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External review of the Framework Programme
ADA-CARITAS
„Improvement of food security of 3.100 households”
(Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, DRC, Senegal)
2014 - 2016

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
II. INTRODUCTION	4
II. 1 CARITAS AUSTRIA-ADA Framework programme „Improving Food security of 3.100 households“ 2014 to 2016	4
III. OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND METHODS OF THE REVIEW	6
III. 1 Objectives and review questions	6
III.2 Design and methods	6
IV. REVIEW RESULTS	7
IV.1 What are the main lessons learned and recommendations in each of the four intervention countries?	7
IV.1.1 Burkina Faso	7
IV.1.2 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	9
IV.1.3 Ethiopia	11
IV.1.4 Senegal	13
IV.2 What is the added value of the programmatic approach in the framework programme?	16
IV.2.1 Conclusions and recommendations	17
IV.3 How were the local country interventions able to profit from the cross-national activities?	19
IV.3.1 Conclusions and recommendations	20
V. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	22
VI. ANNEX	23
VI.1 Terms of reference	23
VI.2 Documents reviewed	26
VI.3 Interview partners	26
VI.4 Acronyms used in the document	26
VI.5 Literature/Links	27

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objectives and results achieved by the framework programme are highly relevant and aligned with national, international, donor and CARITAS strategic goals.

Maimonides' often in development quoted proverb "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" can be easily reconnected to this programme. **Training and capacity building is the single most important and sustainable activity.** This is one of the most important outcomes of the analysis of all four intervention countries.

The cross-cutting results show that a strong **focus** on

- ▶ a thorough needs assessment
- ▶ visioning, planning and targeting with key stakeholders considering the available financial and human resources and time span
- ▶ technical as well as organisational capacity development
- ▶ excellent time management and
- ▶ regular follow up

are crucial elements for effective programme implementation no matter in which country.

The **greatest challenges** to effectiveness in the different countries were drought, timely provision of services and technologies as well as limited follow up on some activities and trainings. The latter was often influenced by high staff turnover and logistical difficulties.

The results show that more investment is needed in **managing capacities** at the level of project partners as well as CBOs, especially in the creation of a strong leadership as well as storage/transformation/marketing skills.

The **most successful activities with high potentials in terms of food security and income increase** were:

- ▶ Livestock breeding
- ▶ Vegetable gardening and
- ▶ Cereal banks
- ▶ Saving and lending groups

Impact increases when combined with credit, when more than one support package is delivered and when marketing opportunities are created and exploited. Access to water and land are fundamental preconditions that these activities can fulfil their potential.

The results of this review further show that **knowledge management and sharing** contribute to a large extent to professionalize work of all participating partners and to become more innovative through "cross pollination" of ideas. Cross-country peer learning and reflecting can be even more successful if arguments are not too specific and context-related (e.g. project management techniques and tools) - if the exchange has to take place among very different countries as it was the case here between Western and Eastern Africa. In a next phase knowledge management activities will need to be planned more systematically to allow the deduction and storage of lessons learned at all levels.

II. INTRODUCTION

The external review of CARITAS Austria-ADA framework programme “Improving Food security of 3.100 households” 2014 to 2016 was contracted to Anita Leutgeb, practice&research FOR DEVELOPMENT at the end of May 2016.

Obviously for a review to adequately feed into the design of a future framework programme (FP), a programme review needs to be concluded, or at least be in progress, by the time the new FP is in the concrete planning phase. At the time of contracting the review, FP planning had already been completed. In my opinion, the review should have been commissioned six months earlier to be useful.

As the review was not adequately planned for, time and budget were limited. These limitations have to be taken into account.

The review was carried out within the month of June 2016.

I would like to thank CARITAS Austria for providing all the necessary documents in time at the start of the mission and for its staff in Austria as well as in the intervention countries for being available for the meetings, interviews and workshops at the agreed dates.

II. 1 CARITAS AUSTRIA-ADA Framework programme „Improving Food security of 3.100 households” 2014 to 2016

In this section the main lines of the programme are briefly presented.

The programme “Improving food security of 3.100 households” has given continuity to a first programme phase in the years 2011 to 2013.

The programme is co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADA) with 70%. 30% of funds are from CARITAS own funds.

With a total budget of 1,500,000 Euro and an implementation period of 36 months, the programme comprises four country projects in sub-Saharan Africa:

- ▶ Ethiopia: region of Oromya, diocese of Meki (390,909 Euros)
- ▶ Burkina Faso: region of Centre-Nord and Sahel, diocese of Dori and Kaya (390,909 Euros)
- ▶ Democratic Republic of the Congo (RDC): Katanga Province, diocese of Lubumbashi (267,273 Euro)
- ▶ Senegal: Tambacounda (181,818 Euros)

as well as a common “knowledge management” component (132,727 Euros).

The programme, therefore, combined projects in three francophone countries and one anglophone East African country. The common denominator was to address the problem of food insecurity prevalent in all four intervention countries among subsistence farmers.

In fact, the **specific objective** of the programme was the improvement of the food security situation of 3,100 poor households in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Senegal and Democratic Republic of Congo.

In particular, the **expected results** were:

Result 1: Community based organisations are strengthened

Result 2: Agropastoral production is improved while natural resources are preserved

Result 3: Income from the marketing of mainly agricultural products has increased

Result 4: Utilization of food inside the household has improved

Result 5: The natural resources, environmental sustainability&rehabilitation of the targeted areas have been improved

Result 6: Dialogue with policy makers on food security topics has been enhanced

The programme was **aimed at subsistence farmers and their families** defined as families who own arable farms or livestock and who are living under the poverty line.

