

LEARNING REVIEW REPORT

ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PROGRAMME

ADRA BURUNDI



Uplifting Socio-economic Livelihoods through VSLA Micro-Saving and Lending in Cibitoke Province

August 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADRA Burundi became part of the ASC programme in July 2013 and expanded the programme with livelihood and health activities as well as introduced the REFLECT approach. This meant a shift towards a broader focus on building the capacity of the civil society, empowering Community Based Groups (CBGs) to become active players in their local community, engaging in critical dialogue with government structures and other duty bearers.

The programme works with community based groups in six communes in Cibitoke Province. The province is characterised by high malnutrition rates, weak economy and low literacy rates.

The review found out that the programme was relevant in addressing the prevailing dismal conditions and uplifting the community's livelihood, confidence and ability to push for their own change.

The ASC Programme is holistic focussing on, food security, literacy, health, and advocacy issues. The mode of operation instituted in the programme has enabled the programme to utilize available resources efficiently, despite 30% reduction in budget originating from Denmark Finance Bill. Given the wide area of programme coverage, the 8 staffs directly attached to the management of communes have efficiently executed their roles despite the budget cuts that reduced the number of staff. Apart from the main ASC programme office in Cibitoke there are two other satellite offices in Buganda and Mabayi communes.

Previously, before ASC, the 6 communes were scattered with unorganized groups mainly erupting from the need to re-establish themselves after resettling from various conflicts displacements. The ASC programme has strengthened and created new structures within the community giving members an opportunity to analyse, prioritize and articulate their own pressing problems as well as the efforts to alleviate them. There are 162 CBGs and 121 government extension agronomists that have been sensitized and trained on improved farming and good agricultural best practices.

The main approach used was Farmer Field schools which were effective in ensuring capacity building of improved farming practices which was done through persuasive trial demonstrations. This has led to domestic manure use, desire for quality seeds, desire to increase yield and gradual change of mind-sets. For instance in Mabayi, there is a very good

change from 5% to 90% of members used manure application. More than 30% of the CBGs and CBG members are using more than one of the modern methods trained with 44.4% CBGs and 33.5% CBG members. The programme conducted cooking demonstrations with 29 CBGs to create awareness on proper food preparation and balancing a diet. More trainings are needed though, at CBG member household levels to increase the adoption levels and hence directly improve the food security situation and malnutrition levels. Inputs like seeds and fertilizers are not readily available. This is a government responsibility and as much as the programme wills to promote quality seeds and use of inputs, they can mainly source them from government agencies. Strategic advocacy is therefore needed in ADRA in coalition with others, to enable communities' access quality seeds and fertilizers.

The government expressed there was inadequate budget for seed production. However there are ongoing initiatives that the programme can tap into for future collaboration. Contours on the steep slopes have not been adequately erected and more efforts and campaign should be directed to protect the slopes. Government extension officers are not adequately trained, sufficient and lack logistical support to reach the CBGs for further mentoring. Therefore the programme should invest more in training community based facilitators at CBG levels as well as train more government agricultural extension officers. Design an integrated and intensification food security model that will ensure a variety of crops and small livestock are practiced at every household on the same available land.

There are 169 VSLA groups established and are effectively functioning. VSLA members have been trained on the entire VSLA concept from formation, group discipline, savings, loaning, loan repayment and the sharing of dividends. Majority are in their 2nd cycle with 90–100% member loan repayment rate. Members have in return benefited by accessing loans at an affordable rate, improved their living conditions like constructing improved houses, latrines, accessing farm inputs and assets like livestock and implements.

The CBGs have also tapped into the opportunity of providing groceries and other amenities to the community increasing group income. Women have also found means to be financially responsible giving them an upper hand in managing household economics without relying fully on their husbands. The review recommends that non-farm income opportunities be explored to target youth and women with entrepreneurial inclination and not necessarily agriculture.

The health component has also mobilized and established 77 health CBGs in every government administrative areas within the 6 Communes. There were 227 health focal points from the

government. The result is that there is an increase in behavioural change and attitudes. People are increasingly constructing and using latrines, children are being vaccinated, family planning acceptance and use among women, epidemics like cholera have been managed (case in Camakombe where the quarantined area has been removed after controlling the epidemic), and malaria cases have also reduced. The recommendations include increased mobilization and capacity building sessions to increase willingness to embrace behavioural change. Deliberately target men and religious leaders in the support for FP practise. The vast programme area should have more health CBGs. Design a health programme for youths. Design an adequate monitoring system from the community level to the programme level.

Similarly the programme has attained 313 REFLECT circles with 163 reflect facilitators. As a result 70% of all the women who have gone through the REFLECT classes can read and write, engage in socio-economic activities very confidently, and are empowered to lead in political and CBG positions (out of the 23 CBG s developed from REFLECT classes 9 of them are led by women). The programme should conduct refresher courses to the facilitators, livelihood skills should also be taught, targeting graduates after their ‘classes’ is also important especially by providing them with opportunity to enrol to vocational schools.

The advocacy component has led to communities’ ability to engage the duty bearers and demand for attention and their rights. They have lobbied the government for availing health services closer, and the government is constructing health centres in Gifunzo and Kagarutsi in Mugina Commune, as well as in Ngara Mabayi Commune.

Similarly the 162 local leaders have been trained in their roles as duty bearers. They have understood the CBGs role in educating the community and demanding for an improved life.

Women have gained confidence in themselves and inspiring for change, as well as identifying GBV issues. For example, between April and June 2017, 112 wife-beating cases were reported by women as well as 15 cases of family abandonment. Moreover, women in 49% of all CBGs are holding leadership positions.

There is also an increase in the efforts to create awareness in every commune on social injustices and inadequate services. However advocacy strategies should consider pursuing issues from the community to the national level. This is if no sustainable solutions are found at

the grass-roots. ASC Programme should support this forward linkage of community advocacy, through Regional level and to the national level, by defining its role in advocacy as well as identifying key coalition partners with like-mind.

Moreover, engage religious leaders through social accountability activities to step up SRHRS as well address GBV advocacy in the communities of their congregations. The rights based approach can be strengthened by considering the plight of all vulnerable groups, by designing a community-based advocacy strategy. A stakeholder's analysis is important to identify potential and active stakeholders and how to further engage them in an elaborate advocacy campaign.

The sustainability of the programme is assured. There are trained community facilitators and government agents who have the capacity to mobilize and train the community members. The groups are well organized with governance structures in place.

ASC Programme Burundi should consider revamping the monitoring and evaluation department to reflect flow of monitoring activities by community participation. There should be regular monitoring sessions between CBGs and cooperatives. Documentation of best practices and the particular experiences that shape the ASC programme in the Burundian context.

The review recommends up scaling of ASC programme within Burundi since the challenges in Cibitoke are more likely to be similar elsewhere. More so, it is possible to extend the ASC Programme to Bubanza, which neighbours Cibitoke. Initially both were one Province, and later demarcated into 2 provinces. Both Provinces have similar ecological context and challenges.

To deliver more on the ASC Programme advocacy promises as per the ToC, the Programme planning should be reviewed, to capture more elaborate advocacy issues and clear expected outcomes, which can be monitored progressively. This should be combined with staff capacity development in *Rights Based approach advocacy* as well *community based participatory advocacy*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This review was undertaken through a collaborative effort of the Consultants, ADRA Burundi, ASC programme staff and ADRA Denmark.

In addition, the support of the programme beneficiaries in various communes in Cibitoke region was crucial for the realization of the review objectives.

We acknowledge the welcoming, discussions at the Regional Commissioners, and their appreciation of the programme/ADRA's work.

Finally, we take this opportunity to thank all persons who contributed to the evaluation in one way or another.

Evaluation team

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRA	Adventists Development and Relief Agency
ASC	Action for Social Change Programme
BIF	Burundian Franc
CBG	Community Based Groups
FBO	Faith Based Organisations
FF	Field Facilitators
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
IFAD	United Nations Financial Institution and Agriculture specialised agency.
IFAD/PAIOZA	
FP	Family Planning
FS	Food Security
IFAD/PNSADR	
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Technique
RIPAT	Rural Initiative for Participatory Agricultural Transformation
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SRHRs	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children and Education Fund
VSLA	Village Savings and Lending Association
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WB	World Bank

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background information

In cooperation with ADRA Denmark, ADRA Burundi has been implementing the programme Action for Social Change (ASC) which aims to empower civil society groups to advocate for their rights. ADRA Burundi became part of the ASC programme in July 2013 and expanded the programme with livelihood and health activities and introduced the REFLECT approach. This meant a shift towards a broader focus on building the capacity of the civil society, empowering Community Based Groups (CBGs) to become active players in their local community, engaging in critical dialogue with government structures and other duty bearers.

ASC applies a Communication for Social Change approach, which uses media, communication and community dialogue strategically in the development work.

