

Luberizi groupement is located along the borders of both Rwanda and Burundi. This area 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. If well exploited, the Ruzizi Plain would potentially be capable of feeding all of the total population in the plain and the nearby areas.

Covering the period from July to September 2020, this quarterly report presents an update on the project activities and the implementation environment, including challenges and how the project manages to cope. We should note that, despite restrictions arising from the covid-19 pandemic, the project was able to maintain continued activity implementation, collaboration with relevant stakeholders including local administration; in full respect of the measures put in place to ensure safety of project staff and stakeholders. The community was strongly involved in different project activities organized in the intervention zone including, capacity building for Coopailu, value chains groups, scorecard activity, management of conflicts resulting from the land mapping exercise, capacity building/trainings, etc.

We should also note that following Covid-19, we observe increase in youth unemployment, in addition to perceived economic slowdown, with dramatic consequences on the social life of the population –causing political and social tensions. Indeed, the restriction of people's movement between the cities of Uvira, Bukavu and Goma has had a considerable impact on the economic activities, and more particularly on the food trade. Even though the governors of North and South Kivu took the decision to allow the movement of goods, this did not prevent the slowdown in trade or even the weakening of trade.

Furthermore, the socio-political and security situation in the Ruzizi Plain and in the watershed area continued to be characterized as volatile. Security incidents were continually reported and the project continued screening and monitoring the security to avoid incidents that would affect project staff or vehicles.

ACRONYMS

ACE	: Agence Congolaise de l'Environnement
ACEP	: Association des Consommateurs d'Eau Potable de Sange, Kigoma et Luberizi
ADCP	: Association de Développement pour la lutte contre la Pauvreté
ASCODER	: Assise Communautaire pour le Développement Rural
BDR	: Bureau de Reboisement
BCZ	: Bureau Central de la Zone de Santé
CCRCC	: Conseil Consultatif pour le Règlement des Conflits Coutumiers
COODEB	: Coopérative Laitière des Jeunes de Bwegera
COOPAILU	: Coopérative des Agriculteurs utilisateurs de l'Irrigation de Luberizi
COOPL	: Coopérative de Producteurs de Lait de Bwegera
COOSOPRODA	: Coopérative de Solidarité pour la Production des Denrées Agricoles 5
COOVEPEL	: Coopérative des Vendeurs de Produits Laitiers de Mutarule/Katekama
EPDE	: Ensemble Pour la Paix et le Développement Endogène
FP	: Family Planning
GJVL	: Groupement des Jeunes Vendeurs de Lait de Bwegera
Ha	: hectare
IF	: Innovative Farmers
IFP	: Integrated farmer's Plan
IJED	: Initiative des Jacobins Eleveurs pour le Développement
IRC	: International Rescue Committee
ITAPEL	: Inspection Territoriale de l'Agriculture, Pêche et Elevage
IWRM	: Integrated Water Resources Management
MoU	: Memorandum of understanding
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PAC	: Post Abortion Care
PNC	: Police Nationale Congolaise
SENASEM	: Service National des Semences
SRI	: Système de Riziculture Intensif
VSLA	: Village Savings and Loan Association

IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENT

During this third quarter, the socio-political and security situation in the Ruzizi Plain and in the watershed area continued to be characterized as volatile. The security incidents recorded included the following: ten cases of abductions/kidnapping, nine cases of cattle smuggling, six murders cases, nine cases of car high-jacking on the National Road #5 crossing Luberizi to Uvira, several reported cases of foreign armed groups crossing the project zone.

On August 7th, a soldier of the national army (FARDC) shot and killed 14 civilians and injured 9 others in Sange. This event caused demonstrations in the Ruzizi Plain and further deteriorated the already tense civilian-military relations. Also, on September 21st, three staff members of an international NGO were abducted near Sange and later released. A former Maji Ya Amani consortium local staff and youth leader in the Ruzizi Plain was arrested in relation to the INGO staff members' abduction. He was accused of aiding the abductors, however since his involvement didn't have substantial evidence, he was later released.

On August 23rd, the city of Uvira was attacked by armed men reportedly of the Gumino faction of former FARDC Colonel Mekanika, who defected from the army last December. The project team consistently monitored the situation to avoid significant impact on project activities. The project staff, the partners or the materials weren't directly affected by the incidents.

Regarding project activities, during this quarter there were no major issues to report, apart from community/beneficiaries' reluctance to support the land mapping process in Mugule and Katala villages following a rumor going about as though the project would have a negative intention to spoil / wrest land from Bafuliru community in order to give them to another community component (Banyamulenge). Indeed, these events impacted the initial planning, causing delays in the land mapping and land mediation process. This was successfully resolved thanks to project skilled mediation efforts with active involvement of local and provincial authorities, and in addition the project increased awareness through its radio programs and consultations with community leaders which contributed to lifting some of the obstacles.

