ACDI/VOCA/UGANDA

Title II Multi-Year Assistance Program

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

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To all these people, we reiterate our sincere thanks and acknowledge their respective contributions to our study.

GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

ACDI/VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International /Volunteers Overseas Cooperative assistance
AER	Annual Estimate of Requirements
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARR	Annual Results Report
ART	Anti-retroviral Treatment
C&F	Commodity and Freight
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CF	Contact Farmer
CHAFORD	Charity for Rural Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CS	Cooperating Sponsor
DAP	Development Activity Proposal
CSB	Corn-Soy Blend
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FaaB	Farming as a Business
FADEP-EU	Farming For Food and Development—Eastern Uganda
FANTA	The Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project
FDP	Final Distribution Point
FEWS	Field Extension Workers
FDP	Food Distribution Point
FFP	Food for Peace
FFPr	Food for Progress
FY	Fiscal Year
GDU	Grants and Development Unit
GBHL	Grain Bulk Handlers Ltd.

GDU	Grants Development Unit
GMP	Growth Monitoring and Promotion
GMS	Grants Management Structure
GOU	Government of Uganda
HFA	Height for Age
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRW	Hard Red Winter
HQ	Headquarters
ICB	Institutional Capacity Building (Grant)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
LOP	Life of Project
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MC	Mercy Corps
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEMS	Monitoring and Evaluation Management Services
MT	Metric Tons
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Research Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management

PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PHH/M	Post Harvest Handling and Marketing
PLHIV	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RAA	Recipient Agency Agreement
StC	Save the Children
TASO	The AIDS Support & Counseling Organization
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organization
TOT	Training of Trainers
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
URADI	Uganda Rural Development Initiative
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
USG	United States Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USH	Ugandan shillings
VEDCO	Volunteer Efforts for Development Concern
WFA	Weight for Age
WFH	Weight for Height
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WV	World Vision

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In many parts of Northern and Eastern Uganda, household food security remains one of the most important constraints to rural communities. To reduce food insecurity and increase nutrition status, ACDI/VOCA and its partners, Africare, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Aids Support Organization (TASO) and local NGO grantees, initiated a five-year $74 million Title II Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) designed to achieve the following two strategic objectives: (1) to reduce food insecurity and increase nutritional status through better production and use of food and; (2) to provide food rations to 42,000 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

Although the components of the interventions are quite different, they are interlinked and each represents a major key leverage point for the overall food security in the targeted areas. Each component targets food insecure and vulnerable groups and seeks to establish partnerships with and build-capacity of local communities as a means of assuring the sustainability of project interventions. The intervention strategies are based on a large number of activities; including: groups formation; savings and credit management agronomy; hygiene and nutrition; farming as a business; post harvest handling; and institutional capacity-building through training and awareness promotion.

The Mid-Term Evaluation was conducted by an interdisciplinary team of external consultants over the period of July 27 through September 6, 2009. The team first consulted the abundant program reports and documents provided by ACDI/VOCA staff and other organizations in order to frame the relevant issues. Then, extensive fieldwork was conducted using a range of quantitative and qualitative tools including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, large group discussions, process analysis, and several PRA techniques. Over 200 staff, partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries were interviewed during this process.

The major findings that emerged from the evaluation are listed below:

➥ In general, **ACDI/VOCA and its partners in Uganda have made considerable progress in meeting the majority of its objectives**. Throughout the evaluation, it was evident that ACDI/VOCA MYAP in Uganda has had numerous positive impacts on the lives and livelihoods of participants. All focus groups reported positive changes in living conditions since the beginning of the project

➥ The consultants would like to point out that ACDI/VOCA has been flexible and proactive in re-evaluating the activities of the program. **Most of the changes initiated by the management are in line with the consultant's recommendations**

➥ **The program has successfully increased community awareness** regarding the importance of proper food hygiene behaviors, improved farming practices including post harvest handling and storage techniques, and the need to improve nutrition practices and the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS. The program has been successful at promoting the formation and management of farmer's savings and loan groups.

➥ACDI/VOCA continues to effectively implement the food distribution component of the Title II program. One of **the most significant achievements of this component of the program is the graduation of food distribution clients who had been receiving food through the program since July 2007**.

➥ It is clear that **the program has completed scaling up both geographically and programmatically**. Everyone in the surveyed districts recognizes that **the focus now needs to shift more on quality and excellence**. The monitoring unit should focus on that direction. Quality indicators should be identified and efficient information gathering tools developed to obtain information about the quality (in terms of impacts).

➥ There is also a need for more recycling with communities where ACDI/VOCA and its partners already have worked. In addition to trying to continually expand coverage, it would be important and advantageous **to provide more support to communes and villages that have already been trained.**

➥**The program has invested extensively in developing a comprehensive Behavioral Change Communication strategy, which has been done well** with a focus on key messages, targeting different audiences and using different media. The strategy is now being implemented; however, systems for monitoring the quality of various media in terms of impact on targeted audiences still needs to be developed.

