



Office of Food for Peace Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Results Report

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARR	Annual Results Report
ART	Anti-Retroviral Treatment
AUPWAE	Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment
A2N	Africa 2000 Network
C&F	Commodity and Freight
CBO	Community Based Organization
CF	Contact Farmer
CHAFORD	Charity for Rural Development
CIDI	Community Integrated Development Initiatives
CSB	Corn-Soy Blend
DAP	Development Activity Proposal
DNA	Data Not Available
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FaaB	Farming as a Business
FADEP-EU	Farming For Food and Development—Eastern Uganda
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWS	Field Extension Workers
FDP	Food Distribution Point
FFP	Office of Food for Peace
FY	Fiscal Year
GDU	Grants and Development Unit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRW	Hard Red Winter
ICB	Institutional Capacity Building (Grant)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
KICA BER	Kica Ber Support War Victims
KM	Kilometer
LOA	Life of Activity
LOP	Life of Project
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MT	Metric Ton
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSARWU	National Strategy of Advancement of Rural Women in Uganda
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PHH/M	Post Harvest Handling and Marketing
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PREP	Pipeline Resource and Estimate Proposal
RAA	Recipient Agency Agreement
SFCM	Soy-Fortified Cornmeal
SURFACE	Surface Uganda Rural Agro-Empowerment for Income Development
TASO	The AIDS Support Organisation
TOT	Training of Trainers

TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
UYAP	United Youth Action for Progress
UMEMS	Uganda Monitoring and Evaluation Management Services
URADI	Uganda Rural Development Initiative
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USH	Ugandan shillings
VAT	Value Added Tax
VEDCO	Voluntary Efforts for Development Concerns
WACFO	Women and Children First Organization

I. INTRODUCTION: ANNUAL FOOD AID PROGRAM RESULTS

ACDI/VOCA, along with project partners Africare, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO) as well as local non-governmental and community based organizations (NGOs and CBOs), is implementing a five year (FY 2007- FY 2011) food security program in northern Uganda. The program aims to 1) reduce food insecurity among 170,600¹ farmers in northern Uganda and increase their nutritional status through better production and use of food and 2) provide food supplements to 42,000 PLWHA and their families to help improve their nutritional status and ability to tolerate anti-retroviral treatments (ARVs).

Despite a number of challenges in FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA continued to successfully implement its Title II Food Security Program in Uganda. Although northern Uganda has remained politically stable during the past fiscal year, ACDI/VOCA encountered additional challenges that impacted program implementation. These challenges included a recurrent and prolonged drought, continuing resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and price hikes and scarcity of much needed agricultural inputs. ACDI/VOCA employed a number of strategies to mitigate the impact of these and additional challenges and continued to witness positive outcomes as a result of program activities.

Rainfall unpredictability greatly affected yield and production targets for the program. While many farmers have internalized best agronomic practices, uncertainty about the weather patterns in FY 2009 hindered them from rigorously applying the knowledge and skills gained from project training sessions. Fear of losing available seed as a result of the drought led many farmers to wait longer before planting to ensure that rains were steady. This caused them to miss a critical window for planting to maximize production and yield. To mitigate the impact of drought in program areas, ACDI/VOCA introduced the concept of minimum tillage agriculture that, through moisture and soil conservation techniques, helps to increase yield and reduce farm labor needs. ACDI/VOCA is also in the process of developing a vulnerability index for households that will utilize key indicators to quickly inform the household, community and ACDI/VOCA of any future shocks.

Resettlement of IDPs has posed challenges in terms of reorganizing existing farmer groups in Gulu and Amuru districts to accommodate for the change of members. To address this challenge, ACDI/VOCA provided the most affected local grantees with additional motorcycles to ensure more accurate monitoring of farmer groups. The spread of cassava diseases in central, northern and eastern Uganda limited supplies and caused sharp price increases for the program's target areas during both agricultural seasons of FY 2009. To address this challenge, ACDI/VOCA and partners are working with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and other organizations to coordinate efforts and share information about cassava disease outbreaks as well as diseases that might affect other crops. Specifically, during the past fiscal year, ACDI/VOCA (1) provided all available information to grantees and partners before they procured cassava; (2) ensured that suppliers of cassava provided certificates of clearance from the agricultural officers in each district; and (3) monitored cassava to be purchased before local grantees were allowed to procure from suppliers.