The total range of **activities** carried out in the four programme countries are listed below:

- ▶ Seed multiplication
- ▶ Seed and cash crop production
- ▶ Irrigated vegetable production
- ▶ Breeding of small ruminants
- ▶ Granaries, stock keeping and post-harvest protection
- ▶ Small scale credit and saving schemes
- ▶ Distribution and operation of cereal mills
- ▶ Marketing of agricultural products
- ▶ Composting measures, organic fertilisers
- ▶ Tree nurseries and demonstration centres
- ▶ Bee keeping
- ▶ Distribution of working materials and improved stoves
- ▶ Awareness raising on nutrition, hygiene, forestation
- ▶ Policy dialogue/advocacy on food security, environmental protection, land tenure
- ▶ Knowledge management and sharing

III. OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND METHODS OF THE REVIEW

III. 1 Objectives and review questions

The **main aim of the review** was to appraise the main lessons learned and recommendations of the four country interventions, the benefits of cross-country knowledge management and sharing activities as well as the added value of the programme approach.

Assessing the leanings that can be drawn from the programme interventions the review followed a more formative than summative approach. The review strived to discover the main lessons learned and recommendations from the country interventions as well as give recommendations for further improvement.

The **review questions** outlined in the ToR were:

- 1) What are the main lessons learnt and recommendations in each of the four intervention countries?
- 2) What was the added value of the programmatic approach in the framework programme?
- 3) How were the local country interventions able to profit from the cross-national activities?

III.2 Design and methods

The review followed a **qualitative design** with cross-checking of data from different stakeholders and sources. The following **data sources** were used:

Desk review of key programme documents and country evaluation reports provided by CARITAS Austria (complete list in annex).

In-depth skype interviews with programme management and administration at CARITAS Austria headquarter, CARITAS St. Pölten and CARITAS Vorarlberg as well as the representative of civil society cooperation at ADA.

The interviews lasted approximately between 45 minutes to one hour. Interview guidelines were slightly different for country managers, for the programme coordinator, the head of CARITAS Austria International Programmes and the representative of ADA.

Written interview questions with project managers in intervention countries

Limited by time constraints with communication challenges in the partner countries, the programme managers of the four intervention countries were given three written open questions on their perception of knowledge management activities of the programme. The questions addressed the usefulness of cross-national interventions for their own work.

Presentation of the draft report

After the analyses and the condensation of the results of the desk study and the interviews preliminary findings lessons learned and recommendations were presented with representatives from CARITAS Austria, St. Pölten and CARITAS Senegal as well as ADA. These recommendations were discussed and adopted in collaboration with the responsible persons from CARITAS Austria and from ADA. The final report reflects these inputs and clarifications.

IV. REVIEW RESULTS

IV.1 What are the main lessons learned and recommendations in each of the four intervention countries?

This section deals with particularly successful activities, those with great potentials as well as with topics where some weaknesses have been revealed by the country evaluators or discussed during the learning events in Senegal and Vienna. For each intervention country very concrete recommendations for improvement are made. The results are based on a review of the country evaluation reports of each country as well as documentation from the training conference in Senegal and the workshop in Vienna.

Considerations on knowledge management/sharing have been excluded. They are included in answers to question IV.3.

IV.1.1 Burkina Faso

SUMMARY

The project is highly relevant to address the recurrent famines and poverty problems of the country and of the target groups. The activities respond to beneficiaries' basic livelihood needs and are aligned with national politics and strategies for rural and sustainable development. Sustainable farming and soil conservation activities enabled an increase of production of households of at least 30% from the baseline. Time and burden for household chores has been reduced. Beneficiaries have diversified their diet and income sources from vegetable gardening. Access to cereal banks has a particularly important impact on increasing food security. Good sense of ownership of beneficiaries in the target communities is a great potential to sustain achieved results. However, the "dependency mentality" of people, difficulties with land tenure (lack of written or no contracts on exploitation) and constrained or insufficient access to water present a risk for sustainability if not properly addressed.

LESSONS LEARNED

Membership in **CBOs** has contributed to develop a cooperative spirit of members, to mobilize people for community works and to enable peer learning. In most CBOs women actively participate in CBO management. There are some weaknesses that should be addressed:

- i. The absence of work plans in certain CBOs
- ii. The lack of innovation (in terms of better production, transformation and marketing techniques)
- iii. Weak leadership and low level of education negatively effects CBO management
- iv. Targeting/Inclusion of CBO members in terms of poverty seem to have generated some discontent among beneficiaries
- v. The level of organisation and networking: The majority of CBOs did not develop strong external linkages and partnerships (beyond the Catholic Organisation for development and solidarity, OCADES).
- vi. There is a risk for managing and maintaining community equipment and/or appropriation by more powerful community members

Beneficiaries with access to credits for **livestock breeding** have increased household income. For cultural reasons for many beneficiaries quantity of animals is more important than quality or profit.

Therefore female animals for reproduction are preferred to males for breeding. A better involvement of target groups in planning of activities could contribute to select culturally appropriate varieties.

As a result of the project beneficiaries diversify their diet at least once a week. Produce from **vegetable gardens** help them to improve their nutrition. To increase productivity and sustain results of vegetable gardening regular access to water and markets is crucial. Additional support is needed to help target groups increasing production and sales in order to ensure at least once a day a nutritious meal.

In certain villages there is insufficient **water** to satisfy multiple needs: safe drinking water, water for compost production, water for animals and water to increase vegetable production especially also off-season. The latter is important to ensure a sustained source of income and nutrition during the whole year.

Cereal banks increase food security of target groups especially during the lean season. They are particularly important for people in remote villages that have great difficulties to access food. Weak maintenance capacity of mills and multifunctional platforms resulted in prolonged interruptions of service and should therefore be addressed to avoid undermining of positive effects.

The use of **improved stoves** presents a very positive outcome. They reduced fuel wood and improved health of beneficiaries through reduced smoke. Moreover, cooking time has been reduced. It has to be considered, however, that the standard size is too small for large families and that improved stoves should become available within the communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building

Strengthening PCM capacities (especially needs assessment, resource planning, M&E) and work organisation.

Strengthening managing capacities of CBOS (especially stock management of cereals, accountancy) is a precondition for sustainability.

Strengthening technical capacities of producers:

- i. use of agricultural calendars
- ii. basic accountancy and business calculations
- iii. dairy, fodder production and conservation
- iv. product transformation both to increase income and diversify meals
- v. creation of water conservation basins, mini cisterns to collect rain water, improve land pasture to increase production (include research institutions and experts on water and soil conservation to introduce systems to capture water and distribute it rationally)

Project key staff, especially field animators, should have the necessary technical skills to be able to train and follow up beneficiaries' activities. If necessary, recruiting of experts for specific services should be considered.