With regards to the current pandemic, the project team consistently monitored the situation to avoid any significant impact on project activities. The consortium focal point for Covid-19 continued providing update status and provided sensitization sessions towards staff and community members. To avoid any disturbances stemming from measures taken by the national government to address the Covid-19 crisis, the project team kept adapting activities implementation to the context taking into account the restrictions put into place to guarantee the safety of project staff, partners and beneficiaries.

During this quarter, accessibility has been a challenge in some areas following the degradation of road infrastructures due to natural disasters caused by the rains. Bridges have collapsed, several sections of road eroded by rainwater, crops submerged and / or washed away by torrential rains; these even caused deaths: more than 50 in the territory of Uvira in April, and two in July. This situation continued to have negative effects on the lives of the population during all this third quarter. Activities which were supposed to take place in Uvira were reduced, and some were relocated out of Uvira city.

On the socio-economic front, the DRC is currently facing slowing economic growth and increased youth unemployment, and this has dramatic consequences on the social life of the population – in addition of causing political and social tensions. Indeed, 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 particularly on the food trade. Even though the governors of North and South Kivu took the decision to allow the movement of goods, this did not prevent the slowdown in trade or even the weakening of trade in products.

The consequences are felt in the surrounding markets of the project action area of Sange, Luvungi and Uvira. Small traders, generally women who used to sell products along the roads and in the corners of neighbourhoods or in small markets, can no longer carry out their profession properly due to the less accessibility to the supply circuit and the scarcity of these products. Some food products consumed in the project action area, and in South Kivu (the whole province) in general, come from North Kivu. Its volcanic soil is a basin of great production of many foods. Product prices have increased considerably: In Bukavu for example, the price of a kilo of potatoes sold at 600 Congolese francs before the crisis has risen to 1000 FC, 1 kilo of beans has risen from 1000 FC to 1800 FC.

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Access to drinking water: Construction of a reservoir in Nyamugali & Sango and Extension of the Luberizi-Sange-Kigoma drinking water network

After the donor gave the approval for the construction of the reservoir in Nyamugali, the recruitment of a firm to contract for this activity started in July 2020 and was completed in September 2020

The company named “Maison la Grâce Solidarité” (MGS), which was chosen to carry out this work, has already started. At present, the following steps have already been taken:

- ✓ Installation of the 70 m3 tank is completed;
- ✓ The rubble hedgehog is made, with a clean concrete already poured; and the reinforcement is in progress;
- ✓ Topographic double check has been done and the digging of the trench for the piping in progress.

According to our planning, the contract signed with the company provides that the work should be finished by the end of November 2020 if everything goes as planned. The provisional handover should take place thereafter, and we will then start the warranty period.

Hygiene promotion activities

Activities in this area have been reduced according to the donor recommendation. During this period, field visits have been organized in schools and villages for coaching sessions after monitoring of activities done by school clubs and hygiene committees. These structures continues sensitization sessions in their localities.

Payment for drinking water

The pricing and the community mobilization to increase fund collection on the Luberizi-Sange-Kigoma network improves as project implementation progresses. During this period, a good improvement was observed in the collection and mobilization of contributed funds for water. This was achieved due to the community mobilization set up in the villages which did not pay before, and which finally understand and decide to start paying. This is the case in Nyamugali and Sango, which are the most populated villages in Luberizi *groupement*. The fact of seeing the implementation of the reservoir in their locality may have contributed a lot to this change. From July to August 2020, we have an increase of more than 500,000FC, compared to the past months.

Capacity building of ACEP and accountability in drinking water management

Three major achievements should be discussed here for the period from July to September 2020:

- The finalization of the construction of the ACEP office, which now only awaits the equipment to formalize the provisional acceptance and start the warranty phase;
- The development of the administrative and financial procedures manual for ACEP;
- The relaunch of the Community Performance Bulletin (Community Score Card) process to strengthen the level of accountability in the management of the drinking water supply network.

Monitoring the co-management mechanism and the hydraulic works and water supply

Joint evaluation activities of the implementation of the co-management mechanism of the drinking water supply network took place from July to September 2020. From July 1st to 3rd 2020, the project received a specific and follow-up visit of the Minister of Rural Development who is the focal point of the Provincial Government to ensure the monitoring of drinking water activities, and he is also signatory of the acts of co-management and the procurement agreements. The visit focused on the continuation of the work related to the implementation by the project of recommendations and clauses agreed in the act of co-management and the procurement agreement, in particular the construction of the ACEPSKILU office and the implementation of its management tools, in particular the manual of Administrative and Financial Procedures.