➥ **The multiple shocks associated with recent droughts and floods are eroding the asset base of households to the point where recovery could be compromised**. Some households are forced to take out consumption loans that are difficult to pay back. Most villages in all districts covered by the MYAP are vulnerable to droughts and floods

Droughts and flood mitigation and protection: A critical factor to consider in this review process is the impact of the most recent floods in 2007 and drought in 2008-09 on the livelihood of project beneficiaries. Floods and torrential rains have hindered agricultural activities in the project areas. Given the fact that most of the villages are affected by droughts and floods, investment should seek to focus on ways to lessen the damage of droughts and floods on communities

➥ There is an urgent need to **improve the capacity of the current Monitoring and Evaluation Unit** for close attention to the provision of management

information, both to support the implementation of projects goals and to feed back into the design of new initiatives in changing environments. The use of geographic information could improve the efficiency of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

➥ Technically, **beneficiaries have been exposed to many new techniques in agriculture, nutrition, hygiene and management that will have lasting effects in improving the quality of life beyond the life of the projec**t.

➥ **Women's mobility and status is improving in most villages**. This is primarily because of the investments made by ACDI/VOCA in training and credit schemes for women. This evaluation suggests that while the small size of landholdings could potentially be a constraint on agricultural production, tenure arrangements will be more critical for household food security. A more detailed investigation of local tenure arrangements would enable ACDI/VOCA to gauge how the different forms of ownership and tenancy affect investment, productivity, and the physical environment. Since a substantial proportion of female-headed households and single female-headed households fall into the "extremely vulnerable" category, a review of their specific constraints would be particularly informative.

➥ **Expand groups in targeted districts to include more female-headed households**. The evaluation team found a growing number of female-headed households that appear to be the most vulnerable households in the communities. The program should renew efforts to include those from lower wealth categories in the group formation process. In addition the program should encourage youth to have saving and loan groups.

➥In northern and eastern Uganda, livestock provide important protein to household diets, a source of household income, and a critical means of transport. As such, animals constitute a critical component of the overall livelihood security strategy. Income earned off-farm--to the extent possible--is sometimes invested in the household herd as a form of savings as well as a means of coping with unforeseen and unpredictable difficulties. **Farmers affirm that mitigation enterprises such as improved poultry and small ruminants can effectively help with the droughts and other emergency situations.**

➥Introduce Peace & Conflict Resolution in the training component (Example of VEDCO working with German Agro working on conflict resolution. Some of the beneficiaries are ex-combatants

➥Focus discussions among beneficiaries pointed out **to the need to explore the implementation of school gardens as a pilot activity**.

➥ **Food aid has been undergoing a number of changes in Uganda**. Title II NGOs are no longer responsible for completing their Bellmon Analysis, and or annual updates. Given the increase in local production, vegetable oil is no longer available as a monetization commodity in Uganda. This means that only hard red winter wheat is being monetized in Uganda. There has been a downsizing in scope and range of monetization commodity options within Uganda, which requires a greater need now for coordination between USDA and USAID on planned monetization programs in-country.

➥**During the remaining years of the MYAP, ACDI/VOCA and AFRICARE should seek more collaboration and co-financing of road rehabilitation**. It is possible to mix funds with other donors; but this has not been done to date. Given the costs of materials and the amount of bridge construction work that must be done, such collaboration may make it possible to achieve targets in meters of roads/paths rehabilitated while at the same time taking some of the burden off of the MYAP.

➥**Proactive Management**

ACDI/VOCA has been proactive in re-evaluating the activities of the program. Most of the changes initiated by the management are in line with the consultant's recommendations. Some of the examples of changes in management initiated prior to the midterm evaluation include: a) improving the capacity of the current Monitoring and Evaluation Unit with GIS components; b) the trimming down of training material; c) the posting of additional staff in the field to help monitor activities better. Meanwhile many of the other activities proposed by the Evaluation team are already integrated in the ACDI/VOCA restructuring process

I. INTRODUCTION

Uganda is an agricultural country where 86 percent of the population is rural and engaged in agriculture as a primary source of income. Women provide about 70 percent of the agricultural labor force; they are responsible for 65-75 percent of production of food crops and virtually all the food processing. Ranked 154 out of 177 countries in the Human Development Index, Uganda is among the world's poorest countries, with an average annual income of US$ 300 in 2008; a high infant, child, and maternal mortality rates; and a life expectancy of less than 46 years. Uganda has the potential to increase agricultural production and ensure food security for its citizens, with 19.7 million ha of arable land (81 percent of total land area), but only 6.8 million ha (60.4 percent) under cultivation. On average, households cultivate 2.5 ha. Production patterns vary as evidenced from substitution effects between cereals and root crops, and rainfall patterns range from 500-2,000 mm per year throughout Uganda.

In addition to the negative impact on agricultural production caused by the world economic crisis, a recent drought – the worst in 20 years – affected production all over the country, especially in the districts covered by the project. Overall the past decade has been characterized by considerable climatic change with regard to rainfall, as well as greater seasonal rainfall variation than in the past. These shifts in rainfall patterns have disrupted the agricultural production calendar, further leading to an increase in crop failures.