Livestock

Local productive breeds should be introduced and reproduction techniques drawing on local know-how improved. Beneficiaries should have a choice of the animals to breed to increase successful adoption.

Improved stoves

Local people should be trained to produce stoves that are adequate for the local household needs.

Subsidising acquisition of stoves for increased adoption should be considered.

Income generation

Focus should be laid on strengthening income producing activities, especially during dry season. Support through the credit system (CECI) for promising IGAs and saleable assets (such as livestock) as well as identification, development and running of individual or household business ideas should continue.

Water and sanitation, land access

Measures to ensure access to safe drinking water and productive water¹ for off-season farming should be introduced as well as hygiene and sanitation activities. The latter are closely linked to improved food security. Ensure access to land is an important precondition for sustainability.

Lobbying/advocacy

Community action committees for food security and environmental protection should be created to increase sustainability of actions. It is advisable to link with schools and training centers.

IV.1.2 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

SUMMARY

The project is highly relevant to the local needs and priorities. It is aligned with national poverty strategy plans and the SDGs. The multiple activities, agricultural as well as rights-based contributed to improve beneficiaries' livelihoods. The work through CBOs has positive effects on individual members as well as on the wider community. Better agricultural practices (e.g. improvement of soil fertility and crop diversification) and improved vegetable varieties spill over to the whole community. CBO membership has increased peer learning of members and strengthened their social ties. There is a greater awareness that collaboration and solidarity is for their benefit. However, CBOs, especially mills and cereal banks, need more support to improve their management structures and work organisation. This is crucial, if already achieved results have to be improved and sustained.

LESSONS LEARNED

Membership of **CBOs** enabled beneficiaries to increase production through improved agricultural techniques and improved quality of seeds. Higher revenues led to improved livelihoods of households for CBO members. They are able to pay for education for their children, health care and at least two nutritious meals per day. The infrastructure and equipment provided by CBOs helped reducing work loads of beneficiaries, in particular women. CBOs also enabled members to learn and mutually strengthen each other and to increase their collective spirit. Peasants have been strengthened to advocacy together for their rights to be refunded for damages through environmental pollution. They now have more self-determination to present their requests and concerns and defend their rights publicly.

There are, however, some important weaknesses in the effective and efficient CBO management: Mills are not managed very efficiently. Revenues are not enough for cost amortisation and to build a common fund that could distribute credits to members. If management is not strengthened their sustainability is seriously threatened.

Furthermore, some CBOs have not been officially recognised, others lack a well functioning and democratic internal management system (with alternation of functions, gender balance, and good management of membership fees).

¹ See also experiences and documents of AG Water Solutions for Burkina Faso: <http://awm-solutions.iwmi.org/burkina-faso-documents.aspx>

These weaknesses are probably due to an increase of more than 20% of CBOs to follow up compared to the planned number while human and material resources have not been increased accordingly. This has resulted in a reduction of time to follow up both groups and individual beneficiaries.

Impact on **environmental protection** is still weak. The effects of sensitization as well as tree planting are not immediate. Charcoal production still is a current practice and an important income source for many people. Therefore, efforts to increase environmental protection should continue.

Though an important and appreciated measure, one **improved stove** per household is not enough. Households continue cooking also with traditional stoves. Moreover, improved stoves should be made locally available and sensitization on effects of deforestation increased.

Pollution from mining, displacement, arrest of peasants are some very concerning problems of the intervention area. The target population has improved their **relationship with local authorities** and started to be listened to in the discussion on land tenure. It should be considered to engage regular full-time staff for an important activity such as lobbying and advocacy for peasant's rights and interests instead of a part-time intern. Peasants need strong support and competencies to efficiently work as peasant union and improve their position vis-à-vis authorities and companies.

It was difficult for project animators to keep pace with the huge number of households (more than 300) and CBOs (at least 13) within their responsibility. As a result this caused **important delays in delivery of services and follow-up measures**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building

Strengthening managing capacities of CBOs

- i. to revise and develop internal democratic organisational rules including stronger representation of women at leadership level
- ii. to create a CBO Union to fight for the rights of small farmers
- iii. to network at provincial level
- iv. to accumulate funds for subsequent lending to members (especially mills and cereal banks)
- v. to market agricultural products collectively

Strengthening project management:

- i. Planning should be more realistic taking into account the available means when deciding on the number of beneficiaries to include and on the range of activities that can be carried out and properly followed up with the available staff. As much as possible key stakeholders should be included in project planning and design.
- ii. Build capacities of project animators in CBO management and collective marketing of agricultural produce
- iii. Increase number of field staff for an effective implementation of activities (consider also long distances between BDD and communities)

Income generation

Smallholder production, conservation, transformation and marketing capacities of high yielding fruits and vegetables (Vigna, Soja, Sorgho, fruit trees, etc.) should be strengthened.

Improved chicken breeds, livestock, fish should be introduced as well as beekeeping (in connection with agro-forestry activities).

Introduce income-generating activities specifically for the economic empowerment of women (for example local food like chikwange, sun dried manioc sticks, peanut butter, etc.)

Environmental protection and NRM

Locals should be trained to produce improved stoves. Community forestation and sensitization against slash and burn practice should be increased. Farmers' technical capacities of integrated soil fertility management (compost production, organic-fertilising, anti-erosion measures) need further strengthening.

Lobbying/advocacy

Continue awareness raising of small farmers on land, social and economic rights as well as social responsibility of companies (also through radio emissions) to increase their knowledge and self-awareness. Strengthen capacities of local advocacy committee's networking capacities as well as documentation of severe violations of human rights.

IV.1.3 Ethiopia

SUMMARY

The project is highly relevant to beneficiary and government development priorities. Drought has significantly affected the projected cereal production increase. Despite harsh weather conditions many project interventions have registered positive outcomes on food security, income and asset creation of beneficiary households. 132 households more than planned have benefitted from the project activities. The most successful interventions for the improvement of livelihoods were the support on small ruminants, poultry, irrigation, vegetable gardening and the provision of improved stoves. More than one support package increases the likelihood of positive outcomes.