There was a follow-up visit of the Congolese Environment Agency (ACE) in the last week of September, to check on the level of progress in the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan of the drinking water network. In general, the ACE Director impressions were positive, and some minor recommendations to improvement were formulated.

Increased IGA opportunities / Economic recovery and development

During this third quarter, the project focused on supporting the 40 VSLAs, of which 16 are in the 3rd cycle, 18 in the 2nd cycle and 6 in the 1st cycle. All of these 40 VSLAs have a total of 996 members

among them 288 (29%) of men and 708 (71%) of women. Below is VSLAs increase from quarter two to quarter three 2020.

GVB/FP/Reproductive Health

During this period (July to September 2020) as part of the implementation of GBV and Reproductive Health activities, street-by-street sensitizations by community action groups (GAC in French) and community relays (RECO in French), Radio broadcasts with members of GAC and the Radio team by the support of SFCG continued to be carried out. There was also the management of cases of sexual abuse of women and girls, and a considerable number of new users in family planning and post abortion care (PAC) were registered. In total, 900 new users started using the methods and benefit from post abortion care. There were also follow-up sessions with the BCZ in relation to the state of GBV, Family Planning (FP) and PAC commodities and inputs, as well as monitoring and coaching with health facilities and GAC. A mechanism for strengthening the organizational capacities of GACs is already in place. Refresher courses in favour of all these structures on the Prevention and control of Infections and Covid-19 have been organized. Finally, there were joint monitoring visits with BCZ of activities at the health facilities and those in the community.

Construction of the main canal over 6.5 Km

This activity was launched in July and is progressing normally. This work consists of preparatory works such as cleaning, mowing, stump removal; including construction of the canal banks in rubble masonry, the construction of the bottom of the canal with 5 cm of concrete poured on a rubble hedgehog in dry masonry; and the embankment to ensure a good holding of the earth above the level of the canal. Part of the activities completed include: construction of the finished canal with bottom: 3,226 m; rehabilitation of the old masonry over a distance of 644m; construction of the banks over 500 m and construction of one bridge. All in all, a distance of 3870 m is already finished and ready to provide water in the fields while the canal still misses the bottom part on a -500 m long distance.

Extension of the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi, in Mukama and Majambere

In order to increase the amount of land that can be used in all seasons, an activity to extend the irrigated perimeter was initiated last July. This activity consists in extending the irrigation network on 114 ha (useful surface) in Mukama and about 40 ha in Majambere. The works consist in the construction of a 1,800m long in Mukama, the digging of the irrigation canals network (secondary and tertiary), the construction of distribution boxes, the installation of gates, and construction of special works. In this front, results already achieved are as follows:

- ✓ Construction of the canal with pouring of the bottom of the canal is complete over 1,800 m;
- ✓ Fixing of the gates on the whole distance already built: 6 gates,
- ✓ Construction of the bridges over the canal: 3 bridges,
- ✓ Maintenance of the secondary and tertiary canals in Mukama;
- ✓ Construction of the water distribution boxes: 16 boxes in Mukama;
- ✓ Cleaning of the secondary and tertiary canals: 13 in Majambere with an average distance of 10 km;
- ✓ Construction of the distribution boxes in Majambere: 13 distribution boxes.

Construction of the COOPAILU office

The construction started at the end of July and is progressing quickly and very well: all the structural works (foundation, walls, the construction of the roof) are underway). This a very interesting and encouraging achievement as the community structure was in a serious need of an office to be able to conduct its everyday activities and envision to achieve more

COOPAILU capacity building

In order to ensure good management of the infrastructure after the project, the capacities of the farmers' organization that will be in charge of the maintenance of the infrastructure must be strengthened. Thus, since the first phase of construction of irrigation infrastructures, COOPAILU has been involved in all stages of project implementation.

For its technical capacities, COOPAILU is involved in the construction through a tripartite contract with contractor firms and ZOA so that COOPAILU provides the manpower for the construction of these works. This facilitates the local community to gain experience and to have the manpower that can carry out the

technical work of maintenance and can continue the works. Implementation of necessary and related facilities around the dike to minimize the effects affecting the operation of the works (management of tributaries and runoff water).

