

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS from a RESILIENCE FOOD SECURITY ACTIVITY

Workshop activities held April 6-9, 2021

This brief summarizes the events of a workshop where formative research findings revise the Theory of Change underpinning a large resilience activity in Malawi. More information can be found at care.org



Members of the Titukulane Activity team presented research findings to participants from around the globe. Photo: CARE/Malawi

OVERVIEW

From April 6-9, more than 60 participants from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), CARE International (CARE), and affiliated partners joined a virtual Culmination Workshop for Titukulane - a 5-year \$75 million Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA). This activity, funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), aims to improve food and nutrition security in Malawi, targeting the vulnerable Districts of Zomba and Mangochi. The Workshop was based on formative research and lessons learned since the activity began in September 2019. Its goal was for BHA and CARE to adapt the Activity's Theory of Change (TOC) and activities to the local context. As a result, Titukulane will have a more comprehensive, sustainable approach to generating income, improving nutrition, and establishing long-term household resilience to shock.

BHA AND PARTNERS Collaborators for this Activity include more than 100 staff at BHA, USAID/Malawi, CARE International and a consortium of partners, including International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM), Emmanuel International (EI), Save the Children, WaterAid, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, and Innovations for Poverty Action. Additional information about USAID's humanitarian assistance work is available at <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance>

BACKGROUND

Despite decades of robust government and donor investments in livelihoods, food security, and nutrition, more than two thirds of Malawians live below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per person per day. To respond to this, the Government of Malawi (GoM) developed a National Resilience Strategy (NRS) to guide investments in agriculture, improve recovery from shocks, promote household resilience, strengthen natural resources management, and better coordinate between institutions, civil society organizations, and development partners.

USAID’s partnership with CARE and consortium partners to implement the Titukulane RFSA (“Let’s develop together” in Chichewa) was designed to directly align under NRS priorities. Based on GoM and USAID food insecurity vulnerability analyses, Titukulane is being implemented in 20 Traditional Authorities in Mangochi and Zomba districts, targeting 723,111 Malawians in 290,722 households.

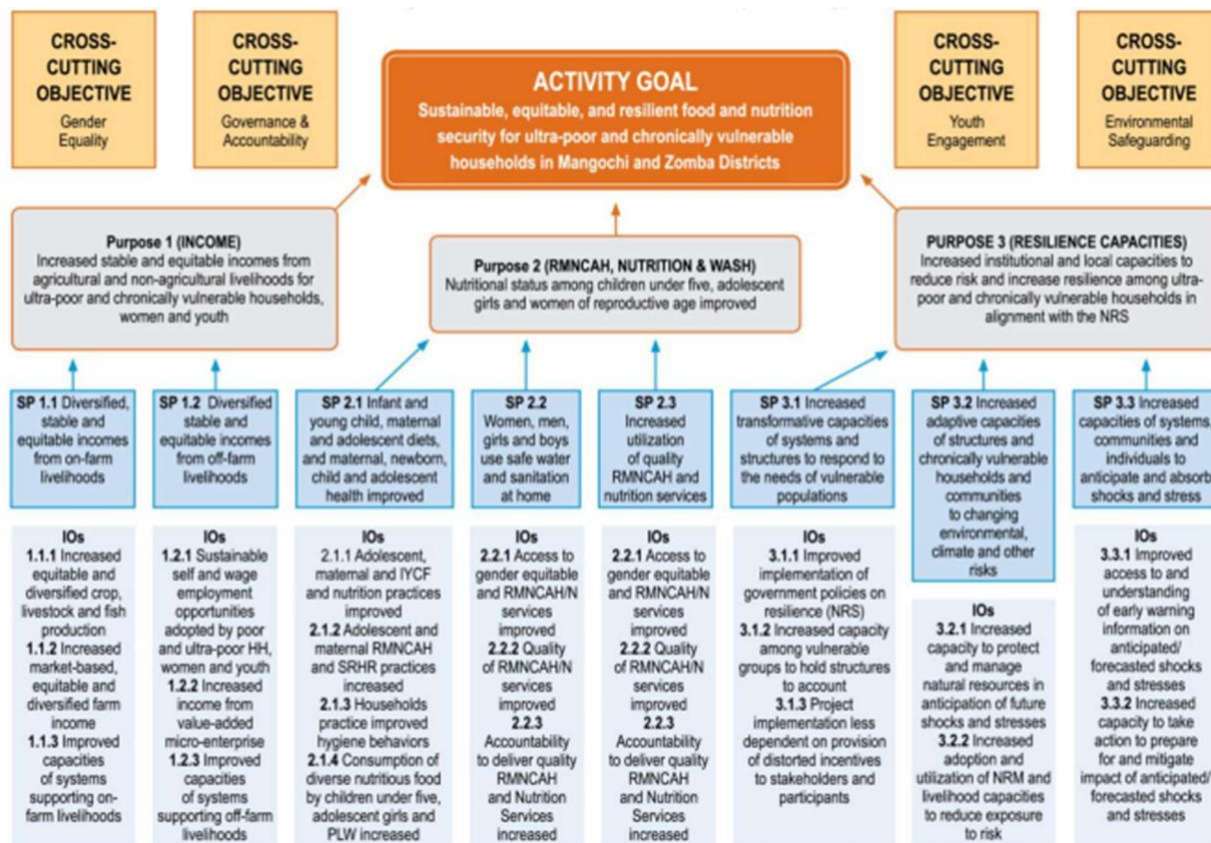
Several elements underlie Titukulane’s design:

1. Ensuring the principles of good governance – transparency, accountability, participation, and inclusion – are practiced at all levels.
2. Ensuring that activities increase household, community, and government resilience capacities.
3. Improving gender equality, women’s empowerment, and youth opportunities.

REFINING THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Titukulane uses an adaptive management approach called Refine & Implement, which emphasizes co-creation between BHA and CARE and includes a refinement phase, during which a partner carries out formative research and stakeholder consultations to inform refinements for the most effective program approaches. The implementing partner reviews and updates the TOC and implementation plans to better respond to local contexts.

Figure 1. Titukulane’s original Conceptual Framework



CULMINATION WORKSHOP

To facilitate the adaptation of Titukulane activities to new learning, a Refine and Implement Culmination Workshop was organized on April 6-9, 2021. The four-day event provided an opportunity for the Titukulane team to share findings relevant to modify the Titukulane TOC, make adaptive programmatic decisions, and to identify priority areas for further learning.

The workshop was facilitated and produced by members of the BHA-supported Program Cycle Support (PCS) team, and sessions were divided by Titukulane's four thematic areas.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 10-11:30AM EST DAY 1: OPENING SESSION

Dr. Fenton Sands (Deputy Mission Director Malawi/USAID) opened the session by describing shocks experienced in Malawi, which have led to poor harvests and deteriorating livelihoods. He underlined the importance of implementing within the National Resilience Strategy. The Culmination Workshop, Dr. Sands said, provided a critical opportunity to align Titukulane with key resilience strategies and priorities in the two districts, Mangochi and Zomba.

After, Arif Rashid (Design, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Applied Learning Division Chief/BHA) outlined

the objectives of the workshop: the Theory of Change would be revised on the basis of the five completed studies, stakeholder consultations, community engagement, pilots, and other findings. "We are fortunate here that CARE is implementing Titukulane," Rashid said. "CARE has been pioneering such a sustainability strategy in Bangladesh, and we are hoping CARE will take those lessons to inform their approach here."

Next, Amos Zaindi (CARE's Country Director in Malawi) described the commitment of the Titukulane consortium to the delivery of the project.

Lastly, Nivo Ranaivoarivelo, the Titukulane Chief of Party, provided an overview of the material that would be presented over the course of the workshop: the purposes, goals, theory of change, challenges, and impacts of shocks on the activity, sector-by-sector learning, and proposed refinements to the Titukulane design and pathways.

BHA/Malawi's Activity Manager for Titukulane, Kumbukani Chirwa, offered his support and highlighted the opportunity provided by the R&I process, which is often rare in resilience activities, for Titukulane to revisit previous assumptions in light of new knowledge.

The proceedings turned back to Laurie Starr (PCS), who outlined the process by which agreement would be reached between BHA and Titukulane.



The Titukulane team followed local health regulations and gathered in Zomba District to give the Culmination Workshop presentations to participants. Photo: CARE/Malawi

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 9-11:30AM EST
PURPOSE 1: “INCOME”**

**INCREASED DIVERSIFIED, SUSTAINABLE,
AND EQUITABLE INCOMES FOR ULTRA
POOR, CHRONICALLY VULNERABLE
HOUSEHOLDS, WOMEN, AND YOUTH**

Under Purpose 1, Titukulane aims to generate income for vulnerable Malawians. The day’s discussion commenced with a presentation of findings by Emanuel Nasasara (Titukulane Technical Lead/NASFAM) and Suresh Babu (Titukulane Technical Lead/IFPRI) from four formative research studies on-farm activities and value chains, social and behavior change, and gender.