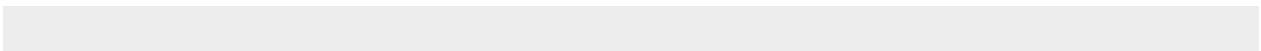
ADRA Burundi therefore identified three change areas to work on namely:

- a) Community and civil society structures, including media, that permit community members and civil society to articulate their needs, concerns and rights and engage in peaceful dialogue and debate with formal and informal decision makers and authorities.
- b) Community members that have the knowledge and skills to claim and realize their rights and utilise livelihood opportunities.
- c) Local and national executive authorities and informal leaders that have the capacity, resources and willingness to implement existing laws and engage with civil society actors and community groups in accordance with existing legal frameworks and policies.

1.2 Current ASC Programme Context

There is concurrence in what global institutions perceive as the Burundian context.

According to the World Bank update of the Burundi context by end of December, 2016, the situation is as follows:



Overview

Burundi is a small landlocked country (27,830 sq.km) which is one of the five poorest countries in the world.

It is the second most densely populated country in Africa (approximately 11.18 million people-470 inhabitants/sq. km).

Burundi ranks 180th out of 186 countries in terms of the Human Development Index.

Nearly 64.9% of the population live below the poverty line.

Poverty is overwhelmingly rural and most of the country's poor are small-scale farmers. Burundi economy is heavily reliant on agriculture which employs 90% of the population, though cultivable land is extremely scarce.

Political Context

Burundi's history as an independent country has in the past been characterized by high political instability and violence. Currently there is relative calm.

Social Context

Poverty still affects a major part of Burundi's population. Food insecurity is alarming as the country ranks the lowest position in the 2013 Global Hunger Index.

Almost one in two households (around 4.6 million people) are food insecure and over half of the children are stunted (WFP, 2014 and 2016).

Access to water and sanitation is very low and less than 5 percent of the total population has access to electricity (World Bank, 2016).

Economic Overview

Economic growth remains negative in 2016 due to a fragile political environment, private consumption likely weakened following a contraction in food production, due to climate shocks, a longer than expected lean season and forced migrations (refugees and IDPs).

Positive developments in the real sector included private investment growth improving in recent months as consumer agro-industries (soaps and edible oils, beverages, and cigarettes) and the cement industry found new domestic and external markets. These areas drove an

increase in the average monthly industrial production index by 1.7 percent between 2015 and 2016.

While headline inflation has remained moderate at 6.0 percent, standing below the 8-percent convergence level agreed within the East Africa Community's regional integration arrangements, the dire situation of foreign exchange reserves contributed to raising inflation expectations observed over the past months.

Currently, available estimations relying on Central Bank data suggest that the public debt ratio will soon exceed 45 percent of GDP.

World Bank, Last Updated: Dec 27, 2016

Complementing the World Bank, UNESCO has the following statistics on education.

Adult literacy rate (2014)	61.57
Female adult literacy rate (2014)	54.66
Youth literacy rate (2014)	79.56
Female youth literacy rate (2014)	74.96
Government expenditure on education as % of GDP (2013)	5.42

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.

Given the World Bank overview plus the above UNESCO statistics, the ASC Programme has in overall, been relevant to the wanting situation in the Country.

1.3 Objectives of the review

- a) To assess and document the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ASC programme as well as the appropriateness of the approaches and methodologies applied
- b) To assess the livelihood/food security work through the CBGs and CBG networks and recommend how this can be strengthened
- c) To assess the awareness raising and capacity building of partner CBGs and the possibility to improve advocacy work in collaboration with ADRA Burundi and the opportunities to strengthen that work by collaborating with different stakeholders, e.g. the SDA church and other religious leaders and networks like Dutabarane.

- d) To recommend on areas where the ASC programme design and implementation can be improved and suggest ways to strengthen programme documentation.

1.4 Learning Review Methodology

The learning and review process was inclusive of all ASC stakeholders both internal and external. A variety of methods and tools were used to collect, collate and analyse information from different sources in order to produce this evaluation report. A desk review of secondary data was conducted to understand the context and objectives of the project. On the ground, random and purposive sampling was used to ensure all project participants in different geographical areas, sectors, organizations, and government stakeholders were interviewed. The key informant interviews included respondents from hill leaders, ASC programme staff, CBGs leaders, government leaders from the health, agricultural and community development sectors at provincial, commune and hill level. Other respondents included staff of organizations like Help Channel, Dutabarane, PNSDAR, and PAIOZA project. The list of respondents is attached in *Annex 1*. The review used focus groups to elicit information with a key question checklist, to probe and get quantitative and qualitative information. This check list was based on; relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ASC programme as well as the appropriateness of the approaches and methodologies applied. Key respondents who participated in the focus groups included ASC programme staff, CBGs and their leaders, cooperatives, women, and youths.

During the field visit, field survey and observations were made on various activities of the programme. These will be used to gather and to triangulate information collected using other methods of data collection. Outstanding cases where specific persons had achieved remarkable success/failure were captured.

Data collection and analysis

The collected data was analysed, triangulated and synthesised to generate information as per terms of reference, and in good practice of report writing.

Here follows the detailed report of the learning review.

2.0 DETAILED FINDINGS OF THE LEARNING REVIEW

The review and learning exercise mainly focused on the components of the ASC programme, which included, Food security and livelihoods, economic empowerment, VSLA, Health, REFLECT and advocacy. The programme learning review looked at, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, progress towards impact and sustainability. Other aspects on networking and potential for expansion were also covered as part of the learning review. The report has a section on the findings under each of the programme components which explains the achievements, challenges and recommendations.

The table below shows the ToC for the ASC programme.

Change Area Dimension	Outcome Objective
Change Area A	Community structures that permit community members to articulate their needs, concerns and rights are in place.
Change Area B	Community members have the knowledge and skills to claim and realise their rights and utilise livelihood opportunities
Change Area C	Local and national executive authorities have the capacity, resources and willingness to respond to the needs and claims raised by the poor communities.

The review of the programme implementation for effectiveness was done in various thematic areas of the programme activities, whereby the programme activities are cross-cutting over the three dimensions above.

2.1 Relevance

The ASC programme is very holistic targeting food security, literacy, health and advocacy issues. The programme has managed to significantly contribute towards an improved level of life among the direct beneficiaries. The Burundi and Cibitoke context necessitated a programme that will mobilize, train, provide inputs, empower the community and make them in charge of their development process. Specific relevant issues are described under the components.

2.2 Efficiency

The programme has increasingly utilized their available resources efficiently. The programme has 8 staff attached directly to the programme that has a wide coverage of 1638 km. The programme has a main office and 2 sub offices in Buganda commune (flat lands) and in Mabayi commune (highlands) to enable the staff reach both high and low land areas. In 2015 the budget was reduced due to the fact that, the 2016 budgets of all Danish NGOs were reduced by approximately 30% due to reductions in national development assistance on the Finance Bill in Denmark. The cut-back on the budget in Denmark resulted in reduction of four staff in the Burundi ASC Programme. The remaining staff continued to work enthusiastically for the same amount of work-load initially planned. At the onset of the project each field officer was attached to a commune. Currently, approximately 2 communes are served by 3 field facilitators. The staff are also well equipped with motorbikes to conduct wide community outreach sessions, capacity building, and follow ups. This mode of operation at the programme ensures the available personnel are efficiently utilized as well as saving time.

The review exercise found the programme to have efficiently utilized the resources at their disposal especially considering the amount of work done and the results realized with a lean budget.

2.3 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the programme is discussed with specific details per programme components. Generally the programme was effective in regard to the theory of change established that provide the main guidance and direction towards the implementation of planned activities.

Due to the post war situation community members were scattered with a majority desiring to re-establish their lives and livelihoods pathways. During the review the team understood that most of the CBGs started before the programme came into existence. There was a yearning among the people to pull their energies and ideas together to provide social networking, economic opportunities and encourage one another. The ASC programme has

managed to work with existing groups. They have strengthened the groups by training them on their roles and responsibilities, democratic governance using constitutions and re-electing leaders accordingly. They have also been taught on simple financial record keeping, human rights, advocacy, food security and health. Literacy lessons have been provided through the REFLECT component.

The ASC programme has strengthened and created new structures within the community giving members an opportunity to analyse, prioritize and articulate their own pressing problems as well as the efforts to alleviate them. There is a gradual increase of these structures which are now self-replicating themselves. In 2016 there were 40 food security CBGs with an increase of up to 162 CBGs by now, which have been sensitized and trained on improved farming and good agricultural best practices. The programme has undertaken economic empowerment and established 67 VSLA groups in 2016 which have increased to 169 in 2017 and are effectively functioning. The health component has mobilized and established 77 health CBGs in every government administrative areas within the 6 Communes. This is a growth of about 80% from 13 health groups in 2016. These CBGs work in collaboration with government at Communes level, an effort that has been synergetic in addressing the community public health problems of epidemics diseases like cholera, malaria, malnutrition etc. The teaming-up together makes the contribution of the government enable the CBG coverage, reach the community more effectively and with wide outreach.