Maintenance and optimization of the irrigation network

As mentioned previously, the responsibility of maintenance after the rehabilitation of the works is the responsibility of the community through COOPAILU. To do so, the project is accompanying them technically providing advice/guidance and supervision. In the optimization of the network, some canals that were once abandoned are reopening. This process is certainly promising, but it is progressing slowly because the community does not yet share the same vision. Thanks to project sensitization effects through different meetings held with the community and thanks to COOPAILU's action, we hope this will improve shortly.

Control of runoff water that affects the operation of the main channel

To ensure the sustainability of hydro-agricultural works, through an implementation partner, various developments are underway to protect the works against runoff water and to fight against weeds around them. In these developments, biological control against these effects is mostly used. Indeed, on the canal, vetiver is used to protect against erosion and fight against weeds whole on the dyke, bamboos, leicaenas are used.

Capacity building for the watershed management committee

The project has been putting forward dialogue for better results in natural resources management; and the dialogue involves the communities/villages located both in the upstream and downstream catchment areas. To do so, it was mandatory to establish a management committee of the Luberizi watershed. For a good decentralization of the committee, it is based on core subcommittees located in each village part of the watershed. The committee members are chosen by their peers in the villages where we have already implemented the integrated farmer plan (IFP) approach, these are innovator farmers (Ifs). Thus, 18 villages are already constituted, 10 of which are in the middle plateau and 8 in the plain.

Economic recovery and development

During this third quarter, the project focused on supporting the 40 VSLAs, of which 16 are in the 3rd cycle, 18 in the 2nd cycle and 6 in the 1st cycle. All of these 40 VSLAs have a total of 996 members among them 288 (29%) of men and 708 (71%) of women. During this quarter, the projet undertook set up of VSLA networks or clusters.

40 leaders of young entrepreneurs' groups benefited from the last training session on entrepreneurship. To further improve the stability of the capital of these young people, a memorandum of understanding was signed between IRC and COOPEC Kalundu so that it facilitates the establishment and monitoring of the Income-Generating Activities of these groups of young people. COOPEC will also contribute to their training on the management of capital and the distribution of interests.

Access to income generating opportunities

Under this objective, the project was able to carry out a series of activities contributing to access to income-generating opportunities related to agriculture/support to agricultural production for the reduction of conflicts. The following activities were performed by the project staff in the watershed:

- ✓ Training of Innovator farmers in the former of training of trainers to ensure peer training across the farmers was organized. In total, 46 out of 50 Innovator Farmers have been trained on the different themes of the IFP approach to enable them in turn to train others second generation farmers in pilot villages of the watershed.
- ✓ 47 Innovator Farmers of the watershed were trained on soil fertility management and conservation by IFP assistants from the partner organization.
- ✓ 54 IFs were trained on the concept of VSLA, family fish farming in order to diversify and increase family resources and on market gardening (home garden).

Monitoring implementation of the IFP of the IFs

All the 150 Innovator Farmers were visited at their households by the IFP partner assistants, making an observation on their action plans to ensure they are moving towards their household or family visions.

In addition, the observed results provide a clear picture of what worked well and what would need to be amended or corrected to help us focus our attention on what is more effective in this IFP approach. Despite the problem of climate disruption, some IFs are realizing the dreams of their plans, little by little, for the season B. Some IFs are selling their products and saving in several ways or channels that are detailed in the motivation column. And others are already achieving their visions as a result of the productions realized at the harvest of Season B and the integration of several income-generating activities to the realization of their Visions.

We should note that during season C, eight innovator farmers were granted an agricultural credit (FC 1,750, 500 that is \$8,725- by the *Mikono Ya Wajenzi cooperative* for the practice of market gardening to be repaid with an interest rate of 2% after harvest and sale. Training on market gardening was organized for all IFPs. This activity of granting credit allowed IFs to meet expectations on their plans.

Organize exchange visits with IFs to the IFP project

For the exchange of experiences and evaluation of the progress of the IFPs, the innovative farmers made mutual visits among themselves in their villages but also between the pilot villages. The innovative farmers of Mutarule made an exchange visit to Rwenena and those of Rwenena vice versa. This activity ended with great success on the part of the Innovative Farmers of Rwenena and Mutarule. These udders exchanged on several points of the close IFP. We are also expecting to see more impact in the field of collaboration, integration and pacific cohabitation of communities of these localities.

The production of seedlings in the 13 villages for the season A 2020-2021

The project set up and maintained 13 nursery sites (one per village) to cover 222 hectares this season. This second campaign aims to cover 222 hectares including animal passages that will be open and limited by trees including flaming trees. We also note the introduction of some fruit species in the production of nursery plants with the aim of encouraging watershed users to grow fruit for consumption, a very necessary element for human health and a good source of income in the household. Furthermore, apart from the fruit species mentioned above, we will find in our nurseries forest species and those called agroforestry species.

