



INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

(MAJI YA AMANI)

Quarterly Narrative Progress Report

(October –December 2020)

Project Name: Integrated Water Resources Management

Target Areas: Ruzizi Plain (DRC)

Reporting Period: October- December2020

Submission due Date: 31 March 2021

Contact Person: Alexis Eric Macumi, Acting Project Lead

E-mail: AlexisEric.Macumi@rescue.org

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	2
ACCRONYMS	4
IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENT.....	5
KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS	7
COORDINATION	7
ACCESS TO LAND	7
ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER	9
ACCESS TO IRRIGATION WATER.....	10
INCREASED IGA OPPORTUNITIES / ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT ..	11
AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS	14
CONFLICT PREVENTION & MITIGATION AND PEACEFUL COHABITATION.....	14
MONITORING PROGRESS.....	16
GENDER AND VULNERABLE GROUPS	17
CHALLENGES	17
LESSONS LEARNED.....	18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a project funded by the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DMoFA) and is implemented by an IRC-led consortium comprising IRC, Stichting ZOA and Search for Common Ground (SFCG). Aligned with the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), the 46-month intervention is carried out in the Ruzizi Plain, South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The project contributes to the reduction of violence and increasing stability in the groupement of Luberizi (with a total of 28,800 beneficiaries) and is organized around four objectives: (1) increasing access to land and reduction of 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 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, livestock and household use, thereby creating a potential bond for communities divided along ethnic lines. It has been proven that, if effectively utilised, the Ruzizi Plain would potentially be capable of feeding the total population of both the plain, and nearby areas.

The socio-political dynamic and security situation are both volatile and susceptible to sudden changes. Indeed, the project implementation area is strongly blighted by inter-community conflicts due to rivalry over the exercise of traditional power and a lack of cohesion and trust between the ethnic groups. In addition, Luberizi faces significant security and economic challenges. Security wise, the area is prey to a proliferation of armed groups and the circulation of weapons, as well as frequent cases of cattle theft, kidnapping, rape, robbery, and conflicts between herders and farmers. Security incidents were continually reported and the project continued screening and monitoring the security to avoid incidents that would affect project staff or vehicles. Economically, Luberizi severely lacks opportunities for youth employment, which has led to significant rural exodus to neighbouring cities and neighbouring countries (largely Rwanda and Burundi).

This quarterly report (October to December 2020) provides an update on the project activities and the implementation environment, including challenges and how the project manages to respond to these. It should be noted that, despite restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was able to maintain continuous activity implementation, as well continuous collaboration with relevant stakeholders including provincial, territorial and local administration. Throughout we fully respected the measures put in place to ensure safety of project staff and stakeholders.

The project continued to implement a range of activities aim at improving beneficiaries' sustainable access to water (drinking and irrigation) and land as the main sources of production. The community was heavily involved in different project activities organized in the intervention zone. This included capacity building for community structures set or revitalized by the project in order to ensure management of infrastructures provided by the project, particularly ACEPSKILU for drinking water and COOPAILU for irrigation water. In addition to this,

capacity building (trainings, sensitization, supervising and coaching) sessions were hosted for other community structures working with the project such as peace committees, youth-led income generating activities through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) groups, rice producers, value chains groups, etc. The Sauti Ya Amani radio station has been supported while it contribute a lot in sensitizing beneficiaries on various topics.

During this quarter in early December (8 & 9), the project organized the Steering Committee meeting following a field visit. The Sud Kivu Government delegation was led by the Vice-Governor, four partner Provincial Technical Ministers and three provincial deputies, other project administrative partners at provincial and territorial level including the Coordinator of STAREC, community leaders and members took part in the field visit.

Related to conflict prevention & management and peaceful cohabitation, various activities were implemented including Intercommunity Youth Dialogue, Awareness of Security Forces (FARDC/PNC), Conflict Monitoring and TRACK II activities

The project continued with the extension of project activities in the watershed, including setting up and structuring a Watershed Management Committee with a multi-year watershed management plan; the implementation of Integrated Farmers' Plan (PIP approach).

Finally, we note that in terms of coordination, the project held its last Grant Review Meeting (GRM) with the three implementing partners where the prospect of submitting to the donor a request for a contract extension was discussed.

ACCRONYMS

ACEPSKILU	: Association des Consommateurs d'Eau Potable de Sange, Kigoma et Luberizi
ASCODER	: Assises Communautaires pour le Développement Rural
BDR	: Bureau de Reboisement (de l'Eglise 8 ^{ème} CEPAC)
CCRCC	: Comité Consultatif de Règlement des Conflits Coutumiers
CICF	: Cadre Inclusif de Gestion des Conflits et du Foncier
COOPAILU	: Coopérative Agricole des Usagers de l'Irrigation de Luberizi
DRC	: Democratic Republic of the Congo
ETD	: Entité Territoriale Décentralisée
FARDC	: Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
GBV	: Gender-Based Violence
I4S/ISSSS	: International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
IFP	: Integrated farmer's Plan (PIP = Plan Intégré du Paysan)
IJED	: Initiative des Jacobins Eleveurs pour le Développement
IRC	: International Rescue Committee
IWRM	: Integrated Water Resources Management
MONUSCO	: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
MyA	: Maji Ya Amani (Water for Peace)
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PAC	: Post Abortion Care
IFs	: Innovative Farmers
PNC	: Police Nationale du Congo
RFC	: Registre Foncier Communautaire
SFCG	: Search for Common Ground
SGBV	: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SNHR	: Service National d'Hydraulique Rurale
SRH	: Sexual and Reproductive Health
STAREC	: Stabilisation et Reconstruction à l'Est du Congo (des zones sortant des Conflits Armés)
TEP	: Tribune d'Expression Populaire-
VSLA	: Village Savings and Loans Associations
WASH	: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

IMPLEMENTATION ENVIRONMENT

During this fourth quarter, the socio-political and security situation in the Ruzizi Plain, and in the watershed area, continued to be characterized as volatile. We noted rises in urban crime including in burglary and carjacking. This was exasperated by the approach of the end-of-the year feasts & holidays which usually results in an increase in crime. The security incidents recorded during the fourth quarter included the following: roughly thirty security incidents with potential and real impact on the implementation of activities have been reported, 3 demonstrations, 10 reported cases of foreign armed groups crossing the project zone and clashes with either armed groups or the regular army. Targeted acts of assassination, summary executions, robberies followed by burglaries, kidnappings for ransom, demonstrations followed by barricades, etc have also been reported. All of these incidents had, directly or indirectly, impacted the implementation of project activities. For example, in October, there were numerous incursions by armed groups into the villages of Mutarule and Rwenena 3. In Mutarule, 5 people (2 Burundi and 3 Banyamulenge) were kidnapped. As a result of these attacks, there were thefts and looting of valuables and money from peaceful citizens. In Rwenena 3, for example, the holder of the cash box with UMOJA WA MAENDELEO VSL&A group was targeted but managed to escape. Cases of night thefts have also been reported in Nyamugali, and even the chief Fuliru of Luberizi Groupement (Lameke) was amongst the victims. The population suspects the military members of the local brigade (FARDC) have orchestrated these operations. The project team consistently monitored the situation to avoid any significant impact on project activities, however, no project staff, partners or materials were directly affected by those incidents as staff were advised not to go to the areas when and where there were incidents occurred, or the activities were suspended for a given time.