The food security status of households in Uganda is determined by the interplay of natural and human resources, the viability of livelihood systems and survival strategies, the politics of resource allocation and use, and the impact of development intervention.

The mid-term evaluation in the ACDI/VOCA zone of intervention in Uganda entailed comparative analysis of selected agro-ecological, socio-cultural, and political-economic factors at the macro and micro levels.

Households, the ultimate unit of analysis for measuring impact, make critical decisions about the allocation of productive resources. Thus, their demographic characteristics, resource endowments, revenue-generating activities, and strategies of production, trade, and consumption, constitute a set of critical livelihood and food security indicators. However, resource availability, and the household decision-making process itself, are both conditioned by a variety of factors outside the household and sometimes beyond its control.

Sharp variations among microclimates profoundly shape livelihood systems and strategies affecting household food security status in the ACDI/VOCA zone of intervention. The project area is, for the most part, vulnerable to natural

calamities that wreak havoc on household assets (livestock, crops, pasture). Chief among the recent calamities are drought, the bane of rain fed agriculture, and floods. The unpredictability of natural disasters in the ACDI/VOCA zone, coupled with limited assets and revenue-generating activities, make it difficult for households to mobilize sufficient resources to recover from losses while meeting current needs.

Farming remains the predominant occupation throughout the area of intervention, and the principal occupation in the most widely practiced livelihood system. The quality of agricultural land varies by agro-ecological zone.

Rural households in the project area are chronically vulnerable to livelihood system failure and food shortages. Households must endure prolonged drought and other natural disasters. Crop harvests from small, dispersed landholdings of varying quality are highly seasonal and, although petty trade almost universally accompanies farming, the rhythm of market activity fluctuates with seasonal production.

Access to nonagricultural employment for rural households is limited by the geographical distribution of jobs and their small number. The shortcomings of public and private education place even limited jobs beyond the reach of most rural dwellers. Of the rural population who attend school, only five percent complete primary grades. Secondary school and college attendance falls well below that. Likewise, craftwork, a potentially important source of full-time or dead-season employment, which requires supplementary training rather than basic education, is handicapped by undercapitalized production techniques and weak market links.

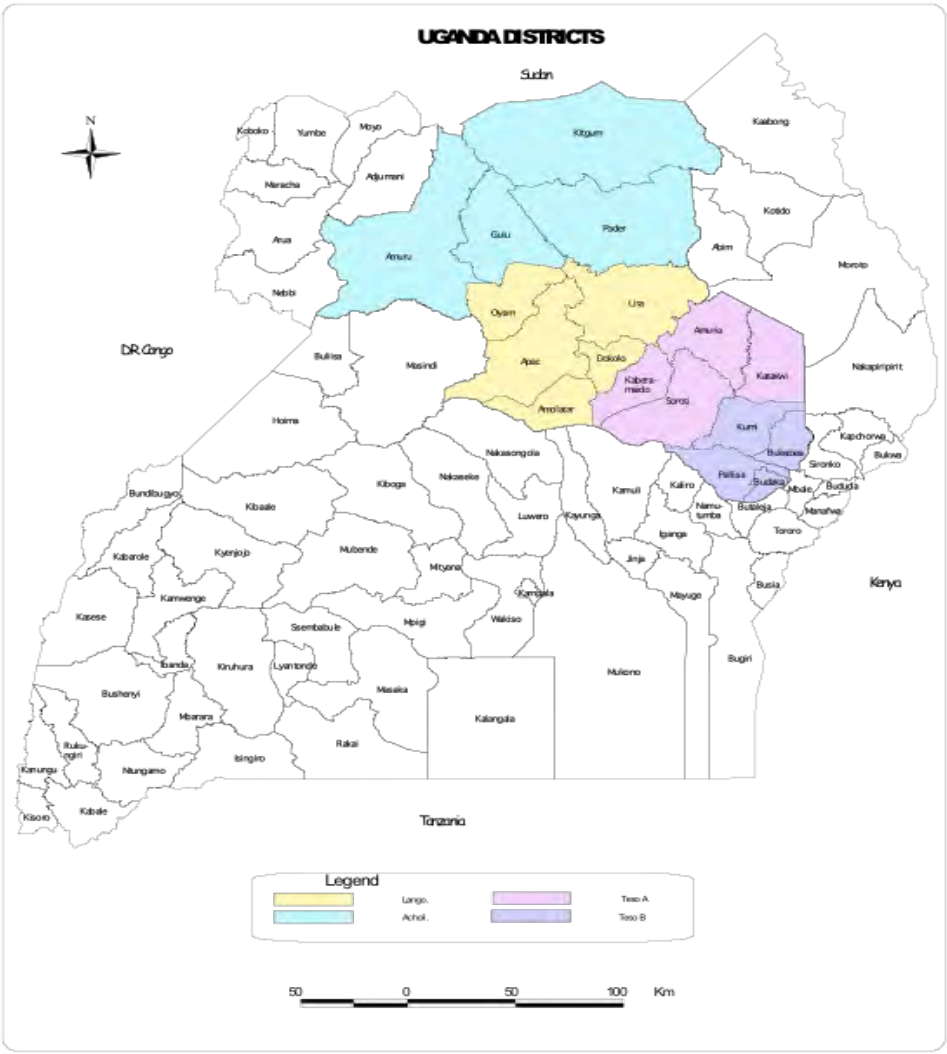
Poor roads, or the absence of roads and other physical infrastructure, exacerbate each of the above-mentioned sources of vulnerability. Aside from the national highways, thoroughfares in the ACDI/VOCA zone are unpaved secondary roads, paths, or trails. Residents of most rural localities walk, and move their goods on the backs of animals, rather than in motorized vehicles. However, even pedestrian and animal traffic is hampered during the rainy season, when heavy downpours, cresting rivers, and flooding make roads, paths, and trails impassable. Moreover, neither the Ministry of Public Works nor private organizations manage to obtain adequate support to counteract the effects of normal wear and tear. Consequently, transportation costs for people and goods are high, and spoilage, rather than buyers, "consumes" agricultural products.