Program implementation was also hindered by the limited capability of selected ACDI/VOCA grantees to implement activities in accordance with set program policies and

¹ ACDI/VOCA has submitted a restructuring plan to USAID that proposes to reduce the number of LOP beneficiaries from 170,600 to 139,000.

regulations. During FY 2009 this sometimes caused delays in fund disbursements to grantees, resulting in procurement delays which subsequently resulted in lower production yields. ACDI/VOCA continued to provide technical assistance and training to the grantees in financial management and compliance of USAID rules and regulations. Practical methods such as early planning and systematic and immediate recording of project activities are also stressed to help grantees comply with rules and regulations. In addition, as part of a proposed restructuring plan, ACDI/VOCA has proposed increasing key staff in order to provide additional technical assistance to selected grantees in need.

As part of a restructuring effort, during FY 2009 ACDI/VOCA implemented a change in the extension strategy for some grantees that have been utilizing contact farmers (CF) as the primary trainers for farmer groups. These grantees have now shifted the training responsibilities completely to field extension workers (FEWs)² while community mobilization and demonstration gardens are the responsibility of the contact farmers. During FY 2009, training materials were reworked and streamlined based on feedback received from beneficiaries and grantees as another aspect of the overall restructuring plan. With more streamlined training, the number of training days has been reduced from 42 to 13 and, consequently, the FEWs have more valuable on-farm extension and monitoring time with the farmers, especially in resettling communities. ACDI/VOCA also anticipates, as part of its proposed restructuring plan, to post some of its own project staff in regional offices to lend more support to the grantees and improve quality technical assistance (TA) to grantees. Finally, ACDI/VOCA has refocused training to the household level (rather than individuals within the household) as an initial assumption that both husbands and wives would attend trainings has not proven accurate.

During the past fiscal year, ACDI/VOCA collaborated with several USAID-funded programs operating in northern Uganda. The collaboration included monthly meetings, coordination of agricultural training material, activities and geographic interventions and maximizing development efforts and programmatic linkages by all the implementing partners. For example, the project's M&E team participated in a workshop on Managing Performance Results organized by the Uganda Monitoring and Evaluation Management Services (UMEMS). This coordination has resulted in more collaborative monitoring and reporting across different programs operating in Uganda.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, ACDI/VOCA was able to achieve positive results with all program activities except agricultural production and yield which were adversely affected by droughts. However, as mentioned above, ACDI/VOCA will continue to adapt the program as necessary to address these and future challenges.

A. Strategic Objective 1: Reduced food insecurity and increased nutrition status through better production and use of food

a. IR 1.1: Improved nutrition and hygiene practices at the household and community level

ACDI/VOCA's nutrition and hygiene interventions focus on educating rural communities on how to improve dietary and hygiene practices. This is achieved through improving the awareness and skills of grantee staff to enable them to train rural farmers. During FY 2009,

² The training was previously conducted by both the contact farmers and the FEWs depending on the structure of grantee organizations.

ACDI/VOCA conducted training in nutrition and hygiene for 130 grantee staff³ from Africa 2000 Network (A2N), Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment (AUPWAE), the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), Africare, LWF, Farming for Food and Development—Eastern Uganda (FADEP-EU), Community Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDI) and National Strategy of Advancement of Rural Women in Uganda (NSARWU).

After receiving the nutrition and hygiene training from local grantees, 38,809 farmers were empowered to make informed decisions on what nutritious foods to consume and cultivate. Messages imparted included the importance of consumption of fruits and vegetables from home gardens, the utilization of local poultry and eggs, the importance of nutritious diets for vulnerable members of their households and the construction of hygiene and sanitation facilities vital for nutritional well being and good health. The number of farmers trained represents 143% of the annual target for FY 2009⁴. Nutrition and hygiene training was found to be particularly useful because it addressed the most pressing needs of the communities and provided observable results while eliminating the need for significant resources from⁵. This finding was corroborated by the mid-term evaluation which found the nutrition and hygiene training as one of the most successful components of the MYAP. Indeed, hygiene and nutrition structures promoted by ACDI/VOCA such as pit latrines and kitchen gardens were found to have direct positive impact on the household in general and on women in particular. Many women, for instance, reported that thanks to the kitchen gardens and overall hygiene improvement at the household level, they and their children fall sick less often and, therefore, do not have to spend resources on health bills.