Similarly the programme in 2016 had established 70 REFLECT circles which have increased to 313 classes and 163 facilitators. CBGs have also replicated themselves and formed more groups, they have also reorganized themselves into networks hence destined for bigger impact in the activities they undertake. The CBGs have graduated to cooperatives and networks. In 2016 the programme had 24 cooperatives and the review learnt that the programme has been able to establish networks and 32 cooperatives. A good example, in Buganda, Dukunde Korora CBG is now a cooperative and is also in a network of 5 more CBGs with 169 members.

The programme has effectively been able to support establishment and strengthen formation of community structures providing several avenues for members to voice their concerns, engage stakeholders and commit to bring a change in their lives. These structures

also provide a forum for other development issues to be taught, discussed and implemented. Issues affecting people living in poverty are publicly prioritized by CBGs and networks.

As a result structures are providing avenues for increased communication of concerns and responsive actions taken. Between April–June 2017 various concerns were raised and resolved. These include 317 couples were officially registered as legally married; reported cases on 112 wife–beating cases, 39 cases where women were denied access to family assets, 52 cases of sexual rape, 22 cases of polygamy, 14 cases of early marriages, 34 of adultery and 15 cases of abandonment. With regard to health issues that were addressed, 115 new latrines were built as 28 households established hand–wash systems at their homes (ASC Quarterly report, April–June 2017).

2.4 Findings on the ASC programme components

2.4.1 Food security and livelihoods

Stated indicator; 30 % of the food security CBGs’ members have applied at least three of the modern farming techniques taught.

Achievements

The overall food security context and need in Cibitoke and Burundi has more than 70% of the population in Burundi suffering from food insecurity with a current level of malnutrition rate of 59% of children under five in Cibitoke province. Given the acute land shortage and severe food insecurity, the programme has built capacity of the farmers to adopt improved farming methods and good agricultural practices (GAP).

Farmers were organized into CBGs (Community Based Groups) for effective training sessions through the Farmer field School approach (FFS) a government supported initiative. Capacity building was key and was viewed as very important by the CBG members. Each group identified a demonstration plot where trial plots were established as a persuasive measure towards behaviour change and adoption of right farming practises. The approach has also played a key role in changing their mind–sets especially with the practical use of trial plots. According to CBGs in Mabayi, (review was done when most of the crops had been harvested) there was a difference after harvesting the four trial plots established

depicting the use of inputs (fertilizer, manure, normal farmer practice and both fertilizer and manure). Evidently the CBG members and community are convinced that the use of inputs is important.

The demand for manure has increased with minimal burning of the same. In Mabayi, the same was initially readily available with only 5% of members using it. The change after the training indicates that 90% of the CBG members use manure on their farms. It was also noted that manure has become a rare commodity for sale. An area of 2m by 2m with manure would cost BIF 200,000.00. The groups indicated they required a livestock component especially since the need to use manure had increased (Mabayi commune).

Other trainings included spaced planting and sowing in rows by using fertilizers, not burning farmland grass, use of farmyard manure, compost manure, kitchen gardening, crop rotation, use of quality seeds, and planting agro-forestry trees and control of soil erosion through contours. The farmers have also been trained in selecting better seeds from their healthy harvest to bridge the gap of accessing quality seeds from the government. The CBGs were also taught on land management practices including construction of contours and terracing as well as planting of fodder crops along the terraces. This has however not brought much change to the community due to low adoption.

There are 121 government extension agronomists trained to fill the extension service gap in advising and training CBGs. The capacity building element in the programme is very holistic such that a FS CBG will also know how to read and write through REFLECT, how to prevent disease and farm appropriately. The table below shows the trainings conducted to CBGs in Murwi Commune.

Table 3. TRAININGS TO CBGs FROM MURWI COMMUNE

	KAMWENUBUSA (NETWORK)			
NO.	CBG NAME	MALES	FEMALES	TOPICS OF TRAININGS
1	GIRUBUNTU	6	13	Conflict management
2	TWISUNUNURE	10	15	Human rights-woman rights
3	NDERAGAKURA	7	14	Importance of working in associations/ CBGs
4	RWANYUBUJUJU	8	12	Group/ Civil society identity

5	TUGWIZUMWIMBU	6	5	Cooperatives on creation and management + women leadership & financial management
6	BIKORWAVYIZIWACU	12	13	Pineapple processing
7	COOPERATIVE- MFASHANGUFASHE	6	10	Tomato processing
				Meeting preparation
				Prioritizing community needs (Pair wise approach & problem tree)
				Growing banana
				Collecting & delivering information at community level
				Producing organic manure
				Monitoring & evaluation of a project

The programme has attained and exceeded the stated indicator of 30% for CBGs and CBG members respectively who are using any of the three trained improved methods of farming. Knowledge increase has led to efficient use of the small pieces of land owned by the farmers with 44.4 % of all CBGs applying at least three modern farming techniques in their CBGs farmlands and has influenced 1,405 close neighbouring households to adopt these farming techniques. This has also led to 33.5 %, 1,395 out of 4,153 food security CBG members, have applied at least three of the modern farming techniques. In addition, out of the 44.4% CBGs, about 68.3% are able to measure their production and production costs. This has also led to increase in productivity.

However more focus should also be directed to individual farms for increased adoption at household level.

Increase in food production should be directly related to increase in consumption of a balanced diet. The programme in the last quarter conducted cooking demonstration with 29 CBGs, however follow ups on the implementation of the same has not been done.

With the knowledge and change of perspectives, CBG members are more inclined to accept new technologies and services from other organizations due to the exposure they have

received from ASC programme. Actually other organizations prefer to work with already formed and organized groups for further developing them. In Mabayi the ~~Piverbe~~ PAIVAB project brought 300 cows to Buhoro sub village and only 120 farmers were ready to receive. CBG members knew the importance of rearing a cow (for manure, dietary diversity and income) and received them willingly in their sub locations. The pineapple group in Mugina has also worked closely with INADES.

There has been good progress among the CBGs which have moved from formative stage of groups to the cooperative and networking level. The presence of cooperatives sets a new pace for development in the food security area. Trainings have been conducted on leadership, governance, constitution and importance of registering their cooperatives. These new structures are in different stages of development depending on when they developed. Their outlook depends on the need at and Cooperatives like the one in Mabayi have been trained on the crops they have identified for farming i.e. sweet potatoes, beans and maize as an effort to diversify, hence improving food security.

Challenges

The implementation had its share of challenges which are either within the programme or contextual affecting the attainment of intended actions.

- a) The ASC programme depends on the government for inputs including quality seeds to promote a vibrant food security programme. However it was evident that there is a bias towards starchy foods that were being advocated in the programme areas, more than the legumes by key stakeholders of government like IFAD. For example the government/IFAD Paioza project is specifically involved with maize, rice and banana promotion. Similarly, the PNSADR organization deals with rice production only.
- b) Drought has been recurrent in the last two years affecting production. It is during these dry seasons that there is perfect environment for maize diseases. Actually the main starchy crops banana, maize, and rice have been affected by diseases worsening the food security situation especially in dry seasons and threatening livelihoods. The government is aware of outbreaks like the cassava mosaic and banana wilt, they are currently introducing clean plants from Imbezi research centre.

- c) The programme has not sufficiently provided for a mechanism towards access to availability of quality and affordable seeds. Communities are using selected harvested hybrid maize and rice crops for seeds, which consequently reduces the viability of such seeds over time and hence production. The government also indicated that there was no sufficient budget for producing quality seeds and there are no seeds for provision as of now. This has been accelerated by minimal linkage with stakeholders who can ease access to quality seeds and fertilizer like PAIOZA and government organs. The government has a role of providing quality seeds. According to Buganda CBGs they were last provided with rice and maize seeds in 2016 and 2014 respectively.
- d) The CBGs have been trained on the use of fertilizers yet the prices of commercial fertilizers are unaffordable to them. This is in spite of a national policy of subsidizing the fertilizers since 2013.
- e) The Cibitoke Region highlands which are steep, barely have any contours or terracing to reduce rainwater run-off and erosion. Hence degradation of soil quality. This is worsened by the gold mining activities taking place in Mabayi and other environs.
- f) Government extension services are limited. The CBGs i.e. in Kagurusi shared that the extension services are not evident in their lives and they really are dependent on ADRA field facilitators.
- g) The FS does not have community based facilitators who should be on the ground to mobilize and follow up on the FS issues and bring about increased food production at household level.
- h) The cooperatives and networks are still in formative stage and therefore need more capacity building interventions to harmonise them.
- i) There is no criteria for progressive CBGs to graduate into cooperatives. There also appears to be a big difference in the cooperatives formed. For example the cooperative in Nyeshenza appeared not sure of what was their main purpose on formation. Last season they grew rice paddy the crop was affected by the drought and have changed to soya bean for this season. It indicates that there was no value chain analysis conducted to assist the farmers to make informed decisions on what livelihood activities they should pursue as a cooperative.

