

Tuendele Pamoja II DFSA Mid-Term Performance Evaluation

Summary Brief

INTRODUCTION

The Tuendele Pamoja II (TP II) Development Food Security Activity's (DFSA) goal is "all members of households from all tribes in South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) live with social and economic well-being." The three purposes supporting this goal are:

- P1: Households have food and income security
- P2: Improved nutrition and health status of women of reproductive age, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and children under 5
- P3: Women, men, and youth of all tribes are social equals and feel safe in their homes and communities

This brief summarizes the results of the mid-term evaluation conducted by the [Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#). The mid-term evaluation (MTE) presents the following topline recommendations:

- Identify priority interventions that will have the most impact under each purpose, and eliminate those that have less impact and/or are too demanding
- Review participant targeting and approach with a focus on prioritizing high-potential interventions and scaling back poorly performing interventions
- Reassess the management structure to be more adaptive and less centrally driven
- Prioritize transparent and frequent communication
- Strengthen information sharing with government entities, implementing partners, and donors
- Define a clear sustainability plan and exit strategy



Photo Credit: Tuendele Pamoja II

ABOUT TUENDELEE PAMOJA II

Primary Focus Areas: Interventions in agriculture, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, literacy, and conflict transformation

Implemented by: Food for the Hungry, Search for Common Ground, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, Institut Nationale d'Etude et Recherche Agronomique, Inspection Provinciale l'Agriculture, Pêche et Elevage, SENASEM, HarvestPlus, TearFund International, Union for the Emancipation of the Indigenous Woman, Ligue pour la Protection des Enfants et le Développement des Mamans, Tillers International, and Johns Hopkins University

Intervention Period: October 2016 – September 2021

Funding: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Office of Food for Peace (FFP)

Intervention Areas: Tanganyika Province and South Kivu Province with 214,000 households, directly benefiting up to 1,427,487 individuals



KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The MTE identifies areas where Tuendelele Pamoja II (TP II) has had important successes as well as areas where there is room for improvement, and to learn and inform interventions moving forward. Broadly, these areas include:

- Overly diverse number of activities coupled with delays in implementation
- Management structure
- Communication and coordination
- Sustainability

TP II experienced three major external challenges since the beginning of implementation:

- Staff from TPI who were not rehired sought government assistance to overrule Food for the Hungry's (FH's) decision, delaying hiring and implementation of TP II.
- Two FH staff members were killed in the Kalemie Territory in November 2018, requiring FH to close operations in that area for one month and delaying operations from that base in general.
- The 2019 presidential elections caused unrest throughout the fall of 2018, which slowed down implementation.



Number of Interventions and Delays

TP II has undertaken too many interventions and is behind on implementation of several of them. This is particularly true for agriculture activities, but also applies to health and nutrition, gender, irrigation, and WASH activities. While many interventions are promising, TP II is not able to implement and ensure the quality and timeliness of such a large number of interventions simultaneously and still reach their targets. To ensure that the project makes progress towards its goals, it is urgent to identify the priority interventions that will have the most impact under each purpose, and to eliminate those that are having less impact and/or are proving to be too demanding at the expense of other interventions.

P1: Households have food and income security

TP II should be commended for the diverse types of agricultural interventions they are attempting. However, there may be too many, leading to poor success and only partial implementation of several of these interventions.

- The MTE recommends cutting the following interventions: oxen traction, youth and metal woodworking, fish racks, fish spawning, and training of community animal health workers.
- There should be an increased focus on supporting the classic agriculture package, including skill transfer, improving value chains, and improving feeder roads in order to get products to market.

P2: Improved nutrition and health status of women of reproductive age, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and children under 5

The dissemination of lessons to women through Care Group (CG) meetings is significantly behind schedule. At the time of the evaluation, Mother Leaders (MLs) were giving lessons from Module 1 in Tanganyika and from Module 2 in South Kivu. Tardiness in lesson dissemination reflects difficulties during the planning phase related to printing and distribution of the modules, with only Modules 1 and 2 available. This has required MLs to repeat lessons, running the risk of participants becoming disinterested in attending sessions.

- Given the short time remaining in the project period, it is imperative that FH ensures that all seven modules are printed and distributed to CG MLs no later than December 2019.

Recipe guidelines of nutritionally-rich dishes for young children have not yet been distributed, delaying the start of the cooking demonstrations. On several occasions, rabbits or poultry distributed for animal husbandry had not been the preferred choice of MLs and were often sick, introducing disease to household animals with many dying as a result. Furthermore, the strategy for raising small livestock requires a long time

period for all CG participants to benefit (due to the reproductive cycle of the animals). Seeds for home gardening were distributed too late and at the start of the dry season. Many MLs reported that constraints in obtaining water and the small quantities of seeds received prevented them from producing many vegetables and multiplying seeds to distribute to other participants.

- FH needs to reassess their approaches designed to increase the availability of high-quality foods for home consumption.

There is minimal direct targeting of adolescents on messages related to health and nutrition. In evaluation sites, CGs included mothers of adolescents, who were requested to transmit messages to their adolescent children. This type of indirect messaging is unlikely to affect behavioral change. In actuality, CGs are supposed to include married adolescents.

- The project needs to ensure that field agents understand the project approach and make adaptations so that adolescent females are included in CGs.

Also, adolescent behavioral change activities designed by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) are innovative, such as film and theater groups, but they are sporadic, reaching a very small segment of the adolescent population.

- At this late juncture, SFCG needs to make rapid modifications so that activities targeting adolescents are more frequent.

Given the very late stage at which TearFund is getting started, it is not realistic to introduce multiple sustainable interventions.