Table 1: Number of Farmers Trained in Nutrition and Hygiene in FY 2009

Partner/Grantee	Farmers Trained in Best Nutrition and Hygiene Practices	
	Male	Female
FADEP	3,149	5,979
NSARWU	673	755
TPO	994	1,363
URADI	314	461
AFRICARE	347	515
LWF	5,204	6,951
KICA BER	101	67
SURFACE	150	177
CIDI	2,375	2,466
GWOKKE BER	532	885
VEDCO	2,223	2,527
WACFO	89	512
TOTAL	16,151	22,658

Having benefited from the nutrition and hygiene training, farmers have invested in thousands of hygiene facilities as well as kitchen vegetable gardens. Table 2 indicates the total number of facilities established by farming households in FY 2009.

³ 98 males and 32 females

⁴ The FY 2009 target was exceeded due to a ramp-up in training activities. ACDI/VOCA expects the LOP target to remain realistic.

⁵ Farmers are taught that they can use available local materials to construct nutrition and hygiene facilities such as kitchen gardens, drying racks, tippy taps and bath shelters.

Table 2: Number of Hygiene Facilities and Kitchen Gardens Established by Project Beneficiaries during FY 2009

	Latrines	Tip-taps	Bath-shelters	Rubbish pits	Plate racks	Kitchen gardens
FADEP	2,147	2,455	3,172	2,701	1,393	1,833
WACFO	234	113	211	126	68	40
NSARWU	1,998	1,677	2,602	2,024	2,088	549
TPO	775	783	942	556	1,039	218
VEDCO	1,019	1,713	2,241	2,369	2,281	1,313
SURFACE	227	46	90	55	15	439
LWF	5,361	4,286	8,403	8,304	9,962	4,322
AFRICARE ¹	158	231	205	164	197	688
KICA BER	300	300	62	0	58	300
CIDI	1,990	1,440	2,408	1,660	2,636	17
COWII	84	24	51	63	61	0
ASDI	417	86	429	343	325	417
URADI	44	35	41	40	12	36
GWOKKE BER	194	61	199	172	117	191
TOTALS	14,948	13,250	21,056	18,577	20,252	10,363

b. IR 1.2: Enhanced Agricultural Productivity, Farm Management and Marketing

During FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA conducted Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops in agronomy, post-harvest handling and marketing, Farming as a Business (FaaB) and group formation and credit and savings. The main objective of the trainings was to provide FEWs with knowledge and skills required to train farmers in different technical areas. After the TOT training, FEWs then train the farmer groups in the various technical areas.

Table 3: Number of Partner and Grantee Staff Trained

Course	Topics	Staff trained			Farmers		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Nutrition & Hygiene	Nutritional behavior change	98	32	130	16,151	22,658	38,809
Agronomy	Pests and diseases identification and management, crop nutrition, weed management, demonstration garden setting and maintenance, crop planting methods, plant spacing, crop critical growth periods, conservation agriculture, herbicides applications and its effect on environment and crop residues management	153	42	195	29,182	40,513	69,695
FaaB	Business skills development, enterprise planning and budgeting	164	79	243	12,139	12,516	24,655
PHH	Significance of working in groups, identifying market opportunities and getting farmers to bulk their products for better prices and revenues	108	26	134	7,825	9,750	17,575
Groups Formation, Savings and Credit Management	Significance of working in groups, identifying beneficiaries, constituting groups, writing group constitution, group governance, importance of saving	50	30	80	12,261	16,978	29,239

Agronomy

In FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA conducted TOT trainings for 195 grantee FEWs. Following this training, FEWs trained 69,695 farmers in best agronomic practices. This represents 139% of the year's target. The target for FY 2009 was exceeded due to the fact that ACDI/VOCA recruited 13 new grantees in FY 2008 who were provided TOT training in FY 2008 but who trained farmers in FY 2009. Most of the trained farmers planted cassava, groundnuts, maize, sunflower and sim sim. However, drought and erratic rainfall negatively affected the yield and production levels that the farmers were expecting.⁶ As a result of extremely high yields of groundnuts produced in FY 2008, farmers substantially increased groundnut acreage in 2009 to 0.93 acres⁷. However, because of the drought during FY 2009, average yields were only approximately 186 kg/acre⁸. Maize and cassava yields were also affected by the drought, with yields decreasing on average by 36% and 32%, respectively.