The reduction in IRC staff and activities, undertaken since Q2, continued with 8 contracts terminated on 31st of December. Six project staff remained.

Regarding project activities, there were no major issues to report apart from community/beneficiaries' reluctance to support the land mapping process in Mugule and Katala villages. This was successfully resolved thanks to skilled project mediation efforts with the active involvement of local and provincial authorities. However, these events have had some impacts on the initial planning, causing delays in the land mapping and land mediation process. The project increased awareness through its radio programs and consultations with community leaders which have contributed to lifting some of the community obstacles.

The COVID-19 pandemic in DRC continues to spread, with more than 11,000 cases of contamination including more than 300 deaths. Economic activities have started to rebound since the third quarter of 2020 after the spread of the virus slowed and containment measures were gradually lifted. However, the recovery has been modest and uneven across areas within the country.

In the project area, the impact of COVID-19 was not significant in this period, compared to the previous period, aside from the closure of the borders with Burundi which impacted the economic activities for those with business connections there. The project team consistently monitored the situation to avoid any significant impact on project activities. The COVID-19 focal point continued to provide status updates regarding this pandemic, and also sensitization sessions for staff and community members. To avoid any disturbances stemming from the measures taken by the national government to address the COVID-19 crisis, the project team continuously adapted implementation activities to the context, taking into account the restrictions put into place to guarantee the safety of project staff, partners and beneficiaries. Particular emphasis was placed on respecting preventive and protection measures, namely the correct and compulsory wearing of face masks, regular hand washing or disinfection with hand sanitizing solutions and respect for physical distancing.

In South Kivu province, in the MyA project area in Luberizi, the 4th quarter of 2020 was characterized by the partial opening of the border with Rwanda for small cross-border trade through the COMESA protocol. Levels of trafficking in people and goods & basic products has remained low, especially with Rwanda above all and Burundi a little. Several borders have remained closed to human traffic and to cross them, on those with possibility of crossing, there are strict and heavy requirements put in place which must be respected.

With regards to accessibility, it has been a challenge to access some areas following the degradation of road infrastructures due to natural disasters caused by the rains which caused more than 50 deaths in the territory of Uvira. Bridges have collapsed, several sections of road eroded by rainwater, crops submerged and / or washed away by torrential rains. This situation has continued to have a negative effect on the lives of the population during all of the fourth quarter.

On the socio-economic front, the DRC is currently facing a slowing of economic growth and an increase in youth unemployment which has had dramatic consequences on the social life of the population. A lot of potential solutions and money have been put forward to resolve these problems, but to no avail. The DRC is ranked 183 out of 190 countries in the latest Doing Business ranking, and 49th out of 53 African countries. On the Human Development Index, it is ranked 41 out of 53 by the United Nations Development Program further reducing the likelihood of any upcoming significant economic improvement. .

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 the food imports. Even though the governors of North and South Kivu have taken the decision to allow the movement of goods, this has not prevented the slowdown in trade.

The consequences of this slowdown in trade 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 fact they have reduced accessibility to the supply chains and due to the scarcity of various products. Some food products consumed in the project action area, and in South Kivu (the whole province) originate from North Kivu. Additionally product prices have increased considerably; in Bukavu for example, the price of a kilo of potatoes sold at 600 FC before the COVID-19 crisis has risen to 1000 FC. Similarly 1 kilo of beans has risen from 1000 FC to 1800 FC.

KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

As this quarter is the final quarter in terms of activity implementation in line with project work plan, many actions were more focused on preparing beneficiaries for IRC's exit (by increasing ownership, and helping them to contribute to the sustainability of results) than in the past.

COORDINATION

Steering committee visit & meeting

During this quarter, on December 8 & 9, the project organized the steering committee meeting. The Sud Kivu Government delegation was led by the Vice-Governor of the Province with the participation of the 4 partner Provincial Technical Ministers and 3 provincial deputies. Other project administrative partners at provincial and territorial level including the Coordinator of STAREC, community leaders and members, who all took part in the field visit alongside the project staff (of the IRC, SFCG and ZOA consortium).

The Provincial Technical Ministers visited the project infrastructure to ensure if their previous recommendations to the project were taken into account. Once in the field, they observed delivery, asked clarification questions and discussed with community members (direct beneficiaries). The day after, they discussed directly with community representatives (without project staff) some of the issues raised. Following that the steering committee meeting was held in Kamanyola. After project presentations, the 4 ministers questioned each one based on the observations made in the field, on the discussion they had had with beneficiaries and on the presentations. Finally the Vice-Governor closed the meeting.

Aside from some issues raised by part of the population, the delegation congratulated the project for its achievements. Some of the raised issues were due to lack of information and were directly addressed by the project. Others, such as the delay in finalizing the irrigation canal, the crossing of the water network on the Luberizi River at an insufficient height, the regular tank cleaning, and some other issues were taken to be addressed later. The delegation recommended the project continued to provide explanatory sessions to the community regarding the challenges faced, and promised to support the project to ensure that the achievements are more sustainable.

Grant Review meeting

The last Grant Review Meeting of the project were organized in Uvira on the 20th and 21st of October. Implementation actions were presented by each component and discussed, including achievements and results, challenges and lessons learned.

Key information regarding the project was shared and discussed. This included the extension request to be submitted to the donor, the status of the 2019 audit report, the endline to be carried out, and the steering committee visit & meeting, etc.

As a result of this there was agreement on the key actions regarding the next steps of the project.