The introduction of revolving funds could present an incentive to reduce aid dependency. A greater focus on climate smart agriculture and irrigation is recommended to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity of beneficiaries. The greatest challenges to effectiveness were drought, timely provision of quality and technologies as well as limited follow up on some activities and trainings.

LESSONS LEARNED

Membership in most **CBOs** increased work motivation and yielded positive outcomes for their members. Experience of members is enhanced through knowledge transfer. This in turn has increased their technical capacities. CBOs have given beneficiaries the opportunity to engage in additional livelihood opportunities through improved social capital.

SILC groups are a good example where important achievements are made for individuals with a small investment. Group membership has positively contributed to the improvement of women's livelihoods. They were able to strengthen their social ties and get access to credit which has enabled them to diversify income. The informal status of the groups, however, could threaten the sustainability if no phasing out mechanisms will be put in place. Not being legally recognized they are not eligible for government support. However, not all groups work well and are fully effective. Especially the newly created ones need additional support.

In general it has been observed that technical training, continuous follow up and close collaboration of field agents are paramount to increase effectiveness of CBOs.

Woreda key informants suggested the introduction of revolving funds to stimulate a spirit of initiative and so address the frequent dependency mindset among the target group. It could also serve to support vulnerable community members.

Irrigation water groups benefitted very well from the support. Members were able to use produce for own consumption and sales, therefore avoiding major sales of livestock and other harvest for household expenses. The additional income increased their food security. Most farmers were also able to buy other farm assets and support education of their children. Beneficiaries indicated that they could have further increased harvest and income with more and better quality of seeds, use of fertilizer and pest control. Support with marketing and storage, conservation and transformation could help producers to cope with high volatility of vegetable markets. Support with access to cost-

efficient water harvesting technologies could further improve the achieved results. Construction of water harvesting plantation pits (micro-basins) to cope with moisture stress is important for the tree nursery.

Results of **small ruminants and poultry breeding** were very positive. Beneficiaries improved their livestock asset and earned good income from sales. The availability of milk and meat for the household improved their food security. Government and local evaluation team indicated that improved breeds surpass the local breeds in income generation. From project staff own view this does not seem viable because they are too disease prone, not cost-efficient, not adapted to local conditions and not accepted by target groups. I suggest relying on another external expert's view as well as on insights from research for decision-making. An additional potential of both activities lies in better follow up and technical support after trainings.

Delay in the provision of **cereal seeds** in the first year and coincidence with El Nino drought has seriously affected the result of this intervention. Bad timing was registered also for the provision of oxen; they were provided after the farming season passed for the beneficiaries' disappointment. Nevertheless the livelihood impacts on farmers are positive. They could reduce both the cost to rent an ox to farm their own land and the time to farm land also for their land owners.

There have been a lot of challenges with **apiculture**: from the delay in legalizing beekeeping groups, area closure to provision of important inputs. Drought further constrained successful implementation of activities. Beneficiaries are not yet able to produce and sell honey. Women culturally are not interested in beekeeping. Poor rains have also negatively affected bee transfer. To exploit the potential of beekeeping and NRM activities there is a need for additional technical support and investment. It should be considered to provide beekeepers with additional income-generating activities for greater livelihood security.

The provision of **improved stoves** has resulted in considerably saving energy, time and better health condition of women through reduced smoke and burden of collecting fuel wood. Moreover, it has contributed to reducing deforestation by saving fuel wood energy. To sustain the results follow up and scale up mechanisms are needed. It is advised that stoves should be locally manufactured so that damaged stoves can easily be replaced and the local economy strengthened.

As a result of greater ownership of the community soil and water conservation activities in the enclosed areas have been successful. **Environmental protection** has improved, so have methods of transplanting. As a result of good management and support of NRM activities wild life started to appear in the enclosed area. Students have proven to be good multipliers to raise awareness for NRM and conservation within their families with positive spillover effects to the community. However, they need regular follow up and adequate training materials.

It was noticed that **provision of more than one technology to beneficiaries** increases the success of the intervention. The benefit of one package reinforces the success of the other intervention. Successful examples are the integration of beekeeping with other natural resource management activities or small ruminants with poultry. Those who only got seeds achieved minimum or negative results as most of their crop production in 2015 (in some woredas more than 80%) was lost because of the drought.

Timeliness, a good work organisation and regular follow up are particularly important in agriculture and NRM as they are time and seasonality sensitive. A one week delay in certain cases (ie seed provision or tree plantation) can damage seedlings or reduce harvest. Timely implementation of activities was affected by turnover of technical staff and resulting gaps in timely staffing. Field agents

need adequate training and proper logistic support from the beginning. It is important to do the necessary preparations before the project start to avoid delays.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building

Strengthen human resource management to reduce turnover, increase motivation and build capacities (time management and technical).

Ensure that trainings for beneficiaries have both a theoretical and a practical component as well as regular follow up (refresher trainings) to increase adoption.

Consolidate existing CBO structures and school environmental clubs.

Income generation

Strengthen measures to increase income generation:

- i. Consider irrigation as risk minimization strategy by adopting cost efficient water harvesting technologies for household vegetable gardening.
- ii. Focus on climate smart agricultural practices to build resilience and adaptive capacity and alleviate negative impacts of prolonged droughts.
- iii. Provide a combination of income-generating technologies/packages to households for greater livelihood security: provide for example cereal or vegetable seeds with poultry after consultation with beneficiaries. Greater ownership of decision-making can improve adoption, satisfaction and increase success of the interventions.
- iv. Consider introduction of revolving funds to change dependency mindset

NRM and environmental protection

Locals should be trained to build improved stoves. This has the advantage to contribute to the rural non-farm economy. In addition, stoves can be more quickly substituted in case of damage. The technology can be expanded to other people through multiplier effects.

The conservation efforts shall focus on areas identified as cause of siltation and reduced volume of water of Ziway Lake which is a potential water source for the local community.

Lobbying/Advocacy

Continue and scale up integration of activities with government stakeholders. Link with other national and international organizations that work on similar interventions.