We should note that for such an activity to take place, there is a number of steps to be followed:

- ✓ Prospection, identification of site and acquisition of land for the nursery installation (essentially for the 13 new nurseries);
- ✓ The delimitation of the site and the clearing of land (essentially for the new nurseries);
- ✓ The construction or installation of the enclosure and the cleaning of the yard (reinforcement for the old sites but effective installation for the new ones);
- ✓ Acquisition of inputs or nursery kits (bags, seeds, other inputs for the 13 nurseries and some materials for the new nurseries such as wheelbarrow, sieve, spade, watering can, hoes etc.);
- ✓ Installation of seedlings and watering;
- ✓ Obtaining soil (digging, sieving, bagging, parking etc.);
- ✓ Shade placement, transplanting and maintenance of plants;

The species produced are the same in all the nurseries, but the emergence and the behavior of the plants in the nursery differ according to the environment. However, the general maintenance of the nursery also continues before the operations of final placement which will take place at the end of October in some nurseries.

Monitoring and maintenance of the fields of the vetiver along the main canal

The field of 1ha and a half of pennisetum purpureum maintained by our partner EPDE is well monitored and maintained. The plants evolution is overall good; the growth of cuttings is not the same because some cuttings had been planted late compared to others. We should note, however, that following Covid-19 constraints, supply of cuttings from neighboring Burundi was done progressively. Hence, this activity suffered some delays due to the pandemic. In terms of progress, it's worth noting that we have a distance of 4 km



already covered with vetiver on both sides; and this season, he partner is making all efforts to cover 5 km more with the same plant. In parallel, oil palm trees were planted along the canal and the seedlings are growing very well with regular monitoring by the partner in charge of this activity.

Farmer Accompaniment and coaching in the irrigated perimeter

The project team conducted their regular accompaniment and coaching of producers in the irrigated perimeter; especially on the new techniques of rice production and market gardening; - Water management in the field, management and treatment of diseases, soil amendment, row sowing. Rice farmers and market gardeners sowed their fields in the perimeter given the presence of water in the canal. The producers were accompanied technically in four different blocks of the perimeter including Kagaraka I, Kagaragara II, Sango II and Kibumba; with a total area of 68.24 ha (52.7 ha for rice and 15.53 ha for market gardening). As of now, rice and market gardening are ripe and can be harvested.

For this season, major activities included:

- Harmonization of the agricultural calendar of the irrigated perimeters: This activity gathered rice producers, ITAPEL, Rural Development, Planning Department, Coopailu, Coosoproda and other associations in the zone;
- Preparation of the season: in the irrigated perimeter; development of rice cultivation technical sheets and distribution to cooperatives, associations of the zone, agronomist and ITAPEL within the framework of improving rice production in the irrigated perimeter;
- Sensitization of farmers on respect of the agricultural calendar: Through the community radio station Sauti ya Amani set up under project support and facilitation, messages are broadcasted to producers inviting the rice producing community in the irrigated perimeter the importance of sowing at the right time and applying agreed upon techniques. Thanks to this activity, the calendar was respected and producers sowed at the same time;
- Knowledge transfer: 10 nurseries have been set up for the farmer school/CEP fields in 4 blocks to facilitate knowledge transfer to the producers of the irrigated perimeter. These nurseries are set up by innovative farmers of the irrigated perimeter with the intensive rice growing system (ISRI).The establishment of nurseries and ploughing are underway in 4 blocks namely Kagaragara I, Kagaragara II, Kibumba, Sango II, Sango II;
- Enhancing innovation: 161 innovator farmers (IFs) producing seeds were selected among the 210 IFs in the irrigated perimeter. This aimed at ensuring availability of quality seeds certified by SENASEM in the zone for 3,045 producers of the irrigated perimeter. The selection was conducted based on a series of eligibility criteria, namely being an active rice farmer recognized as innovator Farmer in the irrigated perimeter; possess a field meeting the standards and requirements of rice multiplication in the irrigated perimeter; possess a certain elementary literacy (be able to read and write); agree to sign the deed of commitment and be able to finance all activities according to the requirements of SENASEM (i.e. to be able to take charge of all activities); agree to use only recommended seeds varieties (Mugwiza, Kigoma, Gwizumwimbu seeds); accept to open a comprehensive input store in the Luberizi area for the benefit of 3045 Producers of the irrigated perimeter.

Training on Tropical Soil Management in general and those of the watershed in particular.