ACCESS TO LAND

Scaling-up of the Land Mapping Process

After consultations with local authorities, the two villages of Mugule and Katala were selected as the pilot areas to scale-up the land mapping process based on the successful experience in Luberizi (2018-2019). Therefore, the project built the capacities of the mediation committees of the two villages. They formed part of the 11 peace committees set up in the Watershed area in February 2020. Four teams were set up (2 teams in each village) and were provided with equipment and tools (boots, waterproof clothes and decametres). The project brought two of CICF (Cadre Inclusif de Gestion des Conflits et du Foncier) members from the Ruzizi Plain to join the mediation teams in the Watershed area with the dual objectives of serving as mentors to the peace committee members of Mugule and Katala, and also to increase collaboration between upstream and downstream committees and stakeholders. Other members of the mediation groups in each village are currently being mobilized to support the process as required. For instance, in the event mediation would require several days these members would visit plots/farms and other gatherings to discuss the issues.

Members of the Brigade foncière were also included in the process to ensure the laws were applied. However, as explained, this institutional role is now devoted to the CCRCC (the Comité Consultatif de Règlement des Conflits Coutumiers), as this came about as a recommendation of a national expert in charge of the DRC land reform process. Thus, the project supported the Brigade Foncière by providing coaching and the CCRCC received

mentorship in order for them to more effectively understand the land law and their respective responsibilities and roles in relation to it.

Establishment of the Bafuliiru community land register

Actions to secure land tenure for local communities continued. In accordance with the law on fundamental principles relating to agriculture, rural land cannot be subject to a registration certificate. A decentralized land management on a customary basis consisting of a local land service commonly called the Community Land Register has been put in place. Three themes were developed (1) decentralization as a management mode, (2) the community land register as a local land service, (3) the organization and operation in a decentralized territorial entity (ETD in French which refers here to the Chefferie).

The land publication of the results of participatory mapping have already been undertaken in the watersheds (in the villages of Mugule and Katala) and in the irrigated area. We collected and resolved complaints & observed errors, and signatures of forms that do not present any problem.

The RFC capacity building

To make the RFC effective, we carried out capacity building for technical land agents. 12 RFC officers were trained in mapping techniques and in electronic development

Development of the Bafuliiru land charter.

In order to secure the lands of the communities in the chefferie of BAFULIIRU, the community land charter which includes local customs, land tenure management, the acquisition and terms of transfer of land rights, a team of consultants was in the field and produced a draft community land charter which will be validated by the local community.

Advocacy campaign for enabling landless households accessing to land

Following the land protection process undertaken in the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi, it came about that some communities, in particular the indigenous pygmies (Batwa) communities, for various not well identified reasons, do not have land in the irrigated perimeter. Then, the consortium organizations conducted advocacy relating to allowing vulnerable households to access to land aimed at local chiefs and state authorities (rural development services, division of the plan and the cadastral office), as well as towards the provincial government (Ministry of Land Affairs). The combination of this advocacy led to the identification of some plots of lands for the benefits of the underserved Batwa group. The project then started with the process of formally identifying landless farmers in the community prior to the distribution of land. Thus, during the month of November the identification activities began in collaboration with the Brigade Foncière of Luvungi, the state service in charge of land administration in the project area. The process started with the development of selection criteria which were validated by the consortium, then with key partners. The project worked closely with the Brigade Foncière by organizing interviews with key informants, notably the agricultural associations of Luberizi, community leaders, elders of different communities, territorial/provincial services and authorities and customary authorities. This process was conducted confidentially to avoid raising expectations as the individuals interviewed could expect to receive a plot in the targeted zone. This process enabled us to identify the concerned communities and a list of households who potentially meet the criteria for being allocated land. A shortlist was established, and then the list was validated. In each of targeted villages, after the identification, the draft list was presented to the community leaders (village chiefs). At the end of the process, the list went through three validation meetings including all the relevant stakeholders of the communities in addition to state authorities. The list was displayed publicly so that people could make claims and comments. After this process a final list of landless farmers was obtained. Out of 793 people interviewed, 297 (37%) were shortlisted; and women represented 55% (164) and men 45% (133) of those shortlisted while Batwa represent 14%.

Farmer-Herder Dialogue

A series of Farmer-Herder Dialogues took place in order to enable discussions and decision-making among farmers and herders in view of reducing violence conflicts related to animal straying. Farmer-herder conflicts and conflicts related to animal straying account for half of all the conflicts reported and mediated by the 18 peace committees of the project zones, hence, the significance of such dialogues. During this quarter, three farmer-herder dialogue sessions were organized, which included a farmer-only consultation and a herder-only consultation that culminated into an inter-group (farmer-herder) dialogue.

A Farmers' Consultation took place on November 27, 2020 and brought together 60 farmers across all the villages of the Groupment of Luberizi, in addition to community leaders and state services in charge of agriculture. The session followed a participatory research and discussion approach which allowed participants to assess and analyse the shortfalls of the various existing provincial decrees, orders and other agreements made at the community level and finally made recommendations by identifying talking points to be used with the farmers.

The Herders Consultation held on November 28th 2020 followed the same approach and format as the farmers-only session. This session brought together 60 cattle owners, Kraal managers, herdsman and other community leaders to assess and analyse the situation

Joint Sessions (Farmer-Herder Dialogues) on November the 30th 2020

During the joint farmer-herder session, each committee presented their assessment, analyses and recommendations from their individual sessions and subsequently discussed their assessment. This allowed for constructive dialogue to synthesize the views and determine some actions.

Land Mediation in Luberizi, Lemera and Kigoma

The whole consortium supported peace and mediation committees and community leaders of Luberizi and Lemera/Kigoma to conduct land mediation activities. These activities started in April 2020 and were initially planned to end in July, however, opposition to such activities arose, particularly related to border conflicts between villages. Moreover, rumours circulated in the communities that the land mapping process in the watershed area was aimed at extorting the “Lands of the Bafuliiru”¹ 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 Bafuliiru (Watershed areas), therefore, a combination of such rumours with the continued disputes between villages regarding their shared borders caused significant delays in the process. Mediations in both Luberizi and the Watershed were conducted with the active involvement of the Brigade Foncière of Luvungi (the local representation of the Provincial Land Administration) and the CICF -Cadre Inclusif de Gestion des Conflits et du Foncier. This structure were restructured by the project through the G&R component with the support of the other partners.

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 their go-ahead for the construction of the reservoir in Nyamugali, and following the end in September 2020 of the recruitment process of a firm to contract for this activity, “Maison la Grace Solidarité” (MGS), the selected company, started reservoir construction in September. At end of December 2020, the construction of the 70 m³ tank in Munara was completed. This included the laying of over 10km of HDPE pipes. Given the challenge of having provincial authorities the provisional handover initially planned in early December should take place early in January 2021, and the warranty period will start which will end with the final handover in February.

