

Final Evaluation Report
**Enhancing food security and nutrition in and
around Monrovia and Tubmanburg - “UPANI”
in Liberia**

**AF 1582 / LBR 1034 – 11
DCI / FOOD / 2011 / 278883**

implemented by

Welthungerhilfe

in cooperation with

ACF and RUAF

co-financed by

European Union

on behalf of **Welthungerhilfe**

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Nieder-Olm, July 2015

List of abbreviations and acronyms

ACF	Action contre la Faim
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CAC	County Agricultural Commissioner
CD	Country Director
CFT	Community Farmer Trainer
CHV	Community Health Volunteers
CKP	Community Key Person
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DeGEval	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Evaluation
EMAS	Escuela Móvil de Agua y Saneamiento
EoP	End of project
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FED	Food & Enterprise Development Program for Liberia/USAID
FLUPFA	Federation of Liberian Urban and Peri-Urban Farmers Associations
FRC	Farmers Resource Centre
FRC veg	Floating Row Cover in vegetable production
FUN	Farmers Unions Network
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HDDS	Households Dietary Diversity Score
HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HoP	Head of Project
IDDS	Individual Dietary Diversity Score
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LASIP	Liberian Agriculture Sector Investment Programme
LEIA	Low External Input Agriculture
L\$	Liberian Dollar (1 LRD = 0,009 €; 28.12.2013; www.oanda.com)
LISGIS	Liberian Institute for Statistics and Geographical Information Systems
LRRD	Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development
M	Million
MCC	Monrovia City Corporation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Micro Finance
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Multi-Stakeholder Forum
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
NAPEX	National Apex of Village Savings and Loan Association

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIP	National Indicative Programme
PM	Project Manager
Q	Question
RRP	Reintegration and Recovery Program
RUAF	Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture & Food Security Foundation
SPRD	Saint Paul River District
TOR	Terms of Reference
TUPUFU	Tubmanburg Urban and Peri-Urban Farmers Union
UL (UoL)	University of Liberia
UPA	Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture
UPA 1	Previous project "Enhancing urban and peri-urban agriculture in Liberia" (LBR 1026)
UPANI	Evaluated project "Enhancing food security and nutrition in and around Monrovia and Tubmanburg" (LBR 1034) = Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture, Nutrition and Income
US\$	US Dollar; (1 US\$ = 85 Liberian Dollar, = 0,899 €; www.oanda , 05.07.2015)
S&L	Save and Loan
TCC	Tubmanburg City Corporation
ToT	Trainers of trainers
VSLA	Village Save and Loan Association
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

I. Summary

1 Brief description of the project and framework conditions

The evaluated project “Enhancing food security and nutrition in and around Monrovia and Tubmanburg (UPANI)” ran during the period of 01/12/2011 to 31/05/2015, co-financed by EuropAid. During the first year, UPANI overlapped with the last year of implementation of the previous project UPA-1. With approval of EU, UPANI was prolonged until August 6, 2015. Its specific objective is: “Households and farmers in Greater Monrovia, Tubmanburg and Saint Paul River District have improved their food security and their nutritional practices.” The project has planned four results:

1. Improved agricultural production of urban, peri-urban and rural farmers
2. Improved income opportunities and access to capital of farmers
3. Increased knowledge about nutritional aspects, diversified diets and home gardening
4. Strengthened capacities of Urban Farmer Association, MoA and MoH and Citizen Townships

Responsible for the project implementation is Welthungerhilfe (WHH) in partnership with the international NGOs Action Contre la Faim (ACF), France, and Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture & Food Security Foundation (RUAF), Netherlands. The project faced difficulties at the organizational level through four changes of the Head of Project (HoP) as well as by the outbreak of Ebola. During the peak of Ebola (July - November 2014), the realisation of trainings and group meetings was very limited due to the obligatory restrictions. The EVD-crisis created an emergency situation, which made necessary quick responses, such as Ebola awareness trainings, support in recovery through group trainings and re-starter kits, partly supported by the GIZ-financed CURE-project.

Today, Liberia is at a crossroad: moving from the emergency and stabilizing phase associated with the protracted civil conflict that destroyed the country, into one of sustainable development, and with the outbreak of EVD, it fell back into emergency state.

2 Relevance

The relevance of “Enhancing food security and nutrition in and around Monrovia and Tubmanburg (UPANI)” is high. According to the target group, the project objectives, the planned outputs and results are highly relevant for the core problems of temporary food shortage, low level of yields and missing access to money. The Liberian’s Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) confirmed the relevance of project activities in relation to the national agricultural policy (LASIP), community organisation, increased productivity and introduction of animal husbandry as well as access to credit through the Village Save & Loan Associations (VSLA). Monrovia City Corporation (MCC) underlined farmer’s organized structure for dialogue and the importance of food supply for urban markets. For the City Corporation of the capital, the project activities support job creation in town and are helping to adapt for climate change.