Objectives of the MYAP

In response to the critical situation in most vulnerable districts of the northeast regions of Uganda, ACDI/VOCA and its partners initiated are implementing a

five-year Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) in seventeen rural districts of Acholi, Lango and Teso sub-regions in northern and eastern Uganda.

Figure 1: Map of the MYAP project intervention zone in Uganda



The program focuses on addressing some of root causes of food insecurity in remote villages in the three sub-regions. The central goal of the 2007-2011 MYAP is to reduce food and livelihood insecurity in vulnerable populations by 2011 for approximately 170,600 vulnerable farmers in seventeen districts over the life of the project. The program has two major components: smallholder agriculture and the provision of food rations to vulnerable households with people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

The strategic objectives of the MYAP are as follows:

1. The first strategic objective is to reduce food insecurity through better production and utilization of food by supporting 170,600 farmers within a period of five years. This first objective includes the following intermediate results:

    a. Improved nutrition and hygiene practices at the household and community level.
    b. Enhanced agricultural productivity, farm management and agricultural marketing. Specific intervention areas include improved agricultural productivity, farm planning management, and post-harvest handling and storage.
    c. Increased road access to local and regional markets and basic physical and social infrastructure.
    d. Enhanced community and household capacity to withstand shocks.

    To achieve the first objective, farmers are trained in improved nutrition and hygiene, farming methods, post-harvest handling, group savings mobilization and management, benefits of hybrid seeds and inputs, Farming as a Business (FaaB) training and collective marketing. It also focuses on mitigating the farm-to-market constraints through the rehabilitation of feeder roads in target areas. This objective focuses on creating changes that will lead to increased production of food crops. The focus is placed on smallholder households – providing technical assistance and training to promote sustainable farming practices, more productive and more diversified farming systems, and improved post-harvest management.

2. The second strategic objective is to provide food rations to 42,000 PLWHA and their families. The intermediate results for this objective are:
    a. Increased access to nutritious foods through direct distribution of supplemental rations to 42,000 PLWHA.
    b. Improved health and nutrition practices through behavior change education.
    c. Increased access to complementary services for food beneficiaries.

Overall, the program seeks to enhance economic opportunities for poor, vulnerable groups through increased crop production and income-generating activities, and to improve the quality of life.

Major components of the program are built upon past achievements realized in ACDI/VOCA and its partners working in Uganda for the last 15 years. The implementation strategy was based on a participatory, community-driven development approach. The total program cost at approval was estimated to reach US$ 74 million.

Critical Issues in the Operating Environment of the MYAP

Three features of the operating environment affected the implementation of the project up to the time of the mid-term evaluation:

1. A critical factor to consider in this review process is the impact of the most recent floods in 2007 and drought in 2008-9 on the livelihood of project beneficiaries. Floods and torrential rains have hindered agricultural activities in the project areas. Twenty thousand households in the districts of Katakwi and Amuria lost most of their productive assets as a result of submerged agricultural fields and delayed planting for the second growing season. The few existing roads were cut off due to floods. This situation caused a major slowdown in the execution and outputs of planned activities. About 50 percent of the households that the MYAP had begun working with in Katakwi and Amuria districts reported total destruction of crops. Access to the beneficiaries in the affected areas also limited most of the planned activities for the following months. In 2008 another disaster caused by drought hit the project area. Many of the beneficiaries lost the inputs provided by the project because of the persistent drought. It was difficult under those circumstances to successfully promote some of project activities.

2. The second aspect of the operating environment that affected the implementation of the project is the late initiation of project start-up (end of February 2007). The set-up and staffing of offices took longer than initially planned. For most of 2007, there were numerous disruptions to project activities as the partnership with the various stakeholders was taking place in a new and relatively insecure environment in the northern part of Uganda.

3. Finally, the lack or limited access to basic physical and social infrastructure in the project area, combined with the overwhelming level of poverty of the population, significantly constrained project outcomes.

Some of these issues have been addressed though a discussion on vulnerability and trigger indicators in the project's PMP as well as anticipated challenges with start-up and implantation in Northern Uganda in the "Risks and Assumptions" section of the proposal, but have not yet been fully integrated into project design or included in the key assumption and risk management of the approved proposal.