Payment for drinking water

During this quarter the pricing and the community mobilization to increase fund collection on the Luberizi-Sange-Kigoma network improved as project implementation progressed. During this reporting period, we continued to see increases in the collection and mobilization of contributed funds for the maintenance of this water infrastructure. This was a result of the community mobilization set up in those villages which had not previously paid, especially in Nyamugali and Sango, the most populated villages in Luberizi *groupement*. Currently, the IRC is collecting an average of 1,500,000 FC each month, whereas before it was less than 700,000 FC. There is still work to be done to reach the desired amount, but with the time, and with the involvement of chiefs and leaders, combined with more awareness, we are aiming to increase the amount collected.

Capacity building of ACEP and accountability in drinking water management

Related to this issue, major achievements to note here during this period from October to December 2020 are:

The finalization of the construction and equipment of the ACEPSKILU office followed by provisional acceptance of it;

The dissemination of the administrative and financial procedures manual for ACEPSKILU. A workshop for the review and validation of the Administrative and Financial Procedures Manual of ACEPSKILU by the central bodies of ACEPSKILU as well as other stakeholders in the hydraulic works procurement process were organized before;

The equipping of ACEPSKILU with material necessary for the maintenance of the drinking water network, including with the water analysis kit, a motorcycle and 2 bikes for easy movements, some reserve pipes and plumbing accessories

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

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

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 continue to take place as preparation to the handover process during this period. A certain number of actions have been carried out, including follow-up visits from various stakeholders including the Minister of Rural Development to ensure the monitoring of drinking water activities, and the Ministry of Planning (who is also the signatory of the acts of the co-management and the procurement agreements). This was the Minister was able to check project progress and these whether project recommendations are being implemented, in particular the construction of the ACEPSKILU office and the implementation of its management tools..

Implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (Greening the network).

The protection of the network and the environment in general has progressed well, especially during the months of November-December thanks to the good resumption of rains throughout the project area. As part of implementing recommendations of the Congolese Environment Agency (ACE), about 4500 seedlings are already transplanted with a growth rate of more than 70%. We should note a weak appropriation of these seedlings by the sub-committees and the local population in general. Hence the project will have to review the awareness strategy. We will be analysing the relevance of setting up a small team to ensure follow-up in each village while continuing with sensitization sessions.

Sanitation

All sanitation commitments have been completed in all the 8 primary schools and 4 health. The final handover to users started in the first week of November and is in progress and should be completed in January 2021. This has involved school authorities, (SOUNPRE and COPA members); and nurses in health structures.

ACCESS TO IRRIGATION WATER

Construction of the main canal: 6.5 km long in rubble stone masonry

The construction of the main 6.5km canal has continued. However, it should be noted that due to a topographical singularity of the mount of the military camp and the Belgian scheme (colonial era Mission Anti-Erosive/MAE), water could barely reach the Sango block. To correct this issue, a section of 1.2 km needed to be revised. This meant the contractor/ builder missed the deadline for the construction of the canal which also had a negative impact on the budget. At the end of quarter 4 of 2020, the works carried out are:

- Construction of the banks of the main canal including the bottom: 5 km out of the 6.5 km planned
- Establishment of the bottom on the correction of the singularity: all the 1.2 km planned
- Fixing the valves on the main channel: 3 valves out of 8 planned
- Backfill and page on the part to be corrected: 900 m out of the 1.2 km planned
- Construction of spades (low walls to facilitate backfilling: all the 35 planned
- Level increase on the correction: 600 m out of the 1.2 km planned
- Construction of banks without bottom 600 m.

The extension of the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi, in Mukama and Majambere

Work on the extension to the irrigated the perimeter has ended. The contractor has will carry out a field visit on the work done in order to confirm that it has been done to the standard required. To assess this, a trial period was needed to analyse the efficiency of the extension's network.

So far, there is no indication of any malfunction of the extension structures. The works carried out as part of the extension are:

In MUKAMA:

- Construction of the main canal (secondary if we consider the entire perimeter) leading to Mukama: 1800 linear meters (built length) including the bottom
- Digging of secondary and tertiary canals: 12.89 km;
- Valves installed: 6 valves on the distribution to the secondary channels
- Construction of water distribution boxes: 16 boxes;
- Talutage of the entire length of the channel built in masonry.

In MAJAMBERE:

Digging of canals (combined) 7.98 km, clearing of secondary and tertiary canals: 13 in Majambere with an average length of 10 km

Construction of 13 distribution boxes in Majambere

Reinforcement of the irrigation infrastructure management capacities of COOPAILU and strengthening the organizational capacities of COOPAILU

After the works rehabilitation, the responsibility for maintenance of the irrigation network is allocated to the community through the users' organization, COOPAILU. As part of the capacity building of this community organization for more sustainability, IRC will provide technical support, advice, supervision and guidance. As such, since the first phase of construction of the irrigation infrastructure, COOPAILU has been involved in all stages of the implementation of the project.

COOPAILU is involved in the construction through a tripartite contract (involving the company as a service provider, COOPAILU and ZOA) with the contractors and ZOA meaning that COOPAILU provides the labour for the construction of these works. This makes it easier for the local community to gain experience of, and have the manpower to, perform the technical maintenance and upkeep of the structures. The project facilitated the hosting of the general assembly of COOPAILU which took place on November the 3rd 2020, and has also supported the hosting of the elective extraordinary general assembly on December the 4th 2020. After this important meeting, a new COOPAILU board committee was established, and effective monitoring of the operating authorization documents was established in the provincial governorate.

The cooperative ethos has been revitalized through a number of different measures. These include the establishment of an exchange space between COOPAILU and COOSOPRODA, the preparation and implementation of the performance SCORE CARD approach, a close monitoring of the construction of the COOPAILU office, and obtaining the support for COOPAILU in the planning of its activities.

Construction of the COOPAILU office

The construction of the COOPAILU office has been in progress since July 27, 2020. All the structural works are completed with the finishing works currently being in progress. At the end of Q4, the works already completed are:

Major works: foundation, elevation of walls and roof;

Surface finishing: floor (paving), care of exterior wall joints, plastering of beams, sill and columns

We are very optimistic that the work will be completed before the end of the project in February 2021.

Control of runoff (water) that affects the good functioning of the main irrigation canal

In order to ensure that the efficacy of the main irrigation canal is maximised a number of measures relating to the dike have been implemented, including the planting of appropriate trees and grasses. On the canal, vetiver has been used which protects against erosion and fights against weeds, while on the dyke, use bamboo and leicaenas have been used. This have been done through IJED, one of our local implementing partners.