A farmer in Akano Parish compares a high-yield orange fleshed potato with a local variety.

It is likely that the yields reported by farmers considerably under-estimate the actual yields. This is because farmers tend to harvest cassava bit by bit, so that the amount that they had harvested up until the time that the FY 2009 data was collected does not reflect the full harvest from the land area planted. Production statistics also do not include rice, beans, sim sim, sorghum, finger millet, or sweet potato since these crops were not key targeted crops by the program. Because these crops were excluded, and because second-season production data was not captured, it is likely that farm income is at least three times the total reported. To address this issue in future years, ACDI/VOCA will revise data collection methodologies and

will conduct two surveys per year to capture both agricultural seasons.

Despite the challenges described above, the annual survey for FY 2009 showed that household food provisioning in program intervention areas averaged 9.3 months. This represents 95% of the FY 2009 target and reflects the relative good climatic conditions in FY 2008. The negative effects of the FY 2009 prolonged drought are likely to be reflected in FY 2010 measurements and may considerably reduce months of household food provisioning of the participating communities.

Farming as a Business

During FY 2009, TOT workshops in FaaB were conducted for staff of partner organizations and grantees. A total of 243 participants attended the trainings. As a part of ACDI/VOCA's overall restructuring plan, the number of training days required was reduced from three to two and topics emphasized the more practical aspects of farming as a business. While training content maintained messages in key topics such as business skills development, sustainability of farm businesses and enterprise planning (budgeting, analysis and selection of enterprises), the focus now is on practical projects that may interest farmers, such as how to use FaaB as a tool to procure oxen to clear land or how to get resources together to buy improved seeds.

⁶ Data in the indicator performance table for FY 2009 reflect first-season production only.

⁷ On average, only 0.5 acres were planted with groundnuts in FY 2008.

⁸ Versus approximately 1,000 kg/acre in FY 2008.

In FY 2009 24,655 farmers were trained in FaaB. The number of farmers trained represents 91% of the annual target for FY 2009 and shows a sharp increase compared to FY 2008. Despite this high percentage, ACDI/VOCA expects next year's results to be even higher as a result of simplified concepts for both the FEWs and the farmers and the sequencing of the technical training⁹.

Post-Harvest Handling and Marketing

In FY 2009, a total of 17,575 farmers were trained in post-harvest handling and marketing (PHH/M). This represents 65% of the year's target. As in the case of FaaB, the sequencing of the training in PHH accounts for the low numbers of farmers trained in FY 2009. Most of the grantees that were recruited in FY 2008 are still training farmers in other technical areas such as agronomy, nutrition and hygiene, group formation and savings and credit which constitute the first trainings promoted by the program.

Despite the low number, farmers who were trained in key post-harvest handling and marketing messages were able to apply the skills received through the trainings and to take advantage of bulk marketing. The table below indicates the volume and average prices of the crops marketed by ACDI/VOCA grantees in FY 2009.

Table 4: Marketing Data for Project Beneficiaries

Grantee	Major crop sold	Crop output sold (MT)	Average wholesale price per MT (US\$)	Average wholesale price per MT (US \$)
NSARWU	Sunflower	79	483,000	252
FADEP	Maize	1,004	600,000	313
FADEP	Beans	268	1,200,000	625
FADEP	Rice	29.4	1,200,000	625
FADEP	Groundnuts	0.26	1,200,000	625
KICA BER	Groundnuts	3.7	1,000,000	521
KICA BER	Maize	11.5	400,000	208
KICA BER	Beans	2.9	1,200,000	625
KICA BER	Rice	4.7	1,000,000	521
KICA BER	Millet	7.6	600,000	313
CIDI	Sunflower	325.5	500,000	260
URADI	Rice	2.61	1,775,000	924

c. IR 1.3: Increased road access to local and regional markets and services

Rehabilitation of roads

ACDI/VOCA approved the commencement for the rehabilitation of two road sections that were implemented by project partner, Africare, in Soroti district. In FY 2009, a total of 31.7 km of feeder roads were rehabilitated¹⁰. This represents 41% of the year's target and 11% of the LOA target. Road rehabilitation activities were hindered by the fact that many of the districts in which ACDI/VOCA is intervening are new districts without the necessary equipment to leverage for the rehabilitation, as envisioned in the original program design. To address this constraint, ACDI/VOCA is considering utilizing Africare and/or private companies in lieu of fully relying on the local governments. However, if a local government

⁹ FaaB is typically offered after all other technical areas are covered.