Eva Christensen (Senior Agriculture and Food Security Advisor/BHA) acted as the purpose lead, and was supported in this by Joe Tritschler (Livestock Advisor/BHA), Martin Banda (Agricultural Development Program Specialist/USAID Malawi), Sarah Welsh-Huggins (Infrastructure & Engineering Advisor/BHA), and Kristine Caiafa (BHA Agreement Officer’s Representative for Titukulane).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

More conversations will be held between CARE and BHA on:

- the feasibility and profit potential of framed fish farms and village savings and loan associations (VSLAs),
- the role of land use and land access in generating income for target participants, and
- findings from an irrigation feasibility study currently underway, when they become available.

Emmanuel Ngulube (Malawi Deputy Country Lead/BHA) closed the session stating, “I want to thank everyone for their positive participation. The objective was to come to agreement on how to move forward. I think we accomplished a lot.”



Nivo Ranaivoarivelo leads the Culmination Workshop from Malawi. Photo: CARE/Malawi

**THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 9-11:30AM EST
PURPOSE 2: “NUTRITION”**

**NUTRITIONAL STATUS AMONG CHILDREN
UNDER FIVE, AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND
WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE IMPROVED**

Under this Purpose, Titukulane aims to achieve sustainable and equitable improvements in food and nutrition security by supporting the development of more accountable and gender-focused systems. Success will require working at multiple levels, from the household, through the community, to the districts, and on to the national level.

During the workshop session, Titukulane presented research findings about social practices, norms, and expectations, and how they should be applied to the planned nutrition, health, and WASH activities. This presentation led to in-depth discussions among Gedesi Banda, Health and Nutrition Manager for Titukulane, Gift Luwe, WASH Manager for Titukulane (WaterAid), the activity’s Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor at BHA, Killian Mutiro, BHA Nutrition Advisors Elizabeth Bontrager (also Purpose 2 lead) and Andrea Warren, and BHA WASH Advisor, Precious Sancho.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

More conversations will be held on:

- the time burden of planned activities on women,
- the safety and effectiveness of engaging men in family care group discussions,
- how to focus interventions for maximum nutrition impact, and
- continuous learning and evidence gaps.

BHA Malawi Food Security Specialist and Titukulane Co-Activity Manager Steve Sibande noted, “Moving forward, Titukulane should clearly mark the sources of evidence for the formative studies and resulting learning ... and properly reference these.”

**FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 9-11:30AM EST
PURPOSE 3: “RESILIENCE”**

INCREASED INSTITUTIONAL AND LOCAL CAPACITIES TO REDUCE RISK AND INCREASE RESILIENCE AMONG VERY POOR AND CHRONICALLY VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE NRS

The final Purpose discussions started with BHA Country Lead, Lori Du Treuille, congratulating the



Gedesi Banda Health and Nutrition Manager for Titukulane, follows the days event intently. Photo: CARE/Malawi

presenters for their hard work and encouraging them to “rethink and refocus” on putting vulnerable households on the road to building wealth.

Next, Tom Mtenje (Titukulane Government Resilience Coordinator/CARE), Fundi Kayamba-Phiri (Natural Resource Manager/EI), and Burnnet Khulumbo (Titukulane Resilience & DRM Manager/CARE) presented indirect findings on resilience capacities. They proposed areas for continuous learning, noting the formative studies still underway: the Gender Sensitive Climate Vulnerability Capacity Assessment, Political Economy Analysis, and Local Capacity Needs Assessment. A discussion about resilience activities followed, with questions from BHA’s Purpose 3 lead, Killian Mutiro, Amy Mintz (Disaster Risk Reduction Technical Advisor/BHA), Kristi Tabaj (NRM Advisor/BHA), Nicole Van Abel (Water Resource Management Officer/BHA), and Emmanuel Ngulube (Malawi Deputy Country Lead/BHA).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

More conversations will be held on:

- continuous learning and evidence gaps,
- strategies for effectively engaging vulnerable groups in using and disseminating early warning information,
- channels for communicating early warning messages, and
- the activity’s role in the discussions by all stakeholders on the subject of allowances and incentives for GoM officials.

Nivo Ranaivoarivelo of Titukulane closed the session by expressing “how very beneficial this culmination workshop has been,” she said. “The questions have challenged us to think more deeply about the refinement decisions that we have made. The TOC will continue to be a living document...to remind us of our plans and allow us to continue to debate the best ways to achieve Titukulane’s goals.”

SUSTAINABILITY SESSION

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 9-11:30AM EST

This session was added to the Culmination Workshop program on the advice of BHA's Monitoring & Evaluation experts and based on the PCS team's recent experience running workshops for other RFSAs, which had benefited from a discussion dedicated to sustainability, separate from the presentation of research findings.