Maintenance and optimization of the irrigation network

As part of the network optimization, some previously abandoned secondary and tertiary channels are being reopened. This process is promising but is moving slowly because not all community members are engaged and not all those that are share a united vision.

Regarding the dike itself, during this quarter, there has been an abundance of rain throughout the Ruzizi plain. All the rivers in the Ruzizi plain are day to day laden with sedimentation which leads to the silting up of the dike. Therefore, it is crucial to carry out regular grit removal work manually but supported by the hydraulic power of the river.

Formalization and capacity building of the sub-watershed management committee

Following the IWRM approach, the management of natural resources and water resources requires consultation between upstream and downstream users of the basin. To do this, the establishment of a management committee for the Luberizi watershed is key.

The committee is based on representatives from each village of the watershed. In the villages where we have already implemented the PIP approach, the latter are PIs. Thus, 18 village centres have already been established, including 10 in the middle plateaus and 8 in the plain.

INCREASED IGA OPPORTUNITIES / ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

During this quarter the border between Rwanda and the DRC has partially opened in for small traders. The project organized a number of its beneficiaries into cooperatives to enable them to cross the border not only to sell some products, but also to source supplies.

Capacity building and funds mobilization within VSL&A Groups.

To contribute to the promotion of livelihoods in households, but also to encourage populations (especially women and young people) to further develop a spirit of savings and business, the ERD team continued focusing on supporting the 40 VSLAs groups supported by the project. Among these 40 groups, 15 are in the 3rd cycle, 19 in the 2nd cycle and 6 in the updated 1st cycle. These 40 VSLAs have 996 members.

This quarter was more devoted to setting up and revitalizing VSLA networks. Five networks / clusters were finally set up and revitalized with the support of focal points.

In addition to the capacity building of focal points for enabling them to support the 5 networks / clusters, (recycling and coaching sessions), there has also been institutional support to the networks: the 5 networks have benefited from kits that can support their operation. These kits consisted of 5 boxes, 5 fabrics, ministerial notebooks and members' notebook.

In this quarter, not enough funds were mobilized (either in savings or in social funds) by members. This is due to the fact that the VSLA members were more concerned about the preparation of the agricultural season A2020-2021 (purchase inputs, field rental, etc.). On the other hand, the members took a lot of credits to support their agricultural activities but also the preparation of the agricultural season especially for the purchase of seeds. For us, this is not bad at all. It is a kind of resilience mechanism which allows us to cope with any negative effects of COVID-19.

Promotion of entrepreneurship through the supervision of young people

To promote the economic sustainability of the groups of young entrepreneurs who have benefited from the cash transfer, and also to avoid them working alone, a management committee of these youth groups has been set up with the support of local notability, the provincial ministry in charge of youth and the president of the young people at Luberizi Groupement level. In addition, to reassure themselves about the economic sustainability of the groups of young entrepreneurs, and to encourage young people to avoid mismanaging the funds received, a series of missions guided by the focal points was organized. During these missions, exchanges around the IGA of young people took place with all the members of the groups. During these exchanges, certain recommendations and advices were provided to the members of the groups in accordance with the challenges recorded.

To help build the capacities of young people involved in SANMARK (Sanitation Marketing), 50 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 WASH component and the national water, hygiene and sanitation service.

All business plans of youth groups have been bolstered by capital hovering around \$350 per group. The project proceeded with the cash transfer by way of strengthening existing Very Small Enterprises (TPE) or IGA for some, and the constitution of capital for the launch of new TPE / IGA for others.

Given the disruption associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, some groups of young people have given new directions/orientations to their business plans to allow them to adjust and adapt to the context (coping measures and resilience mechanisms).

This is the case of the Mukulima group in Nyamugali, which has modified its business plan initially planned for trade in agriculture. The group's forecasts were made as follows:

- Cultivation: rice
- Sown area: 2 squares³
- Charges: land rental \$30, purchase of seeds (14kg) \$28, purchase of fertilizer (12kg), payment for labour in progress.

The group members are waiting for the end of the agricultural season to assess the profitability of their activity which they piloted.

Integration of the PIP approach into the MyA Project

Either in the perimeter or in the watershed, the implementation of the PIP approach is ongoing. The 197 PIs are visiting households and provide feedback on the way these are achieving their goals.

The PIP is at two levels: 1) increasing productivity, and 2) rational management of household income with the participation of women and girls.

91 PIs were visited at home during this last quarter of 2020 to provide coaching on their work. From 20 to 29 October 2020, 162 PIs have been trained on household resource management involving all members of the household without any discrimination.

From December 16 to 17, 2020, PIs held meetings focussed on the sharing of experiences between beneficiaries, and on preparing on the strategy of setting the second generation of PIs.

³ A square is the local common concept used to design a piece of land with a side of 25 m, which means an area of 6.25 acres

In the two pilot villages, an experience exchange visit had been organized in favour of PIs. Each PI explained to his peers and farmers of his village how he is working and the success obtained. This was followed by a discussion to identify weakness and strengths, and then learn the appropriate lessons from each other.

On December the 12th 2020, the project, via the implementing partner ASCODER, organized an open day for all the IPs of the 2 pilot villages of the PIP approach (Katala and Mushegereza). The local authorities and the community members were invited to attend. 4 selected PIs (2 from each village) presented their work, the benefits of the approach and their strategies for implementing the planned activities. They showed how they managed to change their situations in the daily and collegial management of their resources in their households to achieve their visions. 210 people took part in this activity.

Agricultural technical support for season A 2020-2021

Sensitization sessions regarding the Season A 2020-2021 on the respect of the agricultural calendar by the rice producer in the irrigated perimeter have been organized through Sauti ya Amani radio.

Nurseries for PIs have been set up in 4 blocks to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to producers in the irrigated area within the framework of the Intensive Rice Cultivation System (SRI).

In addition, there is an establishment of nurseries and ploughing for producers of the irrigated perimeter who are not PIs in 5 blocks (Kagaragara I, Kagaragara II, Kibumba, Sango I and Sango II). Unfortunately, we still see a lack of respect of the agricultural calendar by the producers: 254 ha out of 1022.4 ha are identified and sown for the cultivation of rice in the 5 blocks. Two blocks are not covered by rice cultivation given the construction of the main canal which is under construction by the partner ADIC.