¹⁰ Arapai-Tubur road: 22.7 km; Gweri-Awaliwal road: 9 km

has the necessary equipment for road rehabilitation work, ACDI/VOCA will work with them first. In FY 2010, ACDI/VOCA anticipates ramping up road rehabilitation activities to meet LOP program targets. As of the end of FY 2009, the USAID mission environmental officer has approved rehabilitation of ACDI/VOCA proposed roads in Budaka and Bukedea (eastern Uganda) and in Lira district in northern Uganda.

Positive impact of roads rehabilitated in FY 2009 is already visible. The rehabilitation of the Arapai-Tubur road has linked 1,744 ACDI/VOCA MYAP-supported households to markets. However, the overall number of people benefiting from the rehabilitation is estimated at 60,374¹¹. This road covers a total of three sub-counties with 19 ACDI/VOCA-supported farmer groups. The number of businesses emerging on the rehabilitated road has also risen from six at baseline to 25 as of July 2009.

d. IR 1.4: Enhanced community and household capacity to withstand shocks

Farmer Savings Groups

In FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA conducted five TOTs for 91 extension staff of LWF, AUPWAE, CIDI, VEDCO and Africare. The objective of the training was to equip extension staff with the knowledge and skills for managing group savings schemes for project beneficiaries.

Extension staff working with ACDI/VOCA's partners and grantees continued to train and support farmers in group formation and management of group savings and credit activities. During the fiscal year, ACDI/VOCA's sub-grantees trained 29,239 farmers¹² in savings mobilization and group management. This represents 108% of the FY 2009 target.¹³ The success in group formation and savings training is partly due to the interest that the farmers have for this topic as they are able to see concrete results in a relatively short amount of time.



Members of the Cici farmer group are now able to buy cows using proceeds from the sale of cassava cuttings.

Table 5: Farmer Savings at the end of FY 2009

Organization	Total number of groups	Number of members saving	Cumulative	Cumulative savings
			savings (US\$)	(US \$)
NSARWU	75	1,939	8,670,750	4,516
CIDI	101	3,030	12,156,060	6,331
CHAFORD	10	300	62,612,500	32,610
LWF	801	19,186	129,934,928	67,675
FADEP	350	8,799	38,601,050	20,104

¹¹ According to the Soroti district local government

¹² 12,261 male and 16,798 female

¹³ FY 2009 targets were exceeded due to the late recruitment of grantees in FY 2008. ACDI/VOCA anticipates that the LOP will remain realistic.

TPO	100	1,573	23,781,300	12,386
VEDCO	132	2,144	7,940,550	413
A2N	150	668	4,426,500	2,305
URADI	10	180	1,950,400	1,015
GWOKKE BER	10	154	3,976,700	2,071
SURFACE	10	150	1,279,000	666
KICA BER	10	300	7,920,000	4,125
WACFO	10	339	6,243,850	3,252
AFRICARE	186	901	9,982,600	5,199
Totals	1,955	39,663	319,476,188	162,668

US \$ 1= USH 1,920

In FY 2009, grantees reported 1,462¹⁴ farmer groups saving a total of UGX 319,476,188 (approximately US\$ 162,668) for FY 2009.

The 1,446 groups were composed of 31,323 households.

The FY 2009 annual survey indicated that 89.5% of the surveyed farmers are members of savings groups and 67.9% of them are active¹⁵ members of savings groups.

Multiplication and Demonstration Gardens

Multiplication gardens are used for multiplying seeds and other planting materials for distribution to farmers. Multiplication gardens are primarily utilized for vegetative seeds such as cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines. Some partners and grantees multiply self pollinated seeds such as groundnuts which do not require much isolation during the production process. Demonstration gardens play a key role in introducing promoted agronomic practices. In FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA partners and grantees extension staff established demonstration gardens for rice, maize, beans, cassava sim sim, sorghum, sweet potato and groundnuts as shown in the table below.



A farmer group supported by LWF in Pader collecting cash savings.