IV.1.4 Senegal

SUMMARY

The project is well aligned to Senegal's priority to promote the agricultural sector. The project addressed the problem of poverty and food insecurity in an area with high incidence of poverty. Food supply increased as a result of the project activities, but is still insufficient to ensure nutrition all-season. However, beneficiaries report a significant alleviation during the lean season and improved diets thanks to proper storage in cereal banks. To maintain the new ecological spirit and the promising results of this phase, in the next phase a strong focus should be laid on production increase and building resilience to climate change.

LESSONS LEARNED

Internal and more democratic governance of **CBOs** still need improvement. It is important to develop and use an agricultural calendar adapted to climate change. Implementation of different activities (e.g. planned missions of public technical services) was hampered by weak scheduling and commitment on all sides.

Vegetable production, sale and consumption have contributed to a diversification of income sources and an improved quality of meals. Production has increased from 1,107 kg in 2014 to 7,265 kg in 2015. There is potential for improvement of technical capacities and need for technical support to maintain high production levels.

There are some difficulties with **water provision**. Cost of water levies for certain households that take water from boreholes is high and sometimes exceeds revenues. More water basins to conserve water for days with supply problems as well as solar panels could ensure a regular water provision.

The **breeding activities** have achieved good results in terms of income. Gouera goats are well adapted to the local context. Provision of animal couples for reproduction of pedigrees should be considered as milk and eggs would contribute to an immediate improvement of food security of the target groups. Technical capacities of breeding among beneficiaries still need strengthening.

Irregular rainfalls and weak technical and organisational assistance of farmers from project animators have impacted to some extent **maize production**. 2015 food stocks were insufficient due to bad harvests. In addition, the evaluation revealed a lack of work schedule and crop calendar. Farmers need sustained support and extension during the whole cycle from identification of plots to harvest.

Cereal banks are an important contribution to help people getting access to food during lean season. However, there has been a lack of fixed targets and planning of quantities and timing to refund cereals previously taken. These funds are necessary to refill the stocks and keep the system going and increase food security.

At national level participation of CBOs at **trade fairs** was too costly. At the regional trade fair four CBOs exposed their products. The most important sectoral stakeholders and authorities were present. The participation encouraged small producers to approach markets with quality products to obtain better prices. For an increase in revenues market linkages and exposure are crucial. Producers and producer groups should be supported and encouraged to organise and participate in such events.

Sensitization sessions on food hygiene and cooking are not enough to induce behaviour change and uptake good practices. Many women still prepare meals the same way they are used to. More formal trainings and follow up measures could bring more sustainable results. The same is true for the sensitization against the prevailing slash and burn practice. More formal trainings and follow up measures could bring more sustainable results, for example the creation of a committee to fight against these practices, training of committee members on important topics such as soil conservation techniques and environmental protection as well as radio emissions.

Although the **tree nursery** did not work as planned in this phase because of delays in setting it up, it has great potential to improve forestation and fight against climate change.

Lobbying at local level was quite successful: Gardens have been legally recognised. The influence on political processes regarding food security has increased. Dialogue with other local stakeholders on food security has increased. Participation at World Nutrition day, agricultural fair and forum on food security was strong.

All **project animators** left after one year of service. This has had a negative impact on timely and qualitative project implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building

Strengthening managing capacities of CBOs to

- i. calculate household dietary needs to improve activity and stock planning
- ii. increase stakeholder involvement in activity scheduling and timing for repayment of cereal debts
- iii. introduce more democratic management rules

Strengthening human resources management

- i. Introduce measures to keep staff on board: Revise salaries and contract types
- ii. Strengthen the capacities of project animators recognising their key role for effective implementation (especially time management and preparation of detailed work plans)

Formal trainings for target groups with hired experts on cooking and hygiene, negative effects of slash-and-burn agriculture, adaptation of agricultural calendar to climate change, techniques and best practices of vegetable gardening should be organised to increase sustainability.

Technical and marketing capacities of women (materials, sowing, replanting, organic fertilising, irrigation, harvest and post-harvest following an annual work schedule) should be increased.

Strengthen breeding techniques of beneficiaries.

Income generation/nutrition

Male and female animals to beneficiaries for immediate benefits (milk, eggs) should be supplied.

Infrastructure for livestock and gardening (fence, water basins, solar pumps, etc.) should be improved.

Water fees for gardeners should be alleviated at least as long as income is not increased.

NRM and environmental protection

Seedling/tree nursery at the pilot farm to produce fruit as well as other trees for sale and community reforestation should be properly set up.

IV.2 What is the added value of the programmatic approach in the framework programme?

The answer to this question is based on interviews with programme staff in Austria at CARITAS and ADA as well as document review. There is some overlap with question I.3. given that the programmatic component was related to cross-country sharing and learning activities.

CARITAS Austria shifted to a more programmatic approach eight years ago. The international programme department follows a five-year programme strategy where detailed projects and activity plans are made on a yearly basis.

The knowledge management/sharing with a training/learning conference and a study visit as overall framework programme activities followed a joint decision by participating partners during a planning meeting in 2013 in Lubumbashi.

All interview partners from CARITAS Austria confirmed the excellent opportunity the ADA framework programme has presented to improve their programme approach. The integration of different country interventions in a programme with the aim to achieve the higher level goal of improving food security was further tested and improved in the programme phase 2014 to 2016.

Some of the programme managers had an initially sceptical attitude towards the programme approach. It had been considered to drift funds away from the target groups and increasing complexity of work. In most cases during implementation this attitude shifted towards a very positive one. For some country managers the ADA framework programme was a real 'light bulb moment' that a programme can work well also beyond country borders. The combination of projects with common goals and results to achieve between different partners, also cross-country, is now seen as an asset.

Through common reflection the work of all involved parties has become more professional and efficient. Although demands on programme managers have increased as they need more skills to coordinate, plan, advise, facilitate etc. processes, the exchange with international programme partners and common learning processes has contributed to increased staff motivation. In summary, requirements of ADA for programming, M&E and reporting contributed to an improved quality of programme and project management in the perception of CARITAS programme staff.