Watershed and grazing improvement by Partners NGO

Regarding the grazing improvement, the project facilitated the organization of livestock passage plans in specific areas of the perimeter to access the drinking troughs. The joint farmer-breeders committee, in collaboration with COOPAILU, is responsible for reopening the passages in the perimeter limited by oil palm seedlings.

In order to circumscribe the movements of the herds while respecting the minimum acceptable conditions in the dry season according to specific passages, a reflection workshop was organized with the various local actors involved. During this workshop fruitful exchanges between farmers, breeders and local authorities on pasture management and herd movements were conducted, and a pasture management and improvement plan was proposed. After its production, it will be disseminated and it will be displayed in strategic public places to be identified.

As part of the management of pastures and paddocks and the mitigation of herd movements, a management system of these pastures was set up colonial times in Luberizi to which the project has always referred. Farmers, breeders and the local authority determine the agricultural and grazing areas for each season. To complement this, a pasture management plan is produced and visualized. The opening of animal passages is being undertaken to mitigate the movements of the herds. Oil palm seedlings are planted in the irrigated perimeter in case the passage of herds crosses a block of the perimeter. The 50 PIs of Rwenena and Mutarule each received and planted fruit trees in their plot according to their expressed needs (lemon, orange, mandarin and papaya trees), not only for food balance, but also for other economic purposes.

A pilot goat farm (20 goats of the local breed and 2 goats of the improved Bauer breed) has been set up in Mutarule. A hectare fodder field with Mukuna, leucaena and pennisetum purpureum was established as an improved pilot paddocks for animal production. This will allow the breeders to be trained in the various improved breeding techniques.

In order to develop service sheds to mitigate the movements of herds:

- Three hangars were built with durable materials in three herds identified by the breeders in Kitemesho, Mutarule and Kibirizi.
- There was construction of drinking troughs to be placed in the sheds to facilitate the watering of calves and sick animals but also of drinkers to be placed in Kraal.

Plotting of the contour lines:

A length of 14 kilometres of contour lines were drawn in the villages of Katala and Tundu-Mushegereza on a slope of 50%. With the road cuts caused by the torrential rains of March – April 2020, we were not able to achieve 10 ha of multiplication fields. To achieve these 14km, we used the few sizes of vetivers reinforced by Calliandra. The seedling production achieved 650,000 seedlings covering an area of 421.1 Ha of community and individual fields in the 13 sites and for all species combined for the B and A campaign.

Seedlings were distributed to users of the watershed: agroforestry tree seedlings and shrubs in contour lines in crop fields, and forest tree seedlings in pure afforestation.

The area planted by users of the watershed through our 3 local implementation partners is 421.1 ha out of the planned 400 ha.

The ASCOODER partner carried out this activity successfully with 217.1 ha out of 150 ha planned in 5 villages namely Kazunguzibwa, Lushama, Mushegereza, Katala and Kirija in the Lemera grouping.

The partner IJED planted 51 ha of eucalyptus and acacia as part of the watershed development over an area of 80 hectares in the sites of Katekama, Kanyambeho (Mutarule), Kihoro (Nyamugali), Kitemesho, Matiaza (Nyamugali) and at the level of the rail to Rwenena in the Nakororo site targeted by the notables and made available to the population. It will also support users of the watershed to plant 41 ha to reach 100 ha planned.

The BDR partner has planted 145 out of the 150 ha planned in 5 villages, including one village in the Lemera group and 4 villages in the Kigoma group. It will also support users of the watershed to plant 5 ha to complete 150 ha.

AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

Concerning the development of agricultural value chains, the highlights are:

- A calculation of the production cost of the chilli and fresh milk CVA as well as the cost of chilli is \$0.25/kg and 1 litre of milk.
- A Teja hybrid chili pepper marketing contract signed between Gashora Farm and 64 market gardeners from Luberizi via the SOGEPA Company for 20 Ha 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 US \$70,000 housed at Equity Bank to facilitate access to agricultural credit for rice farmers in Luberizi.
- A line of credit of \$34,428 opened at EQUITY Bank for 1 first agricultural credit trial to 79 rice farmers of Luberizi, members of COOPAILU and 14 of COOSOPRODA for this season A 2021. An amount of agricultural credit varying between US \$50 and \$1000 US per eligible rice farmer per cropping season.
- 110 individual bank accounts opened and operational in favour of peasant innovators (PIs) members of COOPAILU and COOSOPRODA.
- 79/110 business plans validated to receive agricultural credit during season A 2021.
- A partnership contract signed between ZOA / MyA 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 labour payment for operations cultural).
- 10/210 innovative farmers in the Luberizi irrigated area were eligible for agricultural credit.
- An effective collaboration MoU 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, buoyant market and the PIP approach,
- A joint COOPAILU & COOSOPRODA committee to monitor the MoU was set up; a consultation framework, two marketing plans finalized 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.

CONFLICT PREVENTION & MITIGATION AND PEACEFUL COHABITATION

Intercommunity Youth Dialogue

Following increased engagement with the youth of Luberizi during 2020, informal discussions and talks culminated in an inter-community youth dialogue that was held in Uvira from October 26-28, 2020. This has been the first opportunity in several decades (and since the beginning of the project) for the youth of all the communities of Luberizi to sit and discuss their issues among each other in a non-violent manner. The dialogue followed a series of separate meetings with the youth of each community and intercommunity preparatory meetings that brought together the youth leaders. The opening ceremony was attended by the two opposing Chefs de Groupement, the Administrateur du Territoire and representatives from the Provincial Ministry of Youths. The dialogue was held around the theme: “Pour que Demain soit Meilleur – *So that Tomorrow is Better.*”

The dialogue involved a participatory approach, combining role-plays, mixed community and intra-community discussion, and breakout and plenary sessions that ultimately enabled participants to discuss 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?*; and, (iv) *What do we ask of other communities so that we live better together?*

Discussions were held in a peaceful and mutually respectful manner. Importantly, each ethnic group had the opportunity to express their viewpoints and state their positions without intimidation or fear. Even the assembly discussed the dispute around the Chefferie, which was the key area of contention. Although no agreement could be reached on this issue, the mere fact that the youth were able to freely discuss and state their diverging positions could be regarded as a significant achievement.

Overall, the participants agreed to use dialogue as their means of conflict resolution among youth. A second dialogue is scheduled for the month of January 2021 and subsequently, a joint declaration of the youth will be made. However, participants to this first dialogue did agreed on the following:

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; and

Work together in the agricultural and cattle rearing sector

Security Sector Reform (Awareness of Security Forces (FARDC/PNC))

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, peer-awareness activities regarding security actors resumed this quarter. Specifically, 12 Awareness Sessions on Security Sector Reform were organized, of which 7 by the military actors and 5 by the police across the project zone.