- j) There is attitudinal culture of waiting for external help, which retards the agricultural development effort to bring about change. Some say they cannot do terracing because the neighbours uphill have not done theirs and at times express hope that the government will do it for them. IFAD have funded terracing in some parts of the country, hence diminishing hopes of building self-reliance.
- k) The CBGs stated that they lack marketing skills and access to markets where they can sell their farm products. Often farmers are forced to sell their produce at lower prices during the harvest period. This is made worse by the erratic climate change, presence of middlemen and lack of diversified methods of processing their produce.

Recommendation

The food security component should be revamped to consider all the major challenges in Cibitoke and ensure that the fast growing population is fed efficiently and sustainably.

Design an integrated an intensification of food security model that will ensure a variety of crops and small livestock are practiced at every household on the same available land.

- A basket of option should include a variety of crop and livestock technologies that target annual and perennial seasons. Employing the farmer all year round.
 - This will provide sufficient and nutritious foods to the families.
 - The availability of manure from the livestock will be used to improve the soil and crop production. These two, crop and animal development should not be practiced separately.
- a) The programme has advocated more on maize, sweet potatoes and beans. Other nutrient dense crops should be incorporated like; soya beans, pigeon peas and orange fleshed sweet potatoes. Intercropping of pigeon peas with maize will ensure an increase in harvest for two crops in one season. Food security is directly related to improved nutrition and provision of a diversified diet at household level.
 - b) Due to drought and disease outbreaks, the programme has the opportunity to focus more on promoting drought tolerant crops, intercropping and crop rotation as much as possible. These would include pigeon peas, maize varieties
 - c) The programme should partner more with the government programmes in Cibitoke, to harness various opportunities to leverage their farmers. The advocacy should be

continuous to ensure ADRA Burundi is incorporated in the 2018 action plans of the government agriculture programmes and benefit from the following activities:

- Seek to ensure availability of quality and affordable seeds in PAIOZA. The government PAIOZA project is concerned mainly with seed provision to groups and cooperatives.
 - The government is partnering with FIDA along with other CSOs, to train lead farmers on maize, rice, beans.
 - Consideration of promoting drought tolerant crops too.
 - Strategies to cope with disease outbreaks (banana, rice and maize).
 - Availability of subsidized fertilizer from government.
- d) The programme should conduct a thorough mobilization and continue with the initiative it started in 2014 and slowed down. This process should be carried out and done with emphasis on soil and water conservation methods. Farms on steep land or with any gradient allowing for soil erosion should be preserved with through contouring and terracing techniques planted with hedgerows of pasture crops like elephant grass or Napier grass. The same should be adopted and renovated annually and combined with mulching to reduce the loss of soil and harmful flow of water while increasing *insitu* water retention. With regard to the terracing and contouring techniques, which the programme initiated with practical demonstration in 2017 in the fourth quarter, a close follow-up is needed. ADRA should seek to see how to engage on policy influence /bylaw to make it mandatory for all farmers to oblige. Some farmers are frustrated in doing terracing and contouring given it is a dependent activity on other farmers doing it who are uphill. Some don't do it so it affects those whose attitude is inclined to change about contouring and terracing.
- e) Train lead farmers in CBGs to act as community based facilitators. There should be a developed criteria for identifying lead farmers in every CBG. These lead farmers should be thoroughly trained on the FS component and be able to train, share experiences and upscale best practices. They are expected to work hand in hand with the ASC programme staff and the available government agricultural extension officers.
- f) There is need therefore for conscious efforts to promote cassava and banana crops into levels of value addition and processing. There are minimal efforts on the ground to promote them. The governors in Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces agreed that

banana is a major crop in their areas, with potential for value-adding. The Murwi cooperative has able, strong leadership and focussed on banana enterprise. They have not been trained on banana value chain and this is an opportunity that needs to be pursued further.

- g) ASC Programme should also embrace value chain analysis from production, post harvesting, food utilization to marketing and processing.
- h) Cooperatives have an opportunity to collectively and individually grow similar crops, market and sell them collectively. They should process products for the individual, local and industrial markets. Large volumes of products provide an increased bargaining power and power to access the market. This also translates to more capacity building on quality, quantity, pricing among others.
- i) Integrate agro-forestry to enhance food security by adopting a combination of approaches that include i.e. agroforestry for conservation of farm land, but eventually increase food production. Contextualise and combine components of FFS, RIPAT and other similar community approaches that can synergize the programme.
 - Combine other approaches with FFS which is strong in changing attitudes and mind-sets.
 - Others like RIPAT are strong in ensuring change at the household level and gradually farmers implement more than one technology on their farms.
 - Considering the need for more agroforestry, improved farming methods, community monitoring and upscaling efforts a mix of these two approaches is necessary.
 - Contextualizing the approach to meet the Burundi environment is important.

Cooperatives provide a safe net for pricing of commodities. Members are able to sell their commodities collectively reducing the power of the broker on an individual.

The programme has grown with some CBGs graduating from primary society to Secondary co-operatives. Twenty (20) CBGs have evolved into cooperatives. They have brought together their capitals to initiate IGAs with the purpose of making profits from micro-projects.

2.4.2 Economic empowerment and VSLA

Stated indicator: 60 % VSLA/Cooperative members use responsively their available financial resources to cover household needs.

Given that most of the Burundians targeted by the programme are below the poverty line, the VSLAs have done an overwhelming job to engage CBG members in improving their economic situation. The VSLA members have been trained on the entire VSLA concept from formation, group discipline, savings, loaning, loan repayment and the sharing of dividends.

Members of VSLAs attest they can now afford schools fees for children who were out of school. Others have built decent bricks-stoned houses, graduating from mud-made houses, from the VSLAs savings. Others have afforded referral health services that cannot be provided in local health centres. Some CBGs in agriculture have an improved and stable income from produce sale like pineapples from group-owned farm.

The established and functioning VSLA groups are very popular and an effective forum for socio-economic activities of the CBG groups, where savings are mobilised. Majority are in their 2nd cycle with 90-100% member loan repayment rate.

The programme did not start new groups in the community rather they relied on already formed CBG groups and gave them capacity building opportunities. Most of the groups started on their own to fill a felt gap in the society but lacked the organizational capacity to move forward. However the interest in VSLA is overwhelming and the demand is high.

Achievements towards Impact

- a) All 408 CBGs have been trained on VSLA component. The concept is simple to understand, touches the very core of individuals because it provides access to trusted and accessible saving opportunities, soft loans and friendly loan interests. So even when ASC programme encourages couples to join CBGs with VSLA it is easy to convince one another. For instance in Murwi, Nyabubuye hill one member testified that he taught his wife at home who later joined the VSLA.
- b) The trainings conducted by the programme has changed how VSLA was operated initially bringing a more sustainable effect to the groups. The groups are continuous and do not stop the cycle after share out meeting. They now mobilise resources through VSLAs, save and thereafter utilise for social economic progress. Example, in

Mabayi, the members explained that initially they met saved and shared their entire profit. But with the ASC programme they reinvest their profits again into saving cycle. This has led to wealth accumulation. VSLAs are helping address the social and economic needs of the target groups.

- c) The VSLA approach and model is easy to replicate. They do not depend on outside assistance to form new ones. In Murwi there are a total of 158 people who are members of the 8 VSLAs. Four of them were started in the same week indicating a high demand to join the VSLAs.
- d) VSLA groups are also avenues for training members on other issues like health, food security among others. They also turn into advocates of reducing community problems. It is a basis for implementing an integrated approach to community economic development.
- e) These economic groups have not only provided members with access to soft loans but also small shopping points/centres have been initiated in the hills providing utilities that were initially not available, these include household commodities like grocery, salt and sugar.
- f) The group members are mostly women. They perceive this as a form of liberation from totally depending on their husbands for household economy to accessing their own finances and utilizing them to better their family status. The men have also seen the benefit and willingly let the women participate in VSLAs.
- g) Community has embraced the saving culture and have afforded a support social scheme to finance their daily activities. A cooperative in Murwi started as a VSLA and they still operate the VSLA component. They have tasted growth financially (started with 640,000 in 2015 and are currently having 2,740,000) and socially – all members have medical assistance documents as a form of safety net towards accessing health services.



Plate 1. Brick House Built from VSLA Savings in Camakombe

- h) The VSLA culture has gradually taught the community the value for contributing towards their own commitment and development. This has also been carried over to the establishment of cooperatives and networks. CBGs have co-operatives that are promising to improve the economic situation by pooling resources together. One good example is the Murwi network that has 411 members. Each member CBG paid BIF 2,000 as registration and 500 is paid on monthly basis. They have a bank account. The members have provided furniture for their office too.