Objectives of the mid-term evaluation

This mid-term evaluation combines qualitative and quantitative data aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of how the ACDI/VOCA MYAP is being implemented, how its implementation will result in changes that the project is attempting to bring about on household and institutional participants, and what changes, if any, could improve its performance during the remaining implementation period. The evaluation, conducted at the midpoint of implementation, also provides insight into why certain goals and objectives are more likely or less likely to be accomplished.

The specific objectives of the mid-term evaluation were to:

- Assess the project's progress in meeting its expected results and the likelihood of attaining its outcomes and impact as defined in the agreed Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP);
- Improve the project's performance by highlighting and identifying ways to strengthen management and achieve sustainable results;
- Make recommendations to inform the post-evaluation action plan that will be prepared by the project team. This will guide the project in its remaining years and confirm the continuing relevance of goals, objectives and methodology;
- Assess the achievements to date and identify areas for improvement in the implementation of ACDI/VOCA's FY 2007-2011 MYAP; and
- Analyze the sustainability of current activities in order to identify adequate exit strategies for 2011.

Three external consultants were commissioned over the period July 27 through September 6, 2009 to conduct a mid-term evaluation for the program. MYAP staff from ACDI/VOCA, AFRICARE, LWF, TASO, the CPP and local NGOs provided support for the evaluation. The evaluation reviewed the program to assess progress and formulate recommendations for the remaining two years of the program.

This report summarizes the findings of the mid-term evaluation. The next chapter explains the data collection methodology adopted by the study. A summary of the key findings of the evaluation is provided in Chapter 3, followed by recommendations in Chapter 4. Annex A contains the scope of work for the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the mid-term evaluation methodology. It describes phases and steps of the evaluation undertaken by the lead consultants, from design through reporting.

The mid-term evaluation was designed to capture the maximum amount of information in a limited time frame. It is based on a qualitative field study and quantitative monitoring of and impact indicators collected by ACDI/VOCA field staff during the first two years of the project. The methodology deploys a set of complementary research activities, survey instruments, and techniques for gathering and analyzing information.

The study began with a review of related project documents in order to frame the relevant issues. A non-formal presentation by each component coordinator and other staff provided crucial background information. The team reviewed several key documents compiled by ACDI/VOCA staff, including:

- the MYAP proposal;
- 2008 baseline study;
- annual results reports from FY07 – FY08;
- the MYAP project design document;
- trimester and annual partner and grantee reports;
- baseline surveys in the study area; and
- vulnerability reports in the targeted districts.

Primary quantitative data were collected largely by ACDI/VOCA staff prior to the start of the evaluation. This process included rural household surveys that provided data on key indicators tracked by the project. All quantitative data collection activities and data input were managed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the MYAP.

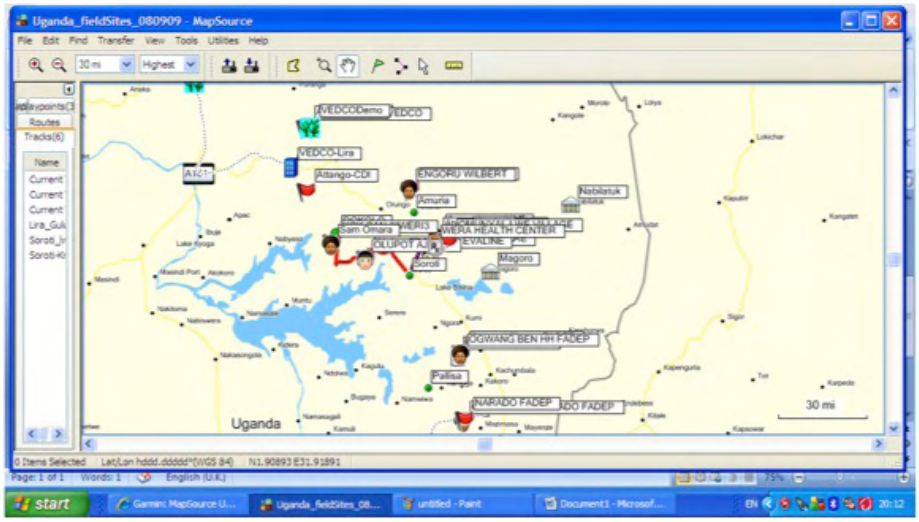
The field evaluation centered on three main groups involved in project activities: ACDI/VOCA and its partners' administrators; coordinators and supervisors at national and local levels; and field agents and project beneficiaries at the district level.

The fieldwork activities applied a range of tools including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, large group discussions, community meetings, observation of project activities and outcomes, and several participatory research techniques. The evaluation team received a pre-field training and participated in designing the focus group discussion outline and randomly selecting the field sites.

The objectives in the scope of work were distilled into a set of critical questions and interview topic outlines. The focus group outline covered the following general topics: (1) MYAP objectives and project activities, (2) level of community participation, (3) community-level impacts, (4) partnership, capacity-building and sustainability, and (5) suggestions for improvement.