- TearFund should reduce their targets in each zone to ensure success and sustainability of their interventions.
- TP II would be better served to introduce WASH infrastructure and ensure its sustainability in a smaller number of villages rather than a larger, unrealistic number.



Photo Credit: Lauren Blum

P3: Women, men, and youth of all tribes are social equals and feel safe in their homes and communities

While SFCG is working to transform destructive gender norms, the FH gender team is tasked with ensuring that regular project activities across all sectors take into account destructive gender norms and try to minimize their negative impact on achieving project targets. Both mandates are crucial, but SFCG and the FH gender teams have quite distinct roles.

- Revisit the respective roles of SFCG and FH gender staff to ensure there is clarity in their missions, emphasizing the difference in the mandates.



Management Structure

The top-down hierarchy within FH causes difficulties for the rest of the activity, especially given the geographical challenge of working in two territories. Due to this management structure, there was a tendency to apply the same approach across all areas, despite significant differences in contexts. Despite recognizing the challenges in changing the way this is managed, FH needs to reassess its management structure to be more adaptive and less centrally driven. The MTE recommends the following:

- Leadership must be able to react more quickly to problems, and staff should be encouraged to think of alternatives if they observe that standard practices are not working.
- TP II staff should be working closely with interventions to identify where there are inefficiencies, gather feedback, analyze it with superiors, and then adapt.
- TP II should request an intense support program for their M&E team from FFP to ensure they are able to apply adaptive thinking and management in TP II's programming.
- TP II should use data from their M&E systems to allow for adaptations to the different areas and contexts where they are working.



Communication and Coordination

Looking at communication within TP II, participants from multiple interventions and FH staff did not know what was planned in the upcoming months and did not know what would happen after TP II closed. This is likely due to the hierarchical planning system used by the regional bases, which consists of bringing supervisors back to bases where they are given the next month's planning from their superiors and then they communicate this to the promoters. This system follows the way FH leadership in Bukavu manages the bases, using a top-down approach. Additionally, communication from participants via verbal and written feedback.

- FH should prioritize the communication of project goals and implementation goals broadly with all TP II staff.

To reinforce the above recommendation, TP II should improve and formalize the system of collecting feedback from participants, both verbally and written, including an acceleration of the setup/introduction of an application-based data collection system to reduce the risk of transcribing data from paper. Communication between TP II leadership in Bukavu and FFP Washington have experienced similar communication challenges. USAID staff have faced security constraints in all of FH's intervention areas in recent years. Until shortly before the mid-term evaluation, they were not allowed to visit South Kivu and, at the time of data collection, they were not allowed to visit the intervention areas near Kalemie or Moba. Additionally, many previous reports lacked updates on all of the interventions being implemented.

- FH should prioritize transparent and frequent updates with FFP and should make sure their quarterly and annual reports meet FFP requirements.
- FH should ensure reports are submitted and posted to the DEC in a timely manner as many reports are currently missing.

Finally, examining the communication and coordination between TP II and the government, the MTE found that government representatives, particularly in the health sector in South Kivu, claimed not to be involved in TP II activities, even though they were invited to meetings and participated in trainings.

- FH needs to understand what type of involvement government officials are referring to and how best to get them effectively engaged in the project. As part of this effort, it is imperative to strengthen information sharing on community initiatives and lessons learned with government entities at all levels, as well as information sharing with other implementing partners, UN agencies, and donors.
- TP II should increase participation in learning fora, such as clusters and multi-sectoral working groups. TP II should also consider establishing a formal mechanism, such as a steering committee, to facilitate regular government involvement in project interventions.

Sustainability

In regards to sustainability, TP II is lacking a clear sustainability plan and exit strategy.

- In order to improve the possibility that outcomes will be sustained, TP II urgently needs to define its exit and sustainability strategy, and disseminate it across all three implementation areas so that both staff and participants understand how to execute these strategies, and what their expectations should be post-implementation.

The initial and continuing training of the irrigation management committees is critical to the long-term success of these large infrastructure projects. It is important to take into account the fact that the floodplain in Kalemie is an area that was set up in a similar fashion fifty years ago, and the work being done now is to a large extent rehabilitating it. Had local communities maintained the infrastructure, this rehabilitation would not be necessary. The MTE recommends the following in regards to sustainability:



Photo Credit: Lauren Blum

- In the irrigation areas that are presently under construction, the project needs to encourage the formation of farming cooperatives, establishment of storage systems through the Community Marketing Centers (CMC), and strengthening of value chains to expand marketing of produce beyond immediate village areas and to urban centers where demand for their products is higher.
- The final year of the activity should focus on fortifying the irrigation project management committees, as the expectation for the sustainability of these major investments lies on the management committees' ability to take care of them. This will be particularly crucial in Kalemie given the complicated context of the zone.

MIXED-METHODS METHODOLOGY

- Desk review of documents and data relevant to the project.
- A qualitative study carried out in September 2019, collecting data in 18 villages located in three health zones in South Kivu and two health zones in Tanganyika, as well as from key informants in the provincial headquarters in Bukavu and Kalamie as well as Kirungu in Moa territory and in the national capital.
- Qualitative data collection focused on a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, nutrition and health, irrigation and drainage, WASH, literacy, governance, conflict, management/operations, M&E, and project modalities such as trainings or food for work (FFW).
- Data was collected via:
 - 67 key informant interviews and 67 in-depth interviews, conducted with DFSA implementers and collaborators, including TP II consortium technical staff, other partners, and government officials
 - 24 direct observations of local village structure, activities, and practices such as irrigation and drainage, terracing, and youth clubs
 - 36 focus group discussions, including groups such as child caretakers, farmers, food for work participants, and literacy classes