Challenges

- a) Livelihood activities that are not related to agriculture were hardly evident hence leaving out a section of the community who are not agriculturalists and especially youths whose socio-economic needs could be different.
- b) It was evident that in almost all the CBGs the minimum amount of share was valued at BIF 1000 and maximum BIF 5000. Hence alienating poorer community members who could not afford BF1000 or less. In particular, none of the Buganda community in the health CBG could join a VSLA since they cannot afford the BF1000 but can afford BF500 and were willing to form a VSLA of such amount. This means they lack start-up capital to initiate economic projects.
- c)

Case study: Camakombe VSLA

Camakombe VSLA			
	Membership	Share value (BIF)	Amount during share out (BIF)
Year 1	33	1,000	911,000
Year 2	25	2,000	1,609,500
Year 3	21	5,000	1,793,400

According to Salvator the Chairperson for the VSLA in Camakombe, the group started with 33 members. The VSLA currently has 18 members. The reason for the major decline is income poverty, where the value of share has increased 5 folds from 1,000 to 5,000 BIF the membership has declined citing inability to pay the value share. Members also said that they desired to access loans but the kitty could not serve them sufficiently.

On the positive side, the VSLA has a good record of managing their income upwards. The loans provided supported members to construct houses, purchase goats and banana business.

- d) The cooperatives and network that are already established should be profiled and analysed to ascertain the stage of development each one has attained. This assists in developing trainings tailored to their needs. Their needs vary in terms of registration of their businesses, business transactions, financial record keeping, and governance. All of them have potential to do more and therefore need more capacity building.

Recommendations

- Although all CBGs have been trained on VSLAs they should also have the space to initiate their VSLA. This can be done by allowing flexibility in the nominal value of a share that the different community socio-economic strata can afford.
- Identify other non-agricultural livelihood activities for economic empowerment like basket making to support youth and women entrepreneurial skills.
- Develop a comprehensive entrepreneurial strategy targeting both agriculture and other alternative sources of livelihoods.
 - The cooperatives and network that are already established should be profiled and analysed to ascertain the stage of development each one has attained. This will assist in developing trainings tailored to their needs.

- All of them have potential to do more and therefore need more capacity building.
- A criterion for defining and assessing the stage for each CBG should be established to ascertain graduation to another level.

2.4.3 Health

The programme has widely sensitised the communities in the various CBGs on malnutrition, epidemics like malaria and cholera, family planning, vaccination among others. In particular there are 858 health CBG members. The awareness level is high, and in collaboration with the health centres, the mitigation measures have been very relevant. The trained programme health facilitators spearhead the implementation of intended plans in the community for the programme, and while doing so, they enjoin the focal persons from the government.

Achievements Towards Impact

- a) Programme work is very vital in addressing, negative taboos like witchcraft healing, biased preaching against FP services, and refusal of family planning methods due to cultural and spiritual reasons.
- b) There are not enough health clinics and trained medical staff to cover the needs of the population, therefore the programme has collaborated with the health workers in the communes helping in filling in a serious gap of inadequate health services, as well as address diseases like malaria, cholera, malnutrition etc. Malaria is responsible for more than 60 % of patients received at health centres and hospitals, followed by Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.
- c) The CBGs have engaged the government in seeking to establish health centres in remote rural areas. For instance, as for now health centres are under construction in Gifunzo and Kagurutsi in Mugina commune and Ngara in Mabayi commune.
- d) The programme has provided capacity building to 227 government focal points working directly with the programme core areas of nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, and hence making them respond effectively in mitigating the health challenges in the community.
- e) They have also mobilized community through community public–dialogue forums, which engages in public discourse on health issues especially family planning, disease prevention and managing epidemics like cholera, hygiene and sanitation.

The programme has also been able to train health facilitators (community members) who spearhead mobilization and implementation of the prioritized plans in the community.

- f) ASC has successfully made it possible for the community to talk, discuss and relate their daily lives to health issues and lifestyles. This is due to the continuous community capacity building sessions done as well as follows up at the community level. Such health lifestyles include washing of hands after latrine use, use of mosquito nets and family planning, personal hygiene, attending prenatal care for pregnant mothers with their husbands and breast feeding among others.
- g) There is an identified structure depicting relations and how feedback is channelled from one level to another. The ASC programme trains CBGs and the health facilitators who are members of CBGs to take up the health mandate as their responsibility. They are trained alongside the health focal points who are government employees. The health CBGs are established in government administrative areas of Commune and Hill, where the programme is present. The ASC programme staff, health facilitators at CBGs and government employees conduct sensitization and trainings together. In Rugombo the health officer agreed that they conduct vaccinations campaigns together with ASC staff.
- h) The 77 health CBGs are working very well in collaboration with the health ministry officials, which gives ADRA a greater credibility and acceptance in the health sector at hill, commune and regional government. The programme has health MoUs with Commune and/or Hill Health centres/ where they work in collaboration with the governmental focal persons in the health sector.
 - They have played a big role in identifying patients as well as sharing knowledge and skills.
 - There is evident positive change and minimized disease infections of such as cholera, bilharzia and other water borne diseases. Malnutrition is also minimised amongst children and community members. This is acknowledged and confirmed from government health data in some commune, where the officials can reveal health statistical data¹. A health CBG in Mabayi said that 80% of the community members attend health centres; malaria incidences

¹Some health Centres in commune claimed they had no statistical data to give.

have reduced to one (1) or no incidence in a year as opposed to where a person would be sick of malaria 3 times in a year.

- Preferred habits are setting in amongst community members. The CBG members acknowledged that before the programme came in, they never had nor used toilets facilities. This behavioural change towards toilet use is acknowledged by the government. A good example of the change was cited by the Camakombe health CBG indicated that their best intervention was the reduction of malnourished cases, followed by latrine construction (90% have latrines and the complete removal of structure meant to quarantine cholera cases) and the 3rd is family planning adoption which was not easy and requires dialogue between couples. The habits are also influencing the community members. The miners in Mabayi community have increasingly started using and constructing latrines as they continue with their mining activities along the rivers.
- i) The community members construct for themselves the latrines and the health facilitators provide technical support where needed. This indicates ownership of the process and its outcome.
 - j) According to the health CBG, the women have readily accepted the family planning practice but men are more hesitant to adopt and use family planning.
 - k) The community is empowered to engage with the duty bearers and seek clarification on specific issues.

Challenges

- a) CBG members revealed that, some sections of the community are still reluctant to go to hospital or health clinics but rely on prayers, traditional healers or unprofessional medical practitioners. Community members still seek superstitious healing from witchcraft as the first option, and health centres as secondary.
- b) The religious leaders have difficulty to embrace family planning and this attitude spills over to their congregations. The church and church leaders are held with high regard in the society. Particularly since majority of the community had initially embraced traditional ways for spiritual nourishment and healing. The converted congregation cannot willingly go against the religious leaders. Change in a religious leader and what he advocates for or against is taken as the truth.

- c) There is a lack of positive response particularly from men who are still rigid in accepting and supporting the FP and SRHR initiatives. It is a cultural pride to have many children. The more the children the more a man's social status is increased. The Rugombo commune information health officer said that FP use is at 8%. The reasons cited for the low adoption of FP is the belief that women will gradually stop bearing children, religious convictions to 'fill the world' and the honour attached to having many children.
- d) There is no mechanism to manage and rehabilitate the malnourished children. This coupled with the lagging ignorance where people have a variety of crops available in their neighbourhood but fail to know how to combine them for a healthier life impedes the efforts towards a reduction in malnutrition. Moderate malnutrition cases are not reported to the health centres, they are only left within the confines of the society.
- e) Although 80-90% households have constructed latrines, only 4 out of 10 have constructed the required latrine with the washing hand facility.
- f) Girls between 14 and 18 years of age still expose themselves to SRHRs risks, by seeking early marriages, as social-fitting esteem. Going past 18 years of age without being married makes them feel inadequate or fear that they won't get one to marry them.
- g) Out of 47 health centres only 5 have youth programmes in Cibitoke. The government has a national programme for youths which can guide the ASC programme and other stakeholders to design youth programmes.
- h) Accessing monitoring data for CBG members at both the programme and government health centres is not easy. Health being a core programme should have a mechanism to monitor implementation of intervention and the change associated thereof.

Recommendation

A lot has been done and achieved in the health sector, yet a lot still need to be done.

- a) More mobilization, trainings, and monitoring sessions should be held to combat cultural and attitude change. These will gradually reduce the dependency syndrome and increase willingness to change. More sensitization and training is needed on FP including SRHRs, use of toilets, hygiene, and nutrition.