Table 6: Number of Demonstration and Multiplication Gardens

FY 2009	Maize	Beans	Upland Rice	Ground nuts	S/Flower	Sweet Potatoes	Cassava	Sim sim	Sorghum	Total
AFRICARE	16			2						18
LWF				386		171	429			986
CIDI	120	52	88	96	100	100				556
VEDCO	123	356				114	175			768
NSARWU	62	70						22		154
TPO	52	33		48			93		48	274
FADEP	235	200		200			235			870
A2N							159			159

¹⁴ Out of a total of 1,995 farmer groups or 72%

¹⁵ Active means that they deposited money in the past six months and attended at least one meeting during that period.

AUPWAE										0
GWOKE BER	10		10	14						34
KICABER	4	3		3						10
WAFCO	10		10							20
SURFACE		1	2	2						5
URADI				1						1
UYAP		1		1						2
TOTAL	632	716	110	753	100	385	1,091	22	48	3,857

In addition, during FY 2009, local grantee TPO established nine citrus nurseries. They expect to raise 70,000 seedlings which will be distributed to farmers.

B. Strategic Objective 2: Reduced food insecurity and improved nutrition for 42,000 particularly vulnerable people through distribution of supplementary food per year

During FY 2009 39,814 PLWHA received rations on a monthly basis. This was slightly lower than the original target of 42,000 individuals and resulting from the loss of 450 MT of CSB from ACDI/VOCA's pipeline in FY 2008 in addition to the loss of commodity aboard the Liberty Eagle¹⁶. ACDI/VOCA anticipates that in FY 2010 the project will achieve its target of 42,000 beneficiaries due to the fact that the pipeline capacity has been increased and recruitment for additional households has been completed. In FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA served clients in the districts of Gulu, Amuru, Lira, Dokolo, Amolatar, Soroti, Kumi, Oyam and Kaberamido with an average of 32,915 attendees at monthly food distributions.

a. IR 2.1: Increased access to nutritious foods through direct distribution of supplemental rations to 42,000 PLWHA, including their families

PLWHA food client ramp-up continued into FY 2009 culminating in 39,814 total beneficiaries at the end of FY 2009. A cumulative total of 394,978 monthly PLWHA food aid rations were delivered in FY 2009 to beneficiaries. This translated into a total of 2,596.7 metric tons (MT) of CSB and soy-fortified cornmeal (SFCM)¹⁷ and 187.56 MT of vegetable oil delivered to beneficiaries in FY 2009¹⁸. During FY 2009 ACDI/VOCA faced pipeline challenges and was forced to substitute CSB with SFCM at a reduced ration of five kilograms per beneficiary to ensure that there was not a complete pipeline break during March, April and May 2009. The SFCM was donated by Save the Children (US) as it was surplus stock that they had left over from the end of their Title II Development Assistance Program (DAP).

b. IR 2.2: Improved health and nutrition practices through behavior change education

A total of 32 food and cooking demonstrations were conducted in FY 2009. This was lower than the targeted 108 cooking demonstrations as a result of the graduation of selected food distribution beneficiaries from the program¹⁹. Cooking demonstrations were conducted to help clients maximize the benefits of Title II distribution commodities by using various

¹⁶ Approximately 991 MT

¹⁷ ACDI/VOCA received approximately 276.78 MT of soy-fortified cornmeal from Save the Children in FY 2009

¹⁸ Client rations are 7.5 kg of CSB and 0.518 liters of vegetable oil per client. ACDI/VOCA gives individual rations to up to six family members in a household

¹⁹ Selected food distribution beneficiaries are being integrated into Objective 1 activities.

recipes utilizing CSB, vegetable oil and local ingredients including fish, greens, meat, bread, pan cakes, porridge and groundnut paste. The purpose was also to provide clients with additional recipes for CSB to improve its palatability by increasing options for consumption. Food clients reported improved health due to proper utilization of supplementary food aid through various recipes.