The EU, major donor of UPANI-project, planned an allocation of € 30M for agriculture, one of the four supported sectors in the “National Indicative Programme 2014 – 2020”. Objective is to 1) improve productivity, added-value especially for small-holders, and 2) to improve access to domestic and international markets. Nevertheless, doubts were expressed especially in relation to relevance and efficiency.

Primary goal of “Welthungerhilfe’s Strategy 2012–2016” is to improve sustainable food and nutrition security as part of its overall mandate to fight hunger and poverty. The orientation

framework “Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security” of February 2015 emphasizes beside others the principle “bridging the link between nutrition and agriculture by implementing nutrition-sensitive programmes”.

The project purpose fits in the strategies of the implementation partners ACF and RUAF.

3 Effectiveness

The project overall objective “to contribute to increased food and nutrition security as part of strengthening resilience of households in Liberia” was achieved.

From the two indicators related to the specific objective of increased food security and improved nutritional practices, one was achieved with the increase of food availability by 300% -more than the 70% was asked for. Nutritional knowledge of the target group has increased by 79%, but only 32,4% of the 148 interviewed beneficiaries indicated that their diet changed in a more diversified one during the last three years.

Nevertheless, the evaluation assesses the project`s overall objective is achieved, due to significant healthier children, better food availability and enhanced resilience of the target group with the EVD-crisis.

The planned target group of 2.040 households has been exceeded. By a different training approach, more baby-mothers accompanied in nutrition, and new VSLAs, the reached target group summarizes to 3.615 direct beneficiaries, with a strong promotion of women. The average household size of the target group is of 8 persons – far more than the average in Liberia of 5 persons. So, the indirect beneficiaries nearly doubled to 28.920 persons.

Most of the planned activities have been realized or even exceeded. Nevertheless, some activities were not realised, like the cancelled use of “alternative fertilizer through recycling of organic waste and human excreta”. Others were delayed and not finished, namely processing activities, the installation of a land use system.

The change of key personnel in management and administration of the implementing organisations influenced negatively the project execution, especially in relation to the processing activities. At the beginning of project implementation, the two organizations WHH and ACF did not coordinate and cooperate sufficiently. After mid-term evaluation, the cooperation got strengthened by monthly steering meetings and training of staff in common themes. The complementary work was benefiting for the organisations and the target group.

There were some serious issues in regard of the quality of project implementation. The Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and the pay back scheme didn`t work out. The pay back scheme was hampered by missing transparency for the group, missing monitoring, and the economic impact of the Ebola outbreak.

Beside the significant higher food security, a further positive outcome is the up-scaling of urban and peri-urban agriculture on national level. The theme joins together national and local key actors in Multi-Stakeholder-Forum (MSF), a national urban policy narrative is approved. The City Corporation of Monrovia and Tubmanburg took the lead with a strong ownership.

Another positive aspect is the multiplication effect of VSLAs. They are highly appreciated by giving access to capital. In combination with nutrition trainings, Income Generating Activities (IGA) and/or farming activities, the S&L contributes to income generation. The capacity to pay school fees and to buy food was stated by the group members. The social fund, part of the S&L system, is a kind of basic mutual security and reduces vulnerability of the group members.

4 Efficiency

The project costs corresponded to € 188,24 per household and year. The expenditure per beneficiary is reasonable for a development project. Nevertheless, activities such as greenhouses, processing units (cassava, meat pork centre) and demo plots were highly expensive and should be analysed on benefits and less costly alternatives.

At the moment of evaluation, there were no data available on yields and income resulting out of the project activities. Some single beneficiaries, which got already support since the previous UPA-1-project, gave indications of promising income like Victoria Sireleaf with a monthly income out of her vegetable production of the equivalent to €265. Another farmer indicated a profit between € 698 and € 991 per farming season. But this is supposed to be not representative. For the VSLA, pay-outs at the end of the year (=end of saving circle) 2013 were indicated between €568 to €1.820 per member – depending on the share rates and the level of interest established by the group.

The state of efficiency would be far easier to monitor and to evaluate by an adequate monitoring. For future projects, the baseline should be established right in the beginning, based on the project indicators and regularly be self-assessed. Income and productivity should regularly be measured in figures, at least at a sample size.