- b) Testimonies from successful couples and individuals should also be shared frequently especially among those perceived as resisting change.
- c) The health CBGs should agitate more on the change of eating habits. An individual's health status is also largely contributed by the amount, type and frequency of food intake.
- d) There is need to target and organize advocacy sessions with religious leaders to synergize programme experiences and mobilize for their support on the uptake of FP and hygiene practises. Devise strategies for the inclusion of the religious leaders to be proactive in the support of the programme, to address the dire worsening population growth explosion
- e) More health CBGs should be initiated to tackle some of the vast hills/villages. Increase of such CBGs mean direct trainings, closer follow up on change and increased togetherness among the community members. It also provides a platform for Hill leaders to pass relevant information to the community. The Gafumbegeti Hill leader said his Hill has 6000 people with only one health CBG.
- f) There is an opportunity to health centred youth programmes. This can be done by organizing HIV/AIDS, SRHRs, family planning sensitization meetings and identify issues with that touch the youth livelihoods.
- g) Design an adequate monitoring system with methods of screening child health and nutrition, immunization, FP among other health issues. This will richly exhibit the extent of change brought about by the interventions put in place. The programme targets the entire province and can collaborate with health centres to provide and acquire information.
- h) According to programme reports and staff discussions, there is no organization concerned with follow up of moderate malnutrition and the government is only concerned with acute malnutrition. To deal with the root cause, a Community based nutrition programme can be instituted to conduct rehabilitation efforts through nutrition trainings, cooking demonstrations and kitchen gardening.

2.4.4 REFLECT

The literacy rate is still low in Burundi as per UNICEF statistics in 2017. The literacy rate is still low among people aged 15 years and beyond (67.2%), men representing 72.9% while women represent 61.8% (2010 estimations). REFLECT is an innovative approach to adult learning and social change, which fuses the theories of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies.

The 163 REFLECT facilitators access the REFLECT trainees within the CBGs they are in or within the VSLAs, these are called REFLECT circles.

STATUS OF REFLECT CLASSES LEARNERS AND FACILITATORS

YEAR	LEARNERS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL REFLECT CLASSES	NEW REFLECT FACILITATORS
2014	828	146	682	66	66
2015	1932	343	1589	116	50
2016	1355	232	1123	70	0
2017	1856	320	1536	61	47
TOTAL	5,971	1,041	4,930	313	163

There has been a gradual increase of REFLECT classes as well as their facilitators. The classes are on demand enabling community members that to be able to read and write.

Achievements Towards Impact

- REFLECT has largely enhanced the reading and writing skills of the participants. For example, in Mabayi 80% of the CBG members are able to read and write after being trained through the 4 months programme. Similarly Up to 70% of all the women who have gone through the REFLECT classes can read and write.
- There are competent REFLECT facilitators based in the community/CBGs.
- REFLECT participants can be able to engage in socio-economic activities very confidently. One community members attested that she can now write a letter to her children teachers/school. Another lady acknowledged she can now read the weighing scale when merchandising her farm produce.

- d) REFLECT classes have empowered community members who gained recognition in their respective communities. Thanks to REFLECT classes, some candidates were elected for leadership positions. It also gave chance, for instance to women, to occupy positions in their CBGs. There are 23 community based groups that were born out of REFLECT classes out of these, 9 groups have women as their chairpersons.
- e) The programme uses REFLECT which the government has approved alongside its official literacy approach of FAL.

Challenges

- a) REFLECT has widely been praised by target groups as a literacy building programme, unlike the programme intention of wanting them to critically analyse their context and take social action as advocacy initiatives.
- b) According to the community responses, the REFLECT duration programme was considered very short. The 4 months period enables them to read and write but not to comprehensively master livelihood skills like basic numeracy skills for accounting in buying and selling commodities.
- c) The community REFLECT facilitators were trained once and have not been given refresher courses, and enhancing the core purpose of REFLECT as tool for community-based advocacy.

Recommendation

- a) We recommend that the REFLECT duration be extended to six months, since the current period is considered too short by the participants. The 4 months period enables them to read and write but not to comprehensively master livelihood skills.
- b) Conduct regular trainings for the REFLECT facilitators to update their skills and motivate their morale.
- c) Enhance the REFLECT component by utilizing its core purpose as a tool of social change rather than only as a literacy tool.
- d) Graduates should be allowed to get access to government vocational training centres and broaden their horizons this aspect should be planned in the programme design.
- e) There is a need for the ASC to initiate /incorporate post-REFLECT /literacy handcrafts including sewing, weaving, and embroidery especially for women and house wall building skills for men.

2.4.5 Advocacy

Dimension of change B 4 states that, People living in poverty know their rights and have advocacy skills that enable them to claim their rights and access communal and private resources. The stated indicator is number of rights claiming events organized by partner Health and Food Security CBGs.

The advocacy component derives its strength to the existence of human rights in a society. A good example is that the national government has given a deadline for couples to register their marriages by December 2017. Such rights need to be known by the community for furtherance of their execution.

The programme has used radio programmes, awareness creation and community dialogues to reach large proportion of the target population. The CBGs are highly sensitized, mobilized and aware of their duties. They know how to constructively engage with their government without friction. And to the extent that the government offices are at times used by some of the CBGs who have no offices to meet. The programme is embedded with advocacy of right holders. Functional community dialogues are done where they engage with the government and other duty bearers to enlighten them on their needs and plight.

Targeting of women and children in the capacity building and advocacy interventions has significantly brought change especially through the various CBGs.

Achievements towards Impact

- a) The CBGs have been sensitised on rights, and especially on how to play their role in addressing community problems through community dialogues with the duty bearers. Issues they have dwelt on are deferred rights based on food security (availability of quality seeds, declining food production), malnutrition, illegal marriages, polygamy, health matters, child health, family planning, child births registration among others;
- b) There is increasingly women leadership at the CBG groups, with about 49% of the CBGs being led by women.
 - This is a significant ASC programme achievement, given the Burundi women literacy rate as per UNESCO current national statistic showing women literacy at 54%.
 - The women leadership in CBGs display confidence and their CBGs are robust.

- c) The review found out that in every commune there is an ongoing community issue being clarified, dialogued or given attention of action by duty bearers. The CBGs are in the forefront to advocate and lobby the duty bearers to participate in the community dialogues, listen and address issues at hand. It was also learnt that participation of local authorities was greater in areas where they are CBG members.

The table below shows, in particular, activities done in 2017.

Table.... Community dialogues in 2017

N°	COMMUNE	HILL	TOPIC	OUTCOME
1	BUKINANYAM A	SEHE	LACK OF QUALITY SEEDS	The communal agronomist promised to make available quality seeds for small farmers to use; He also showed them that if farmers are cautious, they may be able to get quality seeds out of their own farms
2		Nyagwumba	Family Planning	Local authorities promised to promote this issue in their many meetings in order to cope with the ever increasing birth rate + Community members committed themselves to go to the health structures to seek advice and clarification with regard to the different methods.
3		Mikoni	Terracing	Population offered to contribute labour in this activity

II

N°	COMMUNE	HILL	TOPIC	OUTCOME
1	MABAYI	Kibande	Hygiene/Lack of latrines	CBG members in collaboration with local administration agreed to identify a specific number of households they were going to sensitise to build toilets
2		Rusesa	Hygiene/Lack of latrines	Community members agreed to identify all shop or pub owners who do not have toilets and fine them if within one month they haven't dug one. + Community members discovered that it was going to take time before their community is supplied with water and decided to be heating water before drinking it.
3		Rungogo	Advantages from belonging to associations	Together participants agreed to gather into association and work for the protection of the environment.
4		Gafumbegeti	Illegal marriages	354 couples were officially registered as a result
5		Nyabungere	Registration of marriages and children	526 children and 69 couples registered and for the first time marriage registration was organised at community level, instead of at the communal chief centre.

III

N°	COMMUNE	HILL	TOPIC	OUTCOME
1	MUGINA	Rushima	Malnutrition & lack of clean water	The in charge of water supply offered that they will be given priority for water supply but before that, a temporary water fountain was going to be built in their community.
2		Muyange	Polygamy and marriage registration	The in charge of Registry Office accepted to undertake a consistent sensitisation campaign meant to bring people to give up the negative attitudes in community, and encourage community members to register their wedding/ this is in line with the President of the Republic's campaign to register marriages.
3		Bwayi	Poor crop production	Community members decided to grow the fertilising plants(green fertiliser);

IV

N°	COMMUNE	HILL	TOPIC	OUTCOME
1	RUGOMBO	RUKANA	Malnutrition	After admitting that feeding on a balanced diet is an issue but without water they could not make any improvement, Community members also agreed to always prepare meals containing the three 3 types of food.
2		Gicaca	Poor household crop production	Community members agreed to do their best to dig composts and to consult extension officers for advice when they need to get fertilisers or get advice once their crops have been attacked by insects
3		Samwe	Poor household crop production	Population accepted to use composts; they also agreed to work into VSLA groups in order to get access to these small loans they may use to buy inputs or to keep small domestic animals that will give them manure

V

N°	COMMUNE	HILL	TOPIC	OUTCOME
1	BUGANDA	Ruhagarika	Lack of toilets	Conducting a campaign to bring those who do not have toilets to dig them
2		Ruhagarika	illegal marriages	The Commune administration promised to organise official registration of marriages at hill level instead of at the communal chief town, for any couples willing to register.
3		Kansega	illegal marriages	The Commune administration promised to organise official registration of marriages at hill level instead of at the communal chief town, for any couples willing to register.
4		Kansega	Lack of toilets	Sensitisation to all community members who do not have toilets to dig them
5		Ndava	Family Planning	They agreed on a new slogan which is going to be use a greeting word called" Let's value family planning"
6		Nyamitanga	Lack of clean water	There agreed to exploit one water source uphill to supply their community with water.
		Kansega	Lack of clean water	After the debate, more than 300 families were supplied with clean water.