A three-stage random selection process was used to arrive at the final sample of the surveyed sites in the project area. The sampled sites are listed in Table 1. The team first gathered information from local experts at the district level of the project area, mapping villages and parishes in the area and collecting vital information. ACDI/VOCA and partner field staff were very helpful in this endeavor; without them, it would have been impossible to gather the information.

Figure 2: GIS overview of selected areas of the surveyed sites



The villages and parishes were then classified according to agro-ecological zones, production systems, partners and grantees operating in the district, and level of vulnerability in terms of availability and access to food according to key-informants. In selecting the final sample of sites, the team aimed to represent the diversity of the project area. Households were selected for interviews during the initial meeting with the community leaders, during which the community topical outline was completed. Within each site, the field team took a census and categorized households by gender of household head, consulting with residents and resource people who knew the communities intimately. Then households were chosen randomly for interviews from names put into a hat. Special

attention was given to the gender of household head; random selections were done separately for female- and male-headed households.

Table 1: Surveyed sites in the project area

Village	Parish	Sub-county	County	District	Sub-region	Group Name	Partner or Grantee
1. Atango	Banya	Amach	Erute South	Lira	Lango	Acan pe nino	CIDI
2. Okocan	Akano	Ogur	Erute North	Lira	Lango	Aryeki	VEDCO
3. Awelo	Akano	Ogur	Erute North	Lira	Lango	Ocok can	VEDCO
4.Baro gal	Labwoch	Koro	Omoro	Gulu	Acholi	Can miyo diro	UYAP
5. Coo pe	Atiabar	Bungatira	Aswa	Gulu	Acholi	Cach pe ywueka	SURFACE
6. Akeo gweno	Atur	Dokolo	Dokolo	Dokolo	Lango	Kok can ikweri 3	NSARWU
7. Obed ken elders	Kamuda	Kalaki	Kalaki	Soroti	Teso A	Ajelep	TPO
8. Adamasco	Admasco Trading center	Katine	Soroti	Soroti	Teso A	Group of residents	Africare
9. Auparan	Amilimil	Kuju	Amuria	Amuria	Teso A	Auparan	Africare
10. Arubela		Gweri	Soroti	Soroti	Teso A	Arubela	Africare
11. Omunyal	Amolo	Wera	Amuria	Katakwi	Teso A	Aitelel	LWF
12. Agumuloba	Wera	Wera	Amuria	Katakwi	Teso A	Asang eilat	LWF
13. Achap	Achap	Mukongoro	Mukongoro	Kumi	Teso B	Osomora A	FADEP
14. Narado	Budaka	Budaka	Budaka	Budaka	Teso B	Narado	FADEP

Key Definitions

The household was the primary unit of analysis used in data collection and analysis. The definition of household utilized was a *group of people who are related, who live together, produce together and eat together most of the time.* Households may, exceptionally, consist of only one individual or household member.

In the context of Uganda, villages and parishes may be scattered or broken into smaller clusters as households migrate, and village boundaries are thus often difficult to define. For the purposes of this program, a village was defined as *a collection of households in a shared physical space in which households share basic infrastructure and engage in similar livelihood activities.* Field staff met with leaders of communities in order to better define the boundaries of specific nomadic communities.

Community Reception

Community leaders and members enthusiastically welcomed the ACDI/VOCA evaluation team in all field sites visited. The communities made every effort to facilitate their work by hosting field agents and agreeing to participate in community meetings and focus groups at a time when most people are busy preparing for the planting season. The strong rapport and level of trust established between ACDI/VOCA and its partners' agents and community members was evident during the study. In addition, members of groups formed by the program were eager to show evaluators the results of projects and trainings undertaken, including compost bins, tree nurseries, improved storage facilities, live fences, saving groups, etc.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the short time frame of the scope of work, the mid-term evaluation team was unable to incorporate more quantitative socio-economic household level survey data. The lapse of time between the baseline survey done in 2008 and the mid-term evaluation was short. Quantitative indicators were largely obtained from ACDI/VOCA monitoring and evaluation reports and complemented by in-depth focus group discussions, key informant interviews and visits to project demonstration sites. It is expected that a more comprehensive survey will be

undertaken during the final evaluation to provide a thorough quantitative and qualitative impact assessment to compare with baseline data. As in the baseline, this survey should also include data from control villages that have not participated in ACDI/VOCA projects in the zone.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This chapter presents the key findings of the mid-term evaluation for each MYAP component. The major themes discussed in each section include: achieving project objectives, targeting beneficiary communities, implementing and monitoring activities; level of beneficiary participation; observable impacts in the communities served; promotion of partnership and capacity-building; and long-term sustainability of activities after the departure of ACDI/VOCA.

1.1. Assessment of Activities and Results under SO1

1.1.1. Overview of strategic objective 1

The ACDI/VOCA MYAP addresses basic food security in 17 of the most vulnerable districts in northern and eastern Uganda. The food security component contributes directly to the first strategic objective, which is to achieve sustainable improvements in the availability of food for poor households in selected districts. It focuses on creating changes that will lead to increased production of food crops in villages throughout the project area. The focus is on smallholder households – providing technical assistance and training to promote sustainable farming practices, more productive and diversified farming systems, and improved post-harvest management. These activities aim to increase sustainable yields, thus contributing to improvements in the availability of food for poor rural households, both now and in the future.