During this time, Titukulane shared case examples from each Purpose area for how the activity would be self-sustaining, beyond the life of Titukulane. Chawa Master (Titukulane Irrigation Technical Lead/CARE) presented a case study from Purpose 1 on a five-year plan to sustainably provide increased access to quality pest, veterinary and fish disease control services. Gift Luwe (Titukulane WASH Manager/CARE) presented a case study drawn from Purpose 2 on increasing coverage of safe drinking water points. Finally, Burnnet Khulumbo Titukulane presented a case example from Purpose 3 on plans to increase understanding of early warning systems among women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

Then, Adam Reinhart (Acting Food Security & Livelihoods Division Chief/BHA) presented on BHA's collective experience over the past 10 years with sustainability, promising practices and challenges. Reinhart discussed exit strategy research carried out by Tufts University on prior Food for Peace-funded activities, results from a collection of

mid-term evaluations from other RFSAs, and BHA's early but promising experience with SHOUHARDO III and Nobo Jatra Sustainability Pilots, both in Bangladesh.

Each presentation was followed by a period for questions and answers, which led to in-depth discussions among BHA and Titukulane. Kennedy Llewya (Strategic Learning Lead/Titukulane), Rafique Islam (M&E Lead/Titukulane), and Suresh Babu (Titukulane Strategic Advisor/IFPRI) adding critical insights and local context.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, CARE proposed a number of changes to the originally planned activities, many of which were flagged for further discussion with BHA. Activity staff plan to update Titukulane's TOC, develop new work plans, and adjust the program's monitoring and evaluation plan between late April and May in collaboration with USAID colleagues. These updates will feed into the award's Pipeline Resource Estimate Proposal (PREP), which lays out the funding and activities for a defined future period of the award. Any final changes will be thoroughly documented in official program documents and approved by BHA.

Ultimately, participants moved forward with a better understanding of the complexities of the TOC and a greater appreciation for this defining activity and the impacts it can achieve.

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ANNEX 1. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



Above: A snapshot of Culmination Workshop participants taken on the final day of the event. Photo: PCS

USAID

Amy Mintz, Andrea Warren, Brendan Tuttle, Darrell Smith, Elizabeth Bontrager, Emmanuel Ngulube, Eva Christensen, Gilbert Kamiyala, Hwa Yoo, James Akai, Joseph Tritschler, Justin Mupeyiwa, Killian Mutiro, Kristi Tabaj, Kristine Caiafa, Kumbukani Chirwa, Laura Alexander, Lori Du Trieuille, Manoj Khadka, Martin Banda, Michelle Gamber, Nicole Van Abel, Precious Sancho, Sarah Welsh-Huggins, Shannon Rogers, Steve Sibande, Thokozile Chisala

CARE & CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

Chisala Adam Bailes, Allan Kalolokesya, Amos Zaindi, Andrew Patterson, Andrew Samati, Angus Nyangulu, Anthony Malunga, Aurelie Attard, Bessie Msusa, Beverly Li, Blessings Mbendera, Burnnet Khulumbo, Charles Mukiwa, Chawanangwa Master, Chikonzero Undi, Chilimbikitso Kawinga, Chris Mjima, Emanuel Nasasara, Emmanuel Ndilowe, F. Mtonda, F. Sichali, Francis Zande, Fundi Kayamba-Phiri, Gedesi Banda, Gift Luwe, Henry Khonyongwa, Henry Swira, Ireen Kamanga, Jacqueline Munthali, Janet Nkhoma, Jessica Swart, John Chipeta, John Nyirenda, Jonathan Mbuna, Ken Somanje, Kennedy Lweya, Kim Koch, Kondwani Chavula, Laureore Antoine, Lia Dididze, Lloyd Mtalimanja, Mara Russell, Margaret van Wassenaer, Matt Croucher, McKenzie Hanlon, Md. Rafiqul islam, Melissa Joy, Mercy Masoo, Muthi Nhlema, Mwawi Mkandawire, Nancy Peek, Nick Mannix, Nivo Ranaivoarivelo, Olipa Shaba, Opper Maravanyika, Owen Nyama, Peter Phiri, Peter Wright, Precious Matipwiri, Priscilla Kauze, Rose Sikawa, Ryan Forbes Morris, Sella Jumbo, Suresh Babu, Tangu Isabel Tumeo, Tenthema Nyondo, Thandizo-lathu Kadzamira, Thokosani Bema, Thumbiko Msiska, Tiwonge Kumwenda, Tom Mtenje, Wales Magumbi, Yankho Mataya, Mike Phiri

USAID / PROGRAM CYCLE SUPPORT (FACILITATOR & HOST)

Julia Randall, Kaila Clarke, Laurie Starr, Sarah Titus