VI

N°	COMMUNE	HILL	TOPIC	OUTCOME
1	MURWI	Mirombero	Benefits of adopting modern banana farming techniques and of operating through well-organized networks	Farmers , especially FS-CBGs, agreed to promote cultivation of banana with the support from extension officers
2		Githera	Lack of clean water	0
3		Mirombero	Illegal marriages in the Batwa communities	Batwa community which is one of the poorest pleaded that Government should consider reducing or removing the charges linked with marriage registration
4		Nyabubuye	Family Planning	They agreed to continue with sensitisation + Agreed to build their capacities with regard to natural methods

- d) On advocacy the programme has realized isolated but strong and eloquent leaders especially among women. They have been capacity built at the CBG levels and have taken up higher roles at the cooperatives, CBG networks and even successfully vying for government seats and one is assistant Commune leader. In Mugina the chairperson, a lady, was able to follow up a marital case where the wife's land was being sold to settle off the husbands court fines. The chairperson was able to liaise with the primary court and women networks to assist her.

- e) There is effective community dialogue done, where they engage with the government and other duty bearers to enlighten them on their needs and plight. For instance the need for a health centre expansion in Mabayi Commune has been accepted and construction started.
- f) There are 162 local leaders trained on their roles as duty bearers and mobilized to support the CBG interventions.

Challenges

- a) Advocacy strategies have been undertaken but still needs more emphasis since it is still a new concept to both the duty bearers and right holders. This has led to authorities either not attending the dialogues or the right holders are not sure of their right to demand certain rights and hence.
- b) The advocacy is based on a rights based approach but has not fully exploited the various range of rights available.
- c) Advocacy opportunities at national level need to be tapped. There is room to advocate for the enhanced implementation of the policy issues like the national agricultural plan which has only been partly implemented and has not yet had an impact in the rural areas. Quality seed and fertilizer have aspects that require strategic advocacy, given that quality seeds are largely not available at grassroots level and the community is least informed of national programmes like IFAD/PAIOZA that promote quality seeds.

Recommendations

- a) The Community dialogue forum is a strong avenue for mobilisation and a potential for advocacy. It should be tapped on, strengthened as an optimal advocacy avenue.
- b) There is need for a clear advocacy strategy based on a rights perspective, as well as capturing issues that touch on CBGs at the grassroots level. An analysis of more rights needs to be done and advocated for. These include child rights (education, protection, health, recognition etc), food and nutrition, women and land issues, is yet to be elaborated given that there no elaborate and coherent implementation of advocacy issues. ADRA Burundi has an advocacy strategy, and it will require bringing in elaborate and coherent advocacy issues to be planned and implemented as outcome oriented activities and be planned for 2018–2021. The CBGs also need to be aware of all their rights that they can demand accordingly.
- Though the programme beneficiaries were trained on the human rights based approach, there is need to integrate child rights in the programme activities when engaging with

CBGs. Child Rights materials can be borrowed from existing CSOs and agencies like UNICEF for use and distribution.

- c) Have programme activities that pro-actively strengthen women leadership for CBGs as well as for public space.
- d) The programme should conduct a stakeholder's analysis to identify among the current and potential stakeholders who can join hands with the programme to have supporting advocacy voice.
- e) ADRA per se can undertake national advocacy (may be have a special person for national engagement) to address strategic issues like fertilizers, quality seeds, infrastructure supportive programme activities to facilitate terracing etc.
- f) The ASC programme staff have received HRBA training which should be integrated in the programming aspects to effectively focus on the various rights ought to be delivered.

2.5 Sustainability

Achievements towards Impact

- a) The programme has succeeded in implementing activities and bringing about significant attitudinal change. The development process is mostly owned by the community as the main actors in their own development. In both health and REFLECT components there are community-based persons trained specifically to mobilize, supervise and train both CBG and non CBG community members. They are not paid for their participation. The community is the main actor in their own development due to the comprehensive capacity building interventions done. This was not easy at the beginning because, some CBG members joined the groups expecting some relief services as implemented by other organizations only to drop out later.
- b) Most of the CBGs groups started on their own to fill a felt gap in the society during the hard times of the past. The groups lacked the organizational capacity to move forward, but now have the capacity to grow as organised groups rooted in the society.
- c) The programme has addressed the prioritized needs of the community leading to an acceptance of the programme components at the community and government level. It has also ensured that government agents in health, and food security were trained alongside the CBGs.
- d) The programme has worked on the attitude and perceptions of the target group mainly through capacity building. The attitude changes that have occurred include the readiness to work with ADRA even when they do not receive direct financial gain.

- e) There are trained and passionate technical people in the community in the areas of REFLECT, health and advocacy. The continuity of drumming support for change is possible when the local people have skills and are mandated to actualize change in their community.

Challenges

- a) The attitude of free services/inputs still lingers from past experiences with other organizations.
- b) There are no programme-created community-based agriculture facilitators at the community level as in REFLECT and health.
- c) There are no model farms or farmers identified, who can be role models of various best practices, when the programme is no longer there.
- d) There are CBGs that are not registered with the ministry of community development lacking the legal recognition. This can lead to missed opportunities. For example the Murwi network has not been registered to operate their banana business at the province level owing to the fact that most of their CBGs are not registered.

Recommendation

- a) Sensitise the community more and initiate new CBGs in communes that are vast on need of volunteering REFLECT skills and literacy.
- b) Design youth appropriate intervention within the ASC programme framework.
- c) The programme should increase the number of community trained facilitators in the various components and train new ones in the FS area.
- d) ASC should now work towards identifying role model or community members with best practices at household levels.
- e) There is need for new CBGs especially in areas that are vast to assist the field facilitators in mobilizing and implementing the ASC programme.
- f) The programme should liaise more with the ministry of community development for the registration of the CBGs and networks.
- g) Train more local leaders and encourage them to join the CBGs to actively participate in the programme activities.

2.6 Programme Design, management, Documentation, and Operations

Achievements towards Impact

- a) **Human resources.** The ASC programme is staffed with well-trained human resource in various thematic areas. The field facilitators (FF) are very enthusiastic about their work and actually manage vast areas. They have been facilitated with motorbikes to easily access the interior parts of Cibitoke environs as they train, monitor and plan with the community on the various programme components. They have also been exposed to other approaches through study visits including RIPAT in Tanzania, ASC Rwanda, REFLECT with Action Aid and Mutoyi cooperatives. The FF have all been trained on VSLA, community mobilization especially the very effective community dialogues. Among the staff there are specialists on health and agriculture components. With the budget reduction that led to staff redundancy the remaining staff serve a vast area. Simple good agronomic practices and community health issues can be taught to the same staff that can also efficiently transfer the knowledge to the community reducing the amount of time spent by a specialist to reach the CBGs directly. This will also make the implementation of the project cheaper as the budget to pay the staff can be used to cover more topical areas especially in food security.
- b) Availability of manuals in the local language assists the FF and CBG leaders to pass on relevant information to the intended population. This saves on time by ensuring that there is no chance of sharing unchecked information that will again use time to reverse it.
- c) The programme planning process has involved the beneficiaries by soliciting their needs and thereafter used that as input for planning.

Challenges

- a) The M&E capacity is weak and there is disconnect between the Theory of Change, community participatory monitoring results and documentation/reporting of the same at programme level. The changes emanating from implementation done should be systematically documented for all components

- b) Programme documents are readily available however there is minimal progressive documentation on the effectiveness, and thereby affecting the assessment/measuring the extent to which the objectives have been met even at an internal level. Presence of a Programme Monitoring & Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) officer will enable the programme, plan, implement and monitor for outcomes effectively.
- c) ADRA does not have elaborate documentation of its approaches/methodologies in co-operatives development from primary level to umbrella level, health, agriculture and in engaging with CBGS. Despite ADRA relying on the existing Government regulations, it should document elaborately, its approaches without contradicting the government laws and policies.
- d) The programme has not documented the best practices and methodologies/approaches being piloted within the programme area.