When interviewed, 87.25% of clients demonstrated an increased knowledge in the preparation of distributed commodities. This exceeded the project target of 40% of clients demonstrating increased knowledge. When asked, clients were able to list traditional recipes into which CSB could be incorporated. A high percentage of clients (82.5%) were able to give examples of food combinations that they had prepared incorporating distribution commodities. Overall households receiving rations also scored well with regards to the number of meals a day that they reported eating. 63% of households reported that they were eating a recommended three meals which surpassed the project target of 30% of beneficiaries eating three meals per day.

c. IR 2.3: Increased access to complementary services for food beneficiaries

During FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA made great strides towards the project objective of incorporating food aid beneficiaries into livelihood activities. In FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA finalized and rolled out an integration strategy that was shared with partners, grantees and the USAID Mission in Uganda. To facilitate this process, ACDI/VOCA hired a PLWHA Livelihood Integration Manager specifically tasked to take on the role of ensuring that selected food distribution beneficiaries were responsibly integrated into agricultural and livelihood activities. ACDI/VOCA has now formalized a system for the integration of clients receiving food aid to be enrolled from their distribution points by the grantee or partner closest to them geographically.

In addition, during FY 2009, food aid clients received complementary services from project partner TASO such as counseling and medical care, anti-retroviral (ART) treatment, child support, and income generating activity training/support. Clients accessed counseling and medical care services both at outreach clinics and health centers with a total of 2,263 food clients counseled and 2,668 receiving medical care in FY 2009. Due to the benefits of being enrolled into the food program, food distribution clients generally have fewer problems and counselors are no longer overwhelmed with clients' requests for food. Females who received Preventing Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) training received counseling with their husbands that helped increase HIV/AIDS awareness among both partners in the household. It has been noted that the majority of clients on ART receiving food from ACDI/VOCA's program (93%) have shown high levels of adherence to the drugs compared to those who do not receive food. In addition, TASO has been able to sensitize food aid beneficiaries on proper condom use. TASO has also provided a number of beneficiaries with condoms to prevent the further spread of HIV among the population.

Income generating activities

In FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA awarded six income generating grants (IGAs), with project partner TASO to PLWHA women's groups in Acholi, Lango and Teso regions. These grants focused on non-agricultural activities and ranged from bee and goat keeping activities to tailoring and bead making. A total of 792 PLWHA and their families will benefit from these awards. This

number represents 53% of the LOA target²⁰. In an effort to support the funded activities and provide the beneficiaries with the best opportunities to carry out successful and sustainable businesses, ACDI/VOCA also trained 30 PLWHA in management of their income-generating activities in Gulu, Amuria and Kaberamaido. Course content included business skills development, group management and leadership, planning and sources of finance.

II. SUCCESS STORIES²¹

Can Oroma Farmer Group

For years, life in the Labongali internally displaced persons camp consisted of long periods of tediousness punctuated by eruptions of sheer terror. A settlement of some 5,000 households displaced by violence initiated by the Lord's Resistance Army, Labongali was one of over 100 IDP camps dotting northeastern and western Uganda, refuge for virtually the entire rural population. A small army detachment provided little security, and the camp was subject to brutal attacks that made even farming or collecting firewood too dangerous to attempt. Camp residents depended on aid organizations for necessities.

When relative peace returned in 2007, the population was reluctant to resume farming, fearing that the calm would not last. Encouraged by ACDI/VOCA, however, 25 women and 5 men organized a farmer group named Can Oroma, which means “poverty has overwhelmed us.” Training in agronomy, credit and savings, and farming as a business encouraged the group to



undertake commercialized rice farming. ACDI/VOCA provides such training to farmers throughout the region, and anticipated that it will eventually reach 60,000 households.

First, Can Oroma established a credit and savings association. A renewed vision of self-sufficiency through commercial farming, a business plan, and a commitment to the group encouraged members to save despite difficult circumstances. Within 6 months they had enough to invest in seeds and a rented ox-plow to plant 10 acres of land. From two successful rice harvests in 2008, the group earned more capital, which it used to expand and diversify. It now owns two pairs of oxen and an ox-plow, and is constructing a warehouse in order to take advantage of seasonal price fluctuations.



²⁰ Although this activity is not a part of the project's official IPTT, ACDI/VOCA had proposed to reach 1,500 beneficiaries through IGA activities.

²¹ An additional Success Story is included as Attachment I.

Can Oroma member Evelyn Alobo said, "Being in a group encourages us to work harder...It is easier to solve problems; for example, if someone is sick or a group member loses a close relative, all members contribute to help the affected household." Group savings have also provided members with loans to diversify into vegetable production and shop keeping.