The project held a series of training sessions for 34 local partners including BDR, IJED, ASCODER, COOPAILU, COOSOPRODA and relevant Agronomists so as to help them acquire skills (testifies by a certificate handed at the end of the session) in the following areas:

- Introduction to pedology (definition of soil concepts, pedogenetic factors, properties, classification of tropical soils);
- Soil management techniques focusing on two types of soils, namely Vertisols and Ferral soils. These two types of soils are different in management just as they are different in terms of physical and chemical properties;
- The management of tropical soils by adding not only mineral fertilizer but also organic matters and thus integrate other approaches according to ISFM (Integrated Soil Fertility Management);
- Tropical soil conservation and erosion
- Soil conservation techniques to be advocated for in the area and the seven principles of soil conservation

Project interventions in the Value Chain area

Activities conducted under this project component during the period under review include the following:

- ✓ Mapping of actors in the (cow) milk value chain was carried out in the localities of Katekama, Bwegera and Nyamugali. Based on the data collected, a number of cooperatives lead the sale of the milk in the Luberizi group; that is COOVEPEL in Katekama, GJVL Bwegera, COOPL Bwegera, COODEB, etc. The project is trying to determine the cost of 1 liter of milk from the saleswomen of the Luberizi group;
- ✓ 1 joint technical meeting of the Agri-PIP-CVA components held to harmonize interventions in the field;
- ✓ With project facilitation and efforts linking producers to the Bank, a partnership contract was signed with the Equity Bank to grant agricultural credit for small producers in Luberizi, whether or not they are members of the cooperatives being supported (with emphasis on agricultural inputs);
- ✓ To ensure competency gaining in the area, two training workshops were organized for 210 innovator farmers in the irrigated perimeter including one workshop on the IFP approach and a workshop on the validation and orientation of the innovator farmers;
- ✓ A collaboration MoU was drafted and signed by and between COOPAILU & COOSOPRODA clarifying the respective roles & responsibilities in relation to the value chain, structuring & governance, access to formal credit, investment in infrastructure & processing units, access to quality agricultural inputs, lead market, the PIP approach, etc.
- ✓ A joint commission composed of COOPAILU and COOSOPRODA members (i.e. a consultation framework follow-up of the implementation of the MoU) was set up;
- ✓ Marketing plans are being finalized on behalf of COOPAILU (paddy rice), ADCP Rwenena (grain maize) and market gardeners (pepper);
- ✓ A comparative profitability analysis was made for paddy rice versus husked rice in Luberizi groupement for members of the COOPAILU & COOSOPRODA;

Conducting Land Mediation activities in Luberizi, Lemera and Kigoma

During this quarter, the project supported peace and mediation committees along with community leaders of Luberizi and Lemera/Kigoma *groupements* to conduct land mediation activities over land-related conflicts arising from the land mapping process. The project had cope with oppositions that erupted around border conflicts between villages. Indeed, there was a kind of misinformation circulating within the communities around the land mapping process as though this process would end up in extortion of the Bafuliiru¹ lands for the benefits of the Banyamulenge² community. It should be noted that the target villages of the land mapping process, i.e. Mugule and Katala are in the *Chefferie des Bafuliru*. The combination of misinformation spreading and opposition between villages on their shared borders caused delays in the mediation process.

Therefore, in addition to usual land-related conflicts mediated by the peace committees under the supervision project staff, it was deemed more than necessary to actively involve provincial authorities to get this issue resolved. Indeed, their involvement contributed a lot to successfully lift the blockage and hence resume the land mapping process with the full participation of all relevant parties (*CICF - Cadre Inclusif de Gestion des conflits et du foncier*, *Brigade Foncière of Luvungi*, *Chef de Chefferie*, etc.)

Scaling-up the land Mapping Process to Mugule and Katala villages

After consultations with local authorities, the Mugule and Katala villages (Watershed area) were selected as the pilot areas to scale-up the land mapping process based on the successful experience in Luberizi (2018-2019). The project worked to build the capacities of the mediation committees in the two villages and provided them with equipment and tools (boots, waterproof clothes and decameters). Four teams were set up, with two teams in each village, the teams consisted of two mediation committee members, two cartographers and one member of the CICF.

Lastly, members of the Brigade foncière were a part of the process to ensure the laws were applied; just as recommended by national expert in charge of the DRC Land reform process. Once conflict is successfully mediated, the deed of commitment is reviewed and signed by local chiefs and by the CCRCC. By the end of

¹ The Bafuliiru are the largest ethnic group of the Chefferie des Bafuliru and the target villages (Katala and Mugule) are both predominantly inhabited by them.