Recommendation

- a) The monitoring and evaluation unit is a crucial component in the ASC programme. There is need to revive its operations. This can be done in various ways including;
 - Capacity building on M&E. This will assist each staff to appreciate M&E role and regularly synchronize the community monitoring indicators for easy availability.
 - Having a robust monitoring and quality control system. (Staff, data collection, analysis system, redesigning).
 - Invest in management information system (MIS) software for data collection and may be combine with smart phones applications.
 - ASC Programme should improve its own data collection and analysis tools for each component. Improve M&E tools and indicate how regular each component will be monitored.
- b) Generally the ASC programme has been effective largely in livelihoods, and the best practices should be documented.
 - Indications of change and step by step implementation of the programme in a Burundian context.
 - Approaches/methodologies in co-operatives development from primary level to umbrella level, health, agriculture and in engaging with CBGS.

- c) There should be regular community participation and monitoring sessions between CBGs and between Cooperatives. The presence of the various facilitators in the CBGs (REFLECT, health and FS) is a viable opportunity to receive information and progress while working with the community.
- d) Given few staff in Cibitoke, there is need to build their capacity in multi-sectoral knowledge, to optimize on the small human resource, which can give holistic support to CBGs.
 - Simple good agronomic practices and community health issues can be taught to the same staff that can also efficiently transfer the knowledge to the community.
 - Reducing the amount of time spent by a specialist to reach the CBGs directly.
 - This will also make the implementation of the project cheaper as the budget to pay the staff can be used to cover more topical areas especially in food security.

2.7 Stakeholders and Networking

Achievement in Upholding Good Relations and Networking

- a) The programme has very strong relations with various government sectors which is an opportunity to fully tap on new initiatives. The presence of the programme is appreciated. ASC is also preferred by government agencies if new initiatives are needed to be upheld by the community. A good example is the department (Sector) for inspection community finances and revenues, is a key partner of ASC programme and approves ASC Programme financial compliance in the Region. The sector is mandated to build capacity of local leaders on the importance of paying taxes.
- b) The CBGs strengthened/established in the community are partnering well with government in tackling social problems in health. The Mabayi community that was trained on improved farming practices and use of manure, have benefitted from IFAD/Pervebie project for livestock development by getting cows. The Murwi network directly liaises with the government for registration of CBGs.
- c) There is potential to work with large networks like Dutabarane, in whose membership and board, SDA Church in Burundi is represented.

Challenges

- a) They have not fully exploited the presence of other stakeholders and their goodwill in the face of the stakeholders. These include PNSADR/IFAD, and PAIOZA who are in quality seeds promotion and other inputs.

The government is in partnership with IFAD project for seed multiplication and has a research institute in ISABU dealing with Sorghum, maize and beans. IFAD has also partnered with government in an institute researching on rice. However these efforts have not been tapped on by the programme.

- b) Faith networks/stakeholders, who can mobilise wider outreach of faith-based organisations beyond ADRA, has not been identified yet as a potential for value-adding in social accountability advocacy for instance in FP and SRHRs. There are networks like Dutabarane which has almost 30 Christian denominations as members including SDA. Dutabarane has the potential for putting ASC advocacy messages across denominations.
- c) There exists NGOs in Cibitoke who are not mobilised to synergize their efforts. The programme stands to benefit more by working more closely with other stakeholder. For instance the Help Channel organization deals specifically with children rights and welfare. Their experience can be tapped to improve CBGs in considering child rights including right to education, nutritious food among others.

Recommendation

- a) Work out a precise strategy for mapping out and engaging with stakeholders who can add value and synergise the programme activities by conducting a stakeholders' analysis exercise. This is especially because as the programme matures in implementation more CSOs and other stakeholders need to be considered at the different stages of implementation.
- b) Networks like Dutabarane should be considered since they can engage wide outreach and address FP and SRHRs unlike ADRA to achieve a lot as a mono-faith FBO.
- c) Liaise with the government sectors, research institutes like ISABU (researching seeds on sorghum, maize, beans), IRI (Institute Research on Rice) for multiplication of seeds at CBG and cooperative levels.
- d) Reach out to other organizations within Cibitoke and form a network or forum with possibilities of meeting on regular terms. The government should be involved and urged to pass current and relevant information to the stakeholders through the forum. Initiate

an NGO forum that will provide a platform for sharing experiences challenges, opportunities and major areas of concern.

For instance by the time the review was taking place the government was conducting a farmers training on seed multiplication, and the programme was not represented.

2.8 Programme Extension to Bubanza Province

The upscaling of ASC programme is *highly recommended to areas with similar challenges* to Cibitoke including Bubanza Province, Burundians generally face similar basic needs in food security and health. The LEAF project has some similar components with ASC programme, it ends in 2019, is mainly on food security and environmental conservation. The ASC programme has components beyond food security including health and REFLECT.

The upscaling of ASC programme to Bubanza Province largely depends on the recommendations given, best practices and contextualization of the programme.

Recommendations or points to ponder;

- a) ASC should extend their strong and best practices and contextualization of the programme to Bubanza. This will depend on budgetary implications and in view of partnership with ADRA Denmark.
 - Good holistic project planning will be a necessary pre-condition.
 - Emphasis on capacity building and behavioural change
 - Consider ASC shortcomings and redesign to avoid repeating the same.
 - Consider ASC recommendations in a contextualized setting
- b) Avoid duplication of efforts at the community level.
 - Should the programme maintain a food security intervention?
 - Where does the LEAF project need more assistance or extra efforts?
- c) Location and area of operation
 - Should ASC cover the entire 6 communes? Or work with a few gradually increasing the number of communes?
 - Criteria for identifying area of operation
 - Is it where the LEAF has not done very well
 - Or where there is still potential but due to some programming limitation not fully utilized?

– Or where with minimal input of resources translates to higher adoption.

d) The design should consider best practices of what must be included from the two programmes ASC and LEAF.

- Bee hives, energy saving stoves (for clean energy), agro forestry,
- Health
- REFLECT
- Food security initiatives
- Integration of agro forestry will be necessary given the hilly landscape, erosion.

e) Use of model FFSs and model farmers would be important to implement

f) Integration of agro forestry will be necessary given the hilly landscape and erosion,

- Pigeon peas provide ready fuel for use.

g) There is need to utilize clean energy that is sustainable and not degrade the environment.

h) Youth programme;

- Form youth CBGs train them on how to make energy saving stoves as an IGA

If there are no best practices to be transferred, then the other rational way to expand is to re-design a new approach that is tailored for Bubanza, with model FFSs and model farmers.

3.0 LEARNING REVIEW CONCLUSION

The programme has made positive achievements, and is further promising if the various aspects of challenges are addressed. It is very relevant with regard to the Cibitoke context. The strategies and approaches used have been very effective leading to good progress towards impact and sustainability. The challenges being addressed in the community cannot be changed overnight patience towards gradual change is important. This has been efficiently done by working with government employees, community facilitators, establishing strong CBGs and regularly holding the community dialogues.

The programme has employed staffs who are willing and enthusiastic about bringing change. The heavy investment in capacity development of staff should give returns for the investment by reviewing the programme design, planning and establishing best practices of programme management.

The programme still faces and needs to address the dependency syndrome in the community some areas, and change that attitude since it will be counter-productive to any of the programme initiatives. Coordinated partnerships between stakeholders are relevant in Cibitoke to seize available opportunities.

The VSLA mentality shows good disengagement from dependency syndrome, unlike in all other activities that deal with external resources.

Food security has had its milestones too especially in capacity building but it is threatened by the inadequate adaptation of good farming practices, value addition and marketing. Given the high risk in livelihoods and food security as evidenced by the national statistics (see World bank and UNESCO), the programme should advocate even more on food security while empowering the community in economic activities, advocacy skills, and agriculture. Cibitoke is one of the provinces with the highest rate of malnutrition (59%) among children in Burundi. The health and nutrition status of a child provides a better glimpse of the improvement at community level and most importantly at household level. The possibility of making Cibitoke a food basket area is enormous considering the resources available. Most importantly and specifically for Cibitoke affordability and availability of inputs is important. Also, it is increasingly becoming important to explore newer and more innovative approaches to successful farming.

The mitigation measures for the health component are on the right path. The communities understand importance of making the right personal health decisions. Such initiatives should continue as the programme endeavours to facilitate the government health centres to be independent of external support to function.

Co-operatives have their own merits in uplifting livelihoods, efforts to develop them as vehicles of successful marketing of farmers produce should be re-doubled, given the capacity already developed in the programme. More CBGs are still needed which are easy for self-replicating and therefore with minimum encouragement from the programme new CBGs can be formed targeting new within or out of the already targeted Hills within a particular commune area.

4.0 ANNEXES

I. TERMS OF REFERENCE

II. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND PEOPLE MET