There still remain some doubts and discussions about how appropriate it is to include countries with very different geographical, cultural, socio-economic and legal endowments. However, staff now is convinced that at least at local and regional level programmes have a high potential to increase efficiency and effectiveness as well as achieve much higher impact than (small) single projects. In fact, ADA too is in favour of a reduced number of programme countries (or only one). Different experiences have shown that less countries and a greater geographic focus could further increase the value addition of the framework programme.

The programmatic component, ie knowledge management, sharing and transfer, was described at key component in the programme proposal (p. 3). Albeit, it was not explicitly expressed as programme objective or result, but as activities to achieve result 2 ("Agropastoral production is improved while natural resources are preserved"). The stated purpose was to increase knowledge on three main topics that have been considered as relevant by the partner organizations during programme planning. It is unclear why in this programme phase no specific result had been defined for the programmatic component. A specific result for these activities with predefined indicators could have increased commitment of the programme partners as well as have increased measurability of success.

There prevails consensus among the interviewees that the importance of the programmatic activities lay especially in creating occasions of encounter and exchange between implementing partners from the South. They got the opportunity of broadening their horizon, increase knowledge on other approaches used in the other intervention countries and had the chance to get external feedback on

their own work. The meetings at international level, both the study visit/learning conference in Senegal in 2014 and the workshop in February 2016 in Vienna were excellent occasions for building and consolidating the programme team.

Most staff members of CARITAS Austria have noticed an improvement in managing and technical capacities of the programme counterparts during the last years. It is quite difficult to clearly reconnect the improvements made to the solely ADA framework programme. However, the influence seems to be quite strong, especially in countries that had weaker management capacities during the first framework programme phase such as Burkina Faso.

The ADA framework guidelines as well as the collaboration in general between CARITAS Austria and ADA are seen as supportive for the improvement of the programme, especially for the inclusion of knowledge management/sharing activities into the programme. In this regard ADA requirements have played an important role that is recognised by CARITAS Austria. A big challenge for good programming of a new programme phase, however, is the fact that ADA does not finance planning conferences before the official start of a programme. Working with a programme approach these planning meetings have become even more important for CARITAS than before.

The ADA framework programme had some influence on the drafting of the CARITAS Austria food security strategy. More theoretical reflections got underpinning from the practical experiences made on the ground. In fact, within CARITAS Austria this multicountry programme with the common goal to improve food security at household level is considered as a model approach of high value for the organisation's strategic and practical work.

Equally influenced by the positive example of synergy effects within the framework programme CARITAS Austria stated its intention to increasingly use common trainings and knowledge sharing activities in its programmes, also within countries or at regional level.

IV.2.1 Conclusions and recommendations

The Framework Programme has considerably contributed to increased professionalization of CARITAS Austria and their partners' work. Knowledge management and sharing activities have presented a great opportunity to learn from other and with others, strengthen the programme team and strive to achieve the commonly defined goals as well as jointly overcome challenges.

Based on the analysis of documents and interviews my recommendations for increasing the added value of the framework programme component "knowledge management/sharing" are as follows:

- ▶ Earmarking more resources for these activities. The budget for knowledge management activities shall reflect the obvious importance it has for CARITAS Austria.
- ▶ Knowledge management should become a separate expected result with specific activities and indicators. Then it would be also easier to measure the success of the interventions and contribution to the achievement of the overall goal.
- ▶ Increase participation of programme partners in conception, organisation and decision-making of knowledge management/sharing activities according to their own needs. This could increase ownership and usefulness of the activities in general.
- ▶ CARITAS Austria should find a way to systematically archive knowledge, lessons learned, best practice examples and make them accessible for future similar programmes (for example a CARITAS-wide learning database such as other Austrian NGOs now have started working on). This is key especially for the case of staff rotation where loss of knowledge could negatively impact on the effective implementation of project and programme activities.
- ▶ Give the partners more than one possibility for common learning (considering also online exchange, mailing lists, facebook groups, videos, podcasts, blogs, storytelling etc. – that can

happen more regularly on a more local context, but are exchanged globally) and create a community of practice.

- ▶ Plan knowledge dissemination: Who shall transfer information to whom, in which form, and when within the organisation and between organisations.
- ▶ Envisage a more focused exchange at lower hierarchy levels, ie agronomists meet with agronomists, and representatives of CBOs meet their peers, and so on complementary to a more administrative level between programme managers and directors.
- ▶ Define central knowledge areas. Look at context, markets, clients (beneficiaries), products, processes, technologies and organisation/management (see North et al. 2016: 16).

IV.3 How were the local country interventions able to profit from the cross-national activities?

In the programme phase 2014 to 2016 two major learning and exchange events took place: From 26 to 30 May 2014 a Learning Conference in Tambacounda (Senegal) and from 15 to 17 February 2016 a common workshop in Vienna (Austria).

Topics on the agenda were CBOs management, Seed systems, Advocacy, Resource management, Livestock breeding as well as nutrition. Trainings were combined with presentations and exchange from the different countries as well as a field visit.

At the conference in Senegal six participants were from Senegal, four from Burkina Faso, four from DRC, four from Ethiopia and four desk officers from Austria.

The workshop in Vienna in February 2016 (4 months before the programme end) was aimed at looking back and use the learning for the future.

Participants in Austria were: two from the team in Burkina Faso, two from DRC, two from Senegal and eleven from Austria (excluding translators and facilitators, also from Austria). The functions of the participants in Austria were mainly Programme Managers, Programme Coordinator, Directors and Heads of Departments. In Senegal also agronomists, project animators, advocacy and M&E officers participated.

All content during the learning conferences was simultaneously translated into English.

The knowledge shared at the conferences was documented by the knowledge management officer, at the same time overall programme coordinator, at CARITAS Austria.

Exchange beyond these knowledge sharing events between the South-South partners is not traceable from the available data. We do not know if, how, when, how regularly or on what issues cross-national exchange and knowledge sharing has taken place among them.

The answer to this question is based on short written interviews with programme managers from the intervention countries cross-checking with other programme documents, especially the four country evaluation reports.