² Ethnic groups reportedly belonging to the Tutsi community from neighboring Rwanda, who are perceived by many ethnic groups as trying to invade their lands.

the quarter, 49 out of the 103 conflicts identified have been successfully mediated during this quarter, which is around 48% of all the conflicts identified in both villages. Peace committees are currently working with the support of the CICF, local authorities (including CCRCC) and a reduced involvement of the Brigade Foncière with the facilitation of project staff based in the Watershed Area to lead this process.

In both Mugule and Katala, the largest number of conflicts identified and mediated over this reporting period were conflicts related to farm boundaries (50%) followed by spoliation cases (21%). Additionally, it shows the importance of the mapping process that contributes to secure and protect the plots for farmers. Most of these conflicts do not pose major obstacles in the mediation process, however, owing to the insecurity in the area, many of the land owners aren't in their villages, which can delay the mediation processes.

Community Conflicts

This quarter, the eight Peace Committees that lie in the Ruzizi Plain and ten Peace and Mediation Committees in the Watershed area conducted conflict meditations in their respective villages. Overall, 144 conflicts were successfully mediated by both committees, including the mediation of 83 conflicts by Search's Peace and Mediation Committees in the Ruzizi Plain and 61 conflicts by Peace Committees in the Watershed area. Peace Committees in the Mugule and Katala areas are proving their advantages as demonstrated by the impressive progression of conflicts mediated from 18 conflicts being mediated in the first quarter to 61 conflicts mediated in the third quarter.

The two most common reported conflicts are related to animal straying (46%) and regarding drinking water (30%). It is important to highlight that the trends recorded during this reporting period remain consistent with the trends of previous quarters as the two types of conflicts encountered the most were herder-farmer conflicts (50% for Q2 compared to 49% for Q1) and disputes over drinking water (33% for both Q1 and Q2).

The next two highest reported conflict issues are land-related conflicts (9%) and theft (8%). Whereas the figure for theft remained consistent in the second quarter (7%), the figure for land-related conflicts differed from other reporting periods. The main explanation is the resumption of the agricultural season (from the end of August 2020). These are conflicts usually related to farm boundaries, extortion attempts and difficult relations between farmers in the irrigated perimeter. Theft, especially crop and cattle thefts, have a capacity to cause inter-community tensions and violence, therefore, monitoring larceny is highly recommended.

Apart from conflicts around drinking water, the other three leading types of conflicts identified are closely related to economic opportunities. This indicates that poverty and lack of economic opportunities remain some of the leading causes of tension in the project areas. Additionally, the lack of economic opportunities potentially drives the youth to join armed groups.

In addition to the mediations, peace committees of both the Watershed and Luberizi conducted 31 community awareness activities on the main types of conflicts encountered in their respective communities together reaching 2251 people.

Capacity-Building for the FARDC,NC

As part of the Security Sector Actors engagement, the project planned the last training for the FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo) soldiers and PNC (Police Nationale Congolaise). The SSR Component of the project, led by Search, is aimed at engaging security sector actors in the project area to understand the work of the consortium, contribute to the protection of the project infrastructures and increase collaboration, dialogue and trust between civilian populations, soldiers and policemen in the project zone.

The training took place from August 24th to the 26th in Uvira with 17 participants including nine military soldiers and eight policemen. The subjects covered were regarding civilian protection, human rights and knowledge of the infrastructures built by Maji Ya Amani. Altogether, participants were actively engaged and visibly interested in the modules.

Solidarity Activities

The measures imposed by the Congolese Government to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic caused delays in the implementation of some of the solidarity project activities, especially those requiring large gatherings (more than 20 people), as the restrictions only lifted towards end of July 2020. The solidarity activities were then able to resume, with one highlight this quarter in Mutarule. Mutarule is a community inhabited by the Barundi, one of the Congolese communities; while the neighboring Katekama is inhabited by Bafuliru. The two communities are opposed by the conflict around the traditional power with the Bafuliru rejecting the authority of the Barundi Mwami and installing dual power structures in all the *Groupements* of the Chefferie.

However, there is only one public primary school shared by the villages of Mutarule and Katekama. Both chiefs of the villages of Mutarule and Katekama submitted a joint request to the project for a support in the implementation of a solidarity activity by cleaning the school yard. This activity brought together members of all the communities, who worked together to clean the primary school in the perspective of the new academic year that was to start in September 2020. This confirms that there are avenues of collaboration between conflicting communities, and the school can be considered as a connector.