The success of Can Oroma can be traced to ACDI/VOCA's training combined with individual initiative and group commitment. While Can Oroma maintains its original name, it is now a group overwhelmed by success.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

During FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA was able to utilize many important lessons learned. Perhaps the most important lesson learned during the fiscal year was that ACDI/VOCA needed to make some overall changes to the program to ensure that beneficiaries continued to receive the best possible program implementation possible. As a result of observations from both project staff as well as outside stakeholders, ACDI/VOCA submitted a restructuring plan to USAID along with its FY 2010 Pipeline Resource and Estimate Proposal (PREP) and is still awaiting approval. Although some aspects of the restructuring plan have already been implemented (revised training manuals, adjustments to FEW responsibilities), there are additional items that require donor approval. Key issues that will be addressed include:

1. **Life of Project (LOP) Target Adjustments:** ACDI/VOCA is proposing to slightly reduce household and individual LOP targets to better reflect both ACDI/VOCA and local grantee staffing capabilities as well as beneficiary participation in trainings.
2. **Grantee Staff Levels:** During FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA modified all grantee budgets and agreements to allow for the hiring of additional field extension workers (FEWs). This change was made in order to decrease the number of farmer groups for which each field extension worker (FEW) is responsible to more effectively disseminate training messages to beneficiaries.
3. **Technical Training Content:** As a result of field observations as well as recommendations from both volunteers and other stakeholders, ACDI/VOCA has streamlined and simplified all program training manuals and restructured technical training areas by consolidating the previous five technical areas (nutrition/hygiene; FaaB; post harvest handling /marketing; group formation; and savings/credit/agronomy) to a manageable three (agronomy/post harvest handling/marketing; group formation/savings and credit/FaaB; and, nutrition and hygiene).
4. **ACDI/VOCA Staffing Levels:** To allow for more effective project implementation and monitoring, ACDI/VOCA is proposing to increase the size of the GDU department and place selected GDU staff members in four regional field offices.

In addition, ACDI/VOCA has learned that speculative storage in preparation for marketing is not feasible for crops such as sunflower which loses a lot of weight quickly while in storage. This causes the farmer to lose money in the process, thus defeating the purpose of speculative storage. To address this issue, ACDI/VOCA has provided information to its grantees on the best crops for speculative storage given the climatic and storage conditions in its intervention areas.

As a result of observations from regular project monitoring, ACDI/VOCA has advised its grantees to select their farmers within a small radius (a few sub-counties) as opposed to recruiting from a greater geographical area. This reduces administration costs for the grantee and also enhances opportunities for more frequent training and follow-up. A grantee should

also focus on providing technical assistance on only a few key crops in order to ensure quality and to avoid making training less effective and focused.

ACDI/VOCA has also learned that working with farmers for three seasons, graduating them and then taking on new farmer groups is not feasible, especially in a three year project²². Farmers should be recruited and worked with for the entire life of the project without graduation.

To promote sustainable interventions, more time should be allocated by grantees to identify beneficiaries and form farmer groups to allow time to critically think through individual situations and how they can set realistic goals. ACDI/VOCA is working with its grantees to provide additional technical assistance in group dynamics to foster group cohesion and coordination. This is expected to improve grantees' selection of farmer groups and their management.

Interventions aimed at improving farming as a business for vulnerable communities require relatively longer period (three to five years) of continuous engagement.

During field visits, low literacy remains as a major challenge, particularly with training in technical areas such as FaaB. Over-diversification of crops is also limiting farmers' progress in FaaB. Farmers are sometimes engaged in the cultivation of too many crops which stretches their managerial ability to carry out farm activities on time, thus resulting in poor yield and outcome. While crop diversification is a risk aversion strategy that is beneficial to teach to rural farmers, it should be evaluated against other options. With ACDI/VOCA's new training structure, farmers are encouraged to carry out enterprise planning and budgeting to address such challenges.

Adoption of improved storage practices specifically, the use of improved granaries and locally made cribs, is very much dependent on geographical setting. In areas where locally available materials for construction are available, adoption is progressing well while in other areas such as Dokolo district where local grantee is operating, adoption is slow due to the scarcity of raw materials. ACDI/VOCA and project partners are addressing this issue through natural resource management (NRM) training that promotes the cultivation of plants and trees some of which can be later utilized for materials.

²² While ACDI/VOCA's program is five years, most of the local grantee agreements are only for three years.