The MYAP has promoted key behavioral changes in cropping systems through direct training of farmers and indirect dissemination of knowledge via lead farmers. New or improved marketing opportunities for agricultural products are being explored in order to get more products to market and higher returns to farmers through information and negotiation.

ACDI/VOCA and its partners are working in a fairly large number of communities. The consequences of this approach are important – it results in a high number of beneficiaries, wide exposure to the program's assistance and philosophy, the ability to capture areas that have high potential, and rapid payoff. At the same time, there is perhaps not enough nurturing time in each location, and technical assistance becomes spread too thinly; contact with each farmer or household becomes less frequent. In the absence of a fully functioning Ugandan extension service, contact with farmers by project staff or lead farmers is important, especially when trying to introduce new cropping behaviors and other changes to support systems.

In general, ACDI/VOCA and its partners have made considerable progress in meeting the majority of its objectives. Many of the delays have been beyond the control of ACDI/VOCA, especially with respect to changing weather patterns

leading to flood or drought. It is evident that the program's leadership is very dedicated and doing a remarkable job in implementation. Staff work many hours and often on weekends to ensure that activities are being completed, and quality is high.

1.1.2. Improving nutrition and hygiene practices – IR 1.1

Access to potable water and sanitation is critical in improving the health and nutrition of household members. Poor health and sanitation practices may erode the intended nutritional gains achieved through improved nutrition and hygiene behaviors. Access to potable water and adequate sanitation is limited for most households in the project area. According to the baseline study, only two percent of households had access to a protected water source, and about a third of the population in the targeted districts lacked an adequate latrine and instead use the traditional 'bush latrine,' (i.e. open defecation). Only one third of the households had separate structures for animals, away from food and water sources.

Before the implementation of the MYAP and according to the review of secondary data, approximately two thirds of the sample households reported that they did not wash their hands before food preparation, and three quarters reported not using any cleaning agent when washing their hands. This suggests that awareness on personal hygiene is a critical area that needs to be addressed to achieve nutritional goals.

There is strong consensus among beneficiaries that ACDI/VOCA's presence in the project area, and its nutrition and hygiene promotion activities, are having a positive influence in the seventeen targeted districts. This is one of the most successful activities of the program. The observed rates of adoption by beneficiaries suggest likely achievement of the performance indicators by the end of the project.

Table 2 summarizes the key indicators related to nutrition and hygiene practices. Seventy-seven percent of the caregivers demonstrated proper food hygiene behaviors. Two-thirds of the households had adopted at least three sustainable agricultural technologies proposed by the project.

Table 2: Performance tracking table for improving nutrition and hygiene

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	BASELINE VALUE	MID-TERM VALUE	LOP TARGET
IR 1.1: Improved nutrition and hygiene practices at the household and community level			
% of caregivers demonstrating proper food hygiene behaviors	47.6%	**76.9%**	85%
% of caregivers demonstrating proper personal hygiene behaviors	70.9%	**72.7%***	87%
Number of grantee staff trained in improved nutrition and hygiene practices	0	**269**	160
Number of farmers (individuals) trained in improved nutrition and hygiene	0	**58,795**	170,600
# of HH trained in improved nutrition and hygiene (i.e. with a trained individual)	0	**44,103**	65,000

Most of the household members now wash their hands with clean water and soap before and after eating. Today, the majority of households have hygiene facilities at home with "tip-tap". In addition, most households had vegetable gardens.

Young children benefit from the project-like this child is able to use tip-tap to wash his hands (The child belongs to a household supported by TPO)

The nutrition and hygiene trainings include instruction on the construction of hygiene facilities, as well as guidelines for the maintenance of safe food and water. In addition, the trainings help beneficiary households make informed decisions on nutritious foods. Specifically, the trainings promote the establishment of kitchen/vegetable gardens for the provision of fresh vegetables in the family diet.

As a result of the training, farmers from 14 ACDI/VOCA grantees have set up thousands of hygiene facilities and kitchen/vegetable gardens. The mid-term evaluation data indicated increased use of latrines, and cleanliness in homes as a

result of bath shelters, plate racks and rubbish pits. In addition, home gardening has increased vegetable consumption in households.