The results are presented in the tables below. They concern major learnings and benefits of cross-country activities for the participants. A. and B. list examples of what they have learned and shared with their counterparts in the different intervention countries and what was particularly useful to them. In addition there are some suggestions for improvement for the next phase made by the interviewees as well as already outlined in country evaluations.

Ethiopia	Burkina Faso
<p>A. Technical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Drip irrigation used in Burkina Faso and Senegal – interesting where there is shortage of surface water 2) CBO formation 3) Livestock breeding 4) NRM 5) Project management, monitoring instruments 	<p>A. Technical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Production of organic manure (especially Vigna) 2) Vegetable gardens around larger wells 3) Cattle-fattening 4) Use of non-timber forest products to improve nutrition 5) Increased knowledge on seeds (certification, quality)

<p>6) Sensitization methods</p> <p>B. General:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Success stories and failures: chance to learn, improve and capitalize success 2) Scale up best experiences to cross country levels 3) Common reflection on past implementation was an inspiration for new programme aspects and approaches 4) Weak or no application of technical learnings in own work (at time of country report) – context of other countries considered too different <p>C. Suggestions for improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Allow/increase sharing of experiences with other East African countries 	<p>6) SILC</p> <p>7) CBO management</p> <p>8) Lobbying/advocacy</p> <p>B. General:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Innovative workshop methods in Vienna very positive <p>C. Suggestions for improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Include more field visits 2) Focus on common approaches to project planning, M&E and lobbying for food security
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DRC	Senegal
<p>A. Technical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development of annual plans 2) Preparation and conduct of nutrition surveys 3) Use of trickling water in the fields 4) Production of green manure 5) Monitoring and evaluation <p>B. General:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Exchange experiences on success and challenges particularly useful to overcome implementation obstacles <p>C. Suggestions for improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Clearly plan for knowledge dissemination (beyond the programme phase and team) in a format useful for subsequent consultation 	<p>A. Technical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organic agriculture (manure, soil fertility, plant protection) <p>B. General:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Presentation of experiences by different partner countries 2) Training sessions <p>C. Suggestions for improvement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prepare a template to share experiences in the same format 2) Give more time to present experiences in detail

IV.3.1 Conclusions and recommendations

The available evidence indicates that the participants of both the common training conference in Senegal as well as the workshop in Austria were generally satisfied with the opportunity for exchange. These events allowed understanding similarities and differences reflecting on own approaches and what could be done differently.

Among the programme coordination there is already awareness on measures to improve process and outcomes for future exchange visits that are supported by the reviewer:

- ▶ Putting a particular focus on participatory preparation (including selection of discussion topics) and execution of such an event.
- ▶ Selecting training and discussion topics relevant for all participants.
- ▶ Having an external facilitator with innovative facilitation techniques in order to increase the results of a learning conference.
- ▶ Paying attention to a greater gender balance of participants.

In addition, suggestions for improvement of similar events made by some of the interview partners indicate that participants

- ▶ would appreciate opportunities for a more regional exchange with partners that share similar socio-economic and agro-pastoral conditions and
- ▶ find field visits particularly useful.

I further recommend predefining

- ▶ learning objectives
- ▶ discussion/exchange topics with an eye on applicability to the context of all participants
- ▶ who should learn from/have an exchange with whom (top level management and/or field staff) as well as
- ▶ a strategy for dissemination and multiplication (trickle down) of knowledge after the event.

These suggestions relate to what was outlined in answer to question IV.2.

V. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressed to CARITAS:

- ▶ Reduce the number of activities and intervention areas – more depth instead of breadth: The focus should be on strengthening and consolidating
 - i. capacity development (management, technical, business orientation)
 - ii. market access and the business environment
 - iii. environmental protection
 - iv. networking and partnering with key stakeholders to influence policy processes.
- ▶ Reduce the number of intervention countries – more depth instead of breadth. This could have several advantages: from similar contexts and preconditions to a reduction of costs for meetings to ease exchange speaking/understanding the same language. In addition, if activities are concentrated and more budget flows into them, the impact certainly could be increased.
- ▶ Involve universities and research institutes to foster exchange and learning from research to practice and from practice to research on the other hand.
- ▶ Consider to move from a development/service provider to a *development/service enabler*.

Addressed to ADA:

- ▶ Longer term project and programme cycles for agricultural and climate change projects as measures take more years to yield results should be considered.
- ▶ Effective framework programming should be facilitated by financially supporting CARITAS (as well as other NGOs) in carrying out planning conferences at the end of the preceding phase. Even though costly, this would certainly improve programme planning and, subsequently, yield greater impact.

VI. ANNEX

VI.1 Terms of reference



Terms of Reference Programme Review

Framework Programme ADA-Caritas “Improvement of food security of 3.100 households”

1. Context

The programme to be evaluated is an integrated multi-country programme with the following title: “Improvement of food security of 3.100 rural households in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo”. This programme comprises 4 interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as a common «knowledge management project». The programme and its 4 interventions are funded by Caritas Austria with co-financing by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADA). The implementation started on 1st of July 2013 and will end in June 2016. The total budget amounts to 1.500.000€.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide the back donor with an overall evaluation of the programme. More specifically, the purpose is:

- to have clarity and more understanding about the results, successes, the initiated processes, the hampering factors and opportunities of the programme.
- to draw lessons from the individual evaluations and to have possible solutions to identified weaknesses
- to make recommendations on the question of how methods and working structures of the involved organisations can be optimised in order to improve future interventions in the sector of food security.

3. The objectives of the evaluation

In the first half of 2016 local evaluations of the 4 country interventions have been made and reports are available. In February 2016, in a common workshop with all partner organisations, lessons learnt and response on main country evaluation recommendations were discussed. The objective of the programme review is to analyse the main recommendations and lessons learnt on the basis of these the country evaluations and to analyse the added value of the multi-country programme approach.

4. Key qualifications of the evaluator

The evaluation will be done by a person with the following qualifications:

- Education and experience in evaluation, methods, data collection and drawing of hypothesis
- Proven experience in development programmes in the field of food security/sustainable agriculture
- Languages: Fluent in English and French

Qualifications have to be proven by curriculum vitae and references.