Participatory Theatre Production:

Over the reporting period, 12 presentations were organized. The lifting of COVID-19 related restrictions led to the resumption of several activities in initial formats. Whereas during the second quarter theatre presentations were recorded and broadcast on partner radio stations, the easing of restrictive measures in the DRC contributed to the resumption of theatre presentations in their initial formats. The main themes and topics explored through these included: land conflict between farmers in the community, land conflict between members of the same family related to successions, conflicts between community members and fountain managers on the disrespect of the rules governing the management of water fountains, conflicts between VSLA members related to the default of payment of loans contracted and Farmer-Herder conflicts around animal straying. A total number of 2045 people among them 1208 female participated in the 12 theatre productions.

Listening Club Activities

During this quarter, Listening Clubs received their monthly stipends that assists in covering the costs of their radio batteries, communication and/or transportation fees for facilitating events. Their main responsibilities of the Listening Clubs are to conduct community awareness and to listen and discuss programs that are broadcasted on the various radios; while also providing feedback on the content of such programs and suggesting topics for discussions that should be featured in the programs. During the reporting period, these activities were conducted on a continuous basis. In view of reinforcing the impact of their activities in their respective communities, Search organized 6 solidarity activities with them and 24 others were postponed to be organized in January 2021.

Support to the Radio Station, “Sauti Ya Amani”: Capacity building/coaching and equipment reinforcement and documents acquisition process

In line with Search’s 2020 Work Plan, the series of capacity-building and coaching intended for the Sauti Ya Amani radio program continued with in-situ coaching sessions and co-productions of radio programs as described below:

Co-production of a radio program: As part of the radio staff coaching process, following a series of capacity building on key aspects of conflict sensitive and community-based journalism, the Sauti Ya Amani Radio staff created a radio program titled: *“Tuugane Kwa Amani na Maendeleo (Let’s unite for peace and development).”* This program is co-produced with the radio staff to provide them the capacities to produce meaningful programs independently. The program which aims to increase peaceful coexistence around economic opportunities covers the works of local cooperatives, and structures put in place as part of the project.

Radio Document Acquisition: The process of acquisition of the official documentations of the Radio Sauti Ya Amani is ongoing. Thus far, the following documents have been obtained: *Acte notarié, Certificat de depot, autorisation provisoire de fonctionnement and the avis de non-objection from the provincial Ministry of Communication.* The remaining final document is the F92 (the final administrative document recognizing a local association) to be issued in Kinshasa and is currently in the process of being attained. However, the radio is ready to be officially handed over to the provincial government.

Comic Book Production

To date, Search has produced 6000 copies of the specifically designed comic book in Swahili and French. During this quarter, almost all of the remaining comic book copies were shared across communities during the various activities. The comic book covers the importance of peaceful coexistence and inclusive management of commons, especially secured access to lands and improved drinking water. Additionally, the book covers the roles of women in conflict mediation and peace promotion. It also further raises awareness about access to reproductive health and

health services for women including Post-Exposure-Preventive (PEP) kits and treatments for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Production of Radio Programs

During this reporting period, the last three radio programs were produced to support the work of the consortium, notably the WASH Cluster (IRC), the land mapping in the watershed area (Search and ZOA), gender-related issues, land conflicts and other topics covered by the consortium. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the number of participants for each program was reduced to the minimum whilst it was ensured that as many communities were included as possible. All the programs were distributed to the 6 radio stations of the project area and broadcast several times.

Conflict Monitoring

In order to increase the conflict monitoring capacity and build on lessons learnt in the past, Search has recruited four part-time community mobilizers based in the three target groupements (Luberizi, Kigoma and Lemera). For conflict sensitivity sake, a fair representation of the respective communities was a criterion. Thus, we recruited one Bafulirun and one Barundian in Luberizi, one Bafuliru in Lemera and one Batwa in Kigoma. The community mobilizers have been trained on the Common Ground Approach (CGA), Do-No-Harm and also were introduced to the conflict monitoring mechanism devised for the purposes of the project. Search Conflict Analyst based in the project zone is in charge of coordinating the work of those monitors.

The monitoring reports of this reporting period focused on risk factors that may have an impact on the project and on social cohesion. Although the project has provided drinking and irrigation water, there are several complaints in the community around the management of water infrastructures, notably the irrigation canal for rice farming activities and the drinking water. Moreover, theft, abductions, killings and rapes are some of the most pressing security issues in the watershed area; the other risk factor relates to conflict around lands. In addition, many local chiefs are accused of mismanaging community lands through illegal sales. Search recommended to the consortium members of appropriate cluster preventive actions; notably a continuous training and sensitization of fountain managers in order to ensure water fetching schedule is respected. With regards to irrigation water, it was recommended that the cooperative in charge of the irrigation water management, COPAILU should be supported to improve the management of the irrigation infrastructure and to increase collaboration with peace committees for mediations between users of the irrigated perimeter.

During this quarter, a few events occurred relating to some of the issues raised in previous monitoring reports and during the conflict scan. For instance, due to the growing concerns among the populations about the mismanagement of the COPAILU chairperson, its members organized an upheaval and conducted an election to nominate a new chairman.

There were two demonstrations by groups of youths engaged in the various construction sites of the project (building of the water tank of Nyamugali which is an extension of the irrigation canal). However, these issues were quickly resolved through discussions sessions hosted by the project team with the youths and did not cause disturbances to the project or within the community.

TRACK II Activities: Murhesa II

Following the peace retreat which took place from Monday 14th to Wednesday 16th September 2020 at the Catholic Seminary of Murhesa, near Bukavu, South Kivu, the Minister of Defense invited 8 armed group leaders representing 6 coalitions, including 2 representatives of the Gumino, to Goma in order to meet the Head of State, President Felix Tshisekedi who visited North Kivu from October 5th to 8th. The meeting with the Head of State was on October 7, 2020. During the meeting, Armed Group Leaders gave a copy of the declaration to President Tshisekedi who reaffirmed his commitment to create the conditions for peace in the Sud-Kivu province.

The Minister of Defense has informed Search that they intend to replicate the example of Murhesa convening with armed groups active in Nord Kivu and asked Search to conduct the said process.

Search intends to advocate towards the government and other appropriate institutions in charge of the DDR process for further clarification, in order for Search to be fully equipped when they begin their work. In doing so, Search has initiated talks with the MONUSCO, SSU, STAREC and other organizations involved or who may have a role in the DDR process.