Participatory Theater Production

As mentioned above, the lifting of the Covid-19 related restrictions led to the resumption of several activities. During the second quarter theater performances were recorded and broadcasted on partner radio stations in a modified format, however, the lifting of restrictions by the government allowed for the theater to resume their representations in their initial formats. Over this reporting period, 29 representations were organized.

Listening Club Activities

During this quarter, the project provided support to listening Clubs allowing them to cover radio batteries, communication and/or transportation fees that are required for facilitating events. Their main responsibilities include conducting community awareness campaigns, listening and discussing programs that are broadcasted on various radios, in addition to providing feedback on the content of such programs and recommending new topics for discussions. In addition, this quarter the project team conducted solidarity activities with the listening clubs of Bwegera and Nyawera. The objective is to reinforce the impact and recognition of the positive roles of these clubs in their respective communities. The respective listening clubs of Bwegera and Nyawera and members of their community gathered around the cleaning of community shared spaces. In Bwegera there were 43 participants (33 M, 10 F) and the activity consisted in cleaning the yard of the « Salle Polyvalente » the public meeting hall of the community. In Nyawera (18 M, 7 F participants), the activity consisted in weeding the cemetery of the community. Both activities were approved and appreciated by community leaders.

Conflict Sensitivity

The project 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 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.

MONITORING PROGRESS

During this quarter, the monitoring activities were focused to ensure respect of inclusivity criteria in the project, especially regarding the sex, ethnicity and age criteria (youth inclusion). It was also question of ensuring conformity to the submitted workplan; around 87% of planed activities were achieved while other were started and ongoing. Only one activity was not started yet: setting the Luberizi Sub-Basin watershed management plan. We should note that during the quarter, no activity was undertaken to collect change generated by the project, there was preparing to conduct the endline.

GENDER AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

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. As usual, all the activities implemented during this quarter were carried out taking into account the participation of women, youths and Batwa to the activities to enhance equity in income gaining.

CHALLENGES

- (1) Covid-19 restrictions: As mentioned earlier, Covid-19 brought about a series of successive restrictions that were put in place by provincial authorities, lifted at a given moment and reinforced again sometime after. The project had to cope with the measures put in place which brought about delays on normal planning.
- (2) Funds transfer delayed: A request for funds for the last installment relating to the 2020 budget was submitted to the donor but the transfer hasn't yet taken place.
- (3) Limited resources: The project 2020 budget was seriously reduced placing the project in the obligation to size down a situation the budget and HR
- (4) With the little time that remains to us, we make sure to make efforts to ensure that the planned works are completed. However, there is a fear regarding the stabilization of the drinking water network, especially for the extension station and connection to the Nyamugali & Sango reservoir. The moving from water payment by a lump sum payment method (1000 FC per month) to the volume used payment method still poses application concerns. An efficient pricing system and stability in fundraising would facilitate a clear investment plan to ensure the recovery of the cost of the investment. By the time the extension works are completed, it would take time to be able to analyse the technical implications of the connection, and see how this will affect the payment for water; which is likely to be a challenge given the time remaining before the project ends.

LESSONS LEARNED

- (1) The continued dialogue with the youth of Luberizi is proving to be a factor driving inter-community cohesion. In fact, following the strike led by the youth of Luberizi in January-February 2020, the project developed a youth strategy and shared it with the consortium. As part of this strategy, the project engaged the youth on all the major aspects of the projects and thus sufficient trust is now built which allows discussing freely sensitive issues such as armed group activities, recruiters and trajectories in the community, the contestation of the traditional power of the Chef de Chefferie and other topics. Most interestingly, the Bafuliru youth (regarded as the most radical voices in the inter-community conflicts) have sent a letter to Search for Common Ground asking the facilitation of an intercommunity dialogue of the youth. They freely expressed that their aim is to have an inclusive youth governing body. It is worth noting that to date, the youth structures in place in the Luberizi groupement are mono-ethnic. These dialogues are set to be organized during the 4th quarter. The same Bafuliru group have engaged in discussions with the warlords of their communities in view of adhering to the DDR process.
- (2) As expected, while working with youth, this brings a certain stability in their villages and normal civil life. Compared to the past, the enrolment of the youths in armed groups has decreased. As an illustration, we currently have 19 young people who recently decided to leave the bush and joined civilian life. They are working with the project as young entrepreneurs.
- (3) Collaboration with ten government such as the ministerial visit that took place in the second quarter had the impact of giving more credibility to the project. In addition to the partners realizing the reality themselves, they formulated recommendations to the government requesting continuation of the project for more years presenting it as the most credible partner intervening in the Ruzizi plain.