5. Subject and focus (scope)

The goal of the programme intervention is to improve food security of around 3.100 poor rural households with the following expected results and indicators

Result 1: Community based organisations“ are strengthened

- **After 12 months 112 community based organizations (CBO) are founded and dispose of a structure (6 in BF, 38 in DR Congo, 46 in E, 22 in Senegal)**
- **After 12 months 112 CBOs are actively operating. Meetings take place regularly; members take part in activities and knowledge transfer.**

Result 2: Agropastoral production is improved while natural resources are preserved

- **After 6 months new baseline data are available on yields, diversification and income indicators in all 4 programme regions**
- **After three years about 1.900 farmers in all 4 project regions report an increase of yield/ production of main cereals based on data of the baseline survey (800 farmers in Ethiopia, 300 in Burkina Faso, 420 in DR Congo, 387 in Senegal)**
- **After three years about 1.000 farmers in all project regions have harvested vegetables from own production (60 in Ethiopia, 100 in Burkina Faso, 363 in Senegal, 420 in DRC)**
- **After three years farmers about 1.300 farmers have done livestock breeding with success (320 E, 100 households in BF, 700 households in DR Congo, 258 women in S)**

Result 3: Income from the marketing of mainly agricultural products has increased

- **After three years about 1.000 farmers are able to generate additional income from the selling of livestock (E 320 women, BF 240 women, DRC 280 farmers, 258 farmers in Senegal)**
- **After three years about 1.800 farmers are able to generate additional income from the selling of vegetable and cash crop production (860 in Ethiopia, 140 Burkina Faso, 420 DRC, 363 in Senegal)**
- **After three years about 800 farmers are able to generate additional income from non agricultural activities (E 72 farmers, BF 370, DRC: 400 HH),**

Result 4: Utilization of food inside the households has improved

- **After 3 years about 1.300 households have at least one diversified meal per day (E: 160, BF: 175, DRC 420, S 562)**

Result 5: The natural resources; environmental sustainability & rehabilitation, of the targeted areas have been improved

- **By the end of the project 47 ha of marginal land has been improved by treatment with soil & water conservation structure and green vegetation coverage**
- **reforestation on 21 sites (1/4 ha**
- **Use of fuel saving technologies for households will be enhanced (960 HH in E, 840 in DRC, 400 in Burkina Faso)**

Result 6: Dialogue with policy makers on food security topics has been enhanced

- **In all 4 countries regular (at least 2 per year) meetings and contacts on food security issues take place**

6. MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- Based on a synthesis of the 4 country evaluations to be done by the evaluator – what are the main lessons learnt and recommendations?
- What was the added value of the programmatic approach in the framework programme.
- How the local country interventions were able to profit from the cross-national activities?

Whilst answering these two questions, the following topics are to be kept in mind: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability

7. Timeline for the evaluation

Measure	Date	Comments
Decision on evaluator and contract	End of May 2016	
Examination of Documents	June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme proposal and reports - Evaluation of all 4 countries - Report of a common learning conference in 2013 - Report of a common conference in February 2016e
Evaluation, interviews	June 2016	
Submission of final evaluation report	End of June 2016	Will be sent to Caritas Austria and Austrian Development Agency
Presentation of results	June 2016,	In the office of Caritas Austria

8. Report:

The report has to be written in English with a maximum length of 20 pages (without annexes). The Review Report should have a similar format as below:

- a) Title Page (Name of the programme, name of the review company/consultant, name of the author, date of the review, etc.)
- b) Table of contents
- c) Executive summary
- d) Introduction (Description of the review objectives, the process and the methodologies applied)
- e) Content of the review
- f) Review results including conclusion and recommendation per section/question
- g) Overall lessons learnt, conclusion and recommendations for organizational learning and similar future programme interventions
- h) Annexes
(ToR, list of persons interviewed, documents reviewed)

9. Financial aspects

The contract will be signed with Caritas Austria. The evaluator will be paid a maximum fee of 4.000€.

VI.2 Documents reviewed

- ▶ Framework Programme Application: Improving food security of 3.100 households in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, DRC, Senegal – Proposal, Logframe, Budget
- ▶ ADA NGO Framework Programmes Guideline
- ▶ Country evaluation reports of each of the intervention countries
- ▶ Report of Training Conference in Tambacounda 2014
- ▶ Report of Learning Workshop in Vienna 2016
- ▶ Final evaluation Report last phase (2011-2013)
- ▶ Caritas Austria strategy “Future without hunger 2014-2018”
- ▶ Caritas Austria International Programmes “Programme planning document”

VI.3 Interview partners

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Karl Eisenhardt	Programme manager DRC	CARITAS Austria
Annamaria Bokor	Programme manager Senegal	CARITAS St. Pölten
Harald Grabher	Programme manager Ethiopia	CARITAS Feldkirch
Helene Unterguggenberger	Programme coordinator	CARITAS Austria
Georg Matuschkowitz	Head of International Programmes	CARITAS Austria
Barbara Konzett	Programme manager	Austrian Development Agency
Placide Mukebo	Director	BDD Lubumbashi, RDC
Lucien Kadish	Agronomist	BDD Lubumbashi, RDC
Yetenayet Thomas	Programme manager	Meki Catholic Secretariate, Ethiopia
Didier Ouedraogo	Programme manager	Ocades Kaya, Burkina Faso
Léon Sarr	Programme manager	Caritas Tambacounda, Senegal

VI.4 Acronyms used in the document

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
BDD	Bureau de développement
CBO	Community based organisation
CECI	Communautés d'épargne et de crédit interne
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
IGA	Income generating activity
M&E	Monitoring&Evaluation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PCM	Project Cycle Management

VI.5 Literature/Links

AG Water Solutions for Burkina Faso: <http://awm-solutions.iwmi.org/burkina-faso-documents.aspx>, accessed 20 June 2016.

Klaus North, Andreas Brandner, Thomas Steiniger (2016): Wissensmanagement für Qualitätsmanager. Erfüllung der Anforderungen nach ISO 9001:2015. Essentials. Springer Gabler. Wiesbaden.

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