MONITORING PROGRESS

According to monitoring about 94% of the planned activities have achieved their targets whilst others were still being implemented. The remaining key activities/actions are:

-The endline of the project

- Some actions to support community structures put in place and / or revitalized by the project (ACEPSKILU/IRC, COOPAILU/ZOA, and Peace Committees/SFCG) including: coaching sessions, providing last operating equipment/material
- The official handover of infrastructures (IRC, Search, ZOA)
- Production of a documentary film on the results and achievements of the project
- The visit of the Director of the Agence Congolaise de l'Environnement (ACE) to certificate that IRC has respected the recommendations related to the Plan de Gestion Environnemental et Social (PGES) in building the water network
- Finalization the construction of the irrigation canal /ZOA
- Implementation of the Integrated Plan of the Farmer approach (PIP) in 2 villages in the watershed
- Establishment of the Luberizi Sub-Basin Committee and the Luberizi Sub-Basin watershed management plan

We note that we received monitoring visits from provincial and territorial authorities to ensure implementation of recommendations of previous visits, and also to ensure conformity to the reports and communicated information. The government team was led by the Vice-Governor of the South Kivu Province, accompanied by some provincial deputies, and the four technical ministries partners of the project each one led by the Ministers himself. This visit allowed the provincial authority to see for himself the progress of the activities of the Maji ya Amani project some months before its end, and to make some last recommendations for a smooth closure. The Administrateur du Territoire of Uvira also realized a field visit in Lemera to ensure if the data produced in the report regarding the tree plantation by the project (ZOA) are real and conforms to reality.

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 taking into account the participation of women, youths and Batwa to the activities to enhance equity in income gaining.

Moreover, during this quarter, we received many testimonies around the positive impact of the drinking water network on this area of GED (Gender Equality and Diversity). The taps placed in the villages of the Luberizi Groupement have significantly contributed to solving the burden of water chores among community members. Traditionally, girls and women have the duty to draw water for households. Before the taps were set up in the villages, girls and women had to travel kilometres per day with a 20-kilo can on their heads. The taps have not only reduced their time getting water, but also helped protect them from being exposed to road accidents, attacks, kidnappings and sexual assault. The benefits of the water taps also extends to people with low mobility, such as the elderly or people with disabilities. Given that the burden of water fetching is reduced, girls can now have the opportunity to go to school, even access their leisure time.

Integration efforts have been extended to the Batwa (Pygmy) community with the recruitment of a Batwa girl as a radio host at the Sauty Ya Amani radio station, the inclusion of a boy in the theatre group of Luberizi, as well as the recruitment of another Batwa from Mulenge as a community mobilizer with a four-month contract and based in Kigoma. The Pygmies are also part of all the structures, associations, cooperatives and committees put in place as part of the project. Their youth representatives also partake in intercommunity dialogues organized in Luberizi by Search as part of the project. The Twa represent a large portion of the Landless farmers (15%) who were recently identified to be given lands in the irrigated perimeter of Luberizi.

In addition, within the set up and/or revitalized community structures, women have leadership roles in all the structures and entities set up by the consortium. We are expecting to see this leadership being extended to all community positions and structures in general.

Thee PIP approach holistically addresses the gender issue, analyses its causes, manifestations and consequences at the household and community level in general, and includes targeting the identified root causes such as gender inequality in particular, traditional beliefs and religious gender and violence (GBV in particular), harmful concepts of (negative) masculinity. In the development of integrated plans, the rights and needs of women are also taken into account.

CHALLENGES

Covid-19 restrictions and Security restriction

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, activity implementation was not conducted as desired or planned. Some sessions grouping more than 20 participants were limited. At the same time, some activities were relocated or postponed

due to security issues. The collaboration between the consortium partners and the security briefing provided by the security department of IRC significantly helped to prevent security incidents related to project implementation. The limited travel to Rwanda and Burundi due to this pandemic did not facilitate certain operations for staff and beneficiaries, and even to partners and service providers. This made unavailable some products and services from these countries.

Limited human resources

Due to the reduction in staffing within IRC, some activities were not easy to be implemented. For instance, the monitoring activities on field for coaching and data collection, especially for GBV&RH component, but even as well as other components were not easy to be done without community mobilizers and assistants in order to maintain good results while the final evaluation has not been conducted, which means that the project is still accountable on results of this component.

Difficult access to credit at Equity Bank for some project beneficiaries

Negotiations with Equity Bank to ease the conditions for granting loans, in particular the age limits, take time and this delays the access to credit of some of the beneficiaries for the conduct of their AGRs and / or the improvement of their agricultural activities.

Wait-and-see attitude of some beneficiaries

There is still a wait-and-see attitude among some members of the community who wants everything to be done by the project. This was observed during the ministerial visit where certain grievances expressed asked the project to do certain tasks which, logically and according to compromises, should be carried out by the beneficiaries as a community contribution.

LESSONS LEARNED

The start of the construction work of the additional reservoir in Nyamugali increased and renewed community eagerness to support the project. In addition, we saw an increase in those paying for drinking water in the two villages of Nyamugali and Sango.

The Steering Committee field visit, spoilers and sceptical in community members became less violent and started being collaborative. The visit showed the Government support to the project and “community negative leaders” felt helpless in the face of that manifest support of the provincial authorities towards the project.

Continuous engagements with the youth of Luberizi have contributed to transforming many youths into positive contributors to intra-community and inter-community cohesion. The implementation of the youth strategy drafted by Search and shared with the consortium members, as well as ongoing informal dialogues should continue and be more and more inclusive so that a vast majority of the youth engage in the process of peaceful coexistence and development.

With the proper environment and conditions, even the toughest issues facing communities in Luberizi can be discussed and addressed peacefully. The intercommunity youth dialogue organized by Search in Uvira in October 2020 contributed to a sound and constructive dialogue among the youth of Luberizi and even the issue of the Chefferie (the bone of contention of Luberizi) was part of the discussions. Each community had the opportunity to state their position regarding this issue and committed to have recourse to dialogue as a means of conflict resolution in their communities.

Flexibility and adaptations are essential to ensure the project yields its expected outcomes. For instance, following a recommendation by the CONAREF, the structure in charge of land reform in the DRC, the consortium organizations, especially ZOA and Search have adopted a new methodology with the land mapping process in the watershed area. Search quickly supported the CCRCC (the Comité Consultatif de Règlement des Conflits Coutumiers), a structure that is supposed to overtake the role of the Land Service in the Chefferie des Bafuliru. ZOA has also resorted to supporting the Chefferie to implement a Customary Land Register to manage the lands.