5 Outcomes and impacts

The most important outcomes and impacts of the project are:

- Improved food security for the target group – 53,4% of interviewed 148 beneficiaries, three times more than in the baseline of June 2013, stated that they didn't suffered of food shortage during the last 12 months
- Increased agricultural production to 86,9% of farmers and backyard gardeners
- Income increased for all beneficiaries, of them 80,4% indicated that their income increased much or even very much
- Project beneficiaries got access to capital through short-term loans between € 11,36 to € 113,60 during the year. For 1.620 members of 54 VSLAs, an important source of capital are their savings paid out at the end of the year. In a normal year without Ebola, the amounts varied between € 568 to € 1.820 per member, depending on how high is the share contribution and the interest rate.
- Improvement of nutritional practices by producing local weaning food (51,4% learned and apply), as well as 32,4% of beneficiaries indicated to eat more types of food than three years ago
- Better health of children – no less than 80,4% of interviewed beneficiaries indicated that their children's health improved much and very much through project activities
- 100% of farmers and backyard gardeners apply environmentally friendly LEIA techniques
- The organization in groups eased communication and awareness trainings for EVD
- Better group cohesion and mutual support, especially in the S&L groups
- Awareness and interest also of national governmental institutions (MoA, MIA, Land Commission, LISGIS) for urban and peri-urban agriculture, with leadership of Monrovia City Corporation in the on-going Multi-Stakeholder-Forum (MSF)
- The urban farmer organizations FLUPFA and TUPUFU represent interests of their members in the MSF, for example land issues, contaminated soils
- Increased knowledge and skills (gardening, nutrition, group management, business, hygiene aspects)

- Most of beneficiaries 94,5%, stated that project activities helped during the EVD outbreak, mainly backyard gardening, the knowledge on hygiene and awareness raising

6 Sustainability

Knowledge about agricultural production and on nutrition practices is likely to be used after the end of the project. Some farmer groups are stronger and better organized, with well-prepared common fields besides the individual plots. These groups are expected to continue. The same applies for the VSLA's. Without further external hazard, they are supposed to be sustainable.

Other groups are quite recent and not as strong. Members of two visited VSLA stated that they would also give loans to people outside the group (if a member signs responsible), which is not within the rules of VSLA. An important aspect for sustainability is the application of the rules. Therefore, for younger groups out of 2013/2014 and 2015, a continued supervision would be necessary.

Banana farm cassava processing and the moringa processing group are strong with a dynamic leadership and will continue to follow their mission. The meat pork centre and cassava processing in Kormah are not supposed to be sustainable without assistance in the beginning of their processing activity. The farmer association FLUPFA still has a heavy "dependency attitude". Sustainability for both FLUPFA and TUPUFU, will depend on the interest and connection to their members, and if they are able to find other financing.

Empowerment of women will continue and some of the multipliers (Community Key Persons) trained by the project are likely to continue their function with a high sense of responsibility.

7 Recommendations

The most important recommendations which should be considered for successor projects:

- To **improve the planning** in relation to an analysis of the target group combined with actualized need assessment and actors analysis. The project indicators should be SMART and reflect how the activity and result contribute to reach the projects objective. For similar projects, a higher number of technical and administration staff should be considered, reflecting the necessity.
An improved (participatory) planning should be realised before starting the group and (processing) activities. So, a realistic pay back scheme can be included since the beginning. The elaboration of exit strategies is recommended to be part of the planning process.
- To **improve monitoring** since the beginning by a monitoring system, which is oriented on the project's indicators, starting with a baseline and continued, regular measuring with an end-of-the-year presentation and discussion between all involved organizations.

8 General conclusions and lessons learnt

The **integrated approach of UPANI project is appropriate in peri-urban and more rural areas** for the Liberian context. Urban agriculture is applicable in specific circumstances of war or post-conflict, but it is faced to serious problems like high land pressure, high land insecurity, contaminated food by contaminated water and soils as well as the hygienic issues in relation to animal production. Beside these aspects, the prevalence of poverty and food shortage is higher in the peri-urban and rural areas. Therefore, the focus on peri-urban and more rural areas is recommended for future projects.

The link of the “nutrition chain” from agricultural production to food combined with trainings on nutrition, income generating activities and access to capital by VSLA was able to improve significantly the food and nutrition security of the target group. The project activities contributed to strengthen resilience of the target group while Ebola.

The **strong political connection** is recommendable for further projects. The cooperation with local stakeholders (MoA, City Corporations, Health Centres) and the successful establishment of MSF contributed to give a voice to vulnerable farmers and to influence structural changes.

The **cooperation between WHH, ACF and RUAF** was complementary and benefiting for the target group as well as the cooperation partners and is promising for similar projects. If two or more partner organisations are implementing a project together, it is necessary to establish regular coordination meetings since the beginning.

“Less is more” - Due to the different techniques and related diverse knowledge necessary, a lesson learned out of UPANI is the concentration on few selected value chains. The selection of very few value chains can be based on experience e.g. of UPA-1 and UPANI, and a detailed value chain analysis to choose the most promising ones for a systematic approach.

VSLA as complementary measure

The combination of improving general knowledge on how to improve agricultural productivity, how to make a business, how to improve nutrition and health, with the Village Saving & Loan concept is promising, respond to the overall lack of capital and missing access to finance institutions and should be extended.

Irrigation and Water

EMAS – water system may not be an everywhere solution, but a quite economic solution to partially resolve the problem of contaminated water.