Table 3: Values for personal hygiene indicators

Characteristic	GWOKKE -COWII % (n =88)	CIDI % (n =98)	VEDCO % (n =91)	LWF % (n =98)	AFRICARE % (n =108)	TPO % (n =97)	FADEP % (n =102)	NSARWU % (n =102)	ASDI % (n =99)	ALL % (n =883)
1.Has a latrine	65 9 (58)	91 8 (90)	90 1 (82)	63 3 (62)	80 6 (87)	79 4 (77)	97 1 (99)	85 3 (87)	90 9 (90)	82 9 (732)
2.Washes hands after using a latrine	71 6 (63)	74 5 (73)	68 1 (62)	60 2 (59)	72 2 (78)	63 9 (62)	74 5 (76)	48 0 (49)	46 5 (46)	64 3 (568)
3.Washes hands with clean water and soap before eating food	59 1 (52)	54 1 (53)	55 0 (50)	51 0 (50)	53 7 (58)	44 3 (43)	65 7 (67)	47 1 (48)	27 3 (27)	50 7 (448)
4.Washes hands with soap and water after cleaning a defecating child	63 6 (56)	70 4 (69)	76 9 (70)	52 0 (51)	62 0 (67)	42 3 (41)	82 4 (84)	55 9 (57)	46 5 (46)	61 3 (541)
5.Washes hands after eating	96 6 (85)	100 0 (98)	98 9 (90)	87 8 (86)	91 7 (99)	88 7 (86)	96 1 (98)	97 1 (99)	88 9 (88)	93 9 (829)
6.At least 3 of the above (proper personal hygiene)	77 3 (68)	78 6 (77)	82 4 (75)	63 3 (62)	79 6 (86)	62 9 (61)	89 2 (91)	65 7 (67)	55 6 (55)	72 7 (642)

Farmer group members across the project areas reported that their children fall sick less often and compounds are cleaner. Some women expressed that they are "prettier" because they now eat better. A female group member in Acan Paco group in Amach sub-county (Lira district) said that they had always been told to put up household sanitation and hygienic facilities by their local authorities but they had persistently refused, even when their chickens were taken as punishment. She acknowledged that what made them change their minds and adopt such practices was the training element, which made them appreciate the value of such facilities and practices.

Some beneficiaries faced challenges in building hygiene and sanitary facilities. In the Acholi sub-region, where 15 percent of the population still lives in camps, some of the landowners were not in favor of people constructing pit latrines on

their land. Some of the grantees reported seeking support from local government authorities to drive home the message about the need to construct pit latrines.

The soil type and quality at some sites also presented challenges to constructing latrines. Cases were cited in Ngarium sub-county, Katakwi district, where the predominant sandy soils made it very difficult to construct pit latrines with reasonable depth or stability. In some other cases, shallow soils with rocky underneath also made it a challenge to dig pit latrines of sufficient depth. In other cases, the weakness of vulnerable group members (e.g. sick or elderly) and the lack of tools such as pick axes for digging limited latrine coverage.

Nevertheless, overall there was an enthusiastic response to establishing household primary sanitary facilities. All latrines in homesteads visited had the additional facility of tip-taps for washing hands after latrine use.

Improved clean bathing shelters

Separate bathing shelters had been constructed in most households. They were made from simple materials such as grass or reeds and had good stone bases or an absorbent surface of murram stones.

Improved drying racks

Most households had also put up improved drying racks. Drying racks enhanced hygiene for the family through use of dry utensils, as opposed to using utensils that are wet and thus unhygienic.

Improved nutrition

Farmer groups were trained on how to better utilize what they already have for improved nutrition. Kitchen gardens were adopted by all households visited and have become an integral part of improved household nutrition, providing a variety of vegetables for the family.

However the majority of households had been adversely affected by the drought or lack of water during the dry season. A few groups that had access to nearby water points had managed to keep them watered and utilized. Several actions can be taken to increase and extend home garden production in light of recent drought conditions. Fencing the home garden prevents livestock, particularly

goats, from foraging in the home garden. Mulches, such as grasses, are usually available even in the dry season, and can reduce water losses from evaporation. Households should also be trained in water conservation strategies such as reusing grey water from clothes laundering and dish washing in the home gardens.

In the Nalado group, of Nalado village, Budaka sub-county, one woman did so well in her kitchen garden that she was able to establish a small seed bank and offered two packets of amaranth seed to the evaluation team.

Reasons for success according to beneficiaries

Commendable success has been realized through the adoption of improved nutrition and hygienic practices. Beneficiaries attribute this success to a number of factors:

- Activities addressed real needs as identified by communities.
- Appropriate training was provided.
- Applications generally involved simple technologies yet with high impact.
- Applications involved use of locally available materials or those that can be easily obtained.
- In general, these activities do not require a lot of labour to establish.

1.1.3. Enhancing agricultural productivity – IR 1.2

Many of the efforts of the MYAP ultimately aim to increase agricultural production in the region in order to improve food access and provide more marketing opportunities for farmers.

ACDI/VOCA's main strategy for improving agricultural production lies is to train farmers and promote lead farmers, who are provided more training and are expected to then train other farmers. The strategy relies on establishing a village model farm around which are formed a number of groups.

At the time of the mid-term evaluation, all planned groups had been formed and were functioning. Group members had received agricultural inputs and had learned about the new small-scale agriculture ideas and technologies being promoted by the project. Most participants had established gardens in their own small plots. Because the homestead garden is managed by women, this increase in income, albeit only a small increase, has contributed to elevating the status of women in the household. There is some anecdotal evidence that seed recipients have also shared some of their seeds with non-participants in the

community. Given the way that the seed has been made available, i.e. by free distribution directly to participants, there are high expectations among participants that the project will continue to provide seed. FEWs need to ensure that farmers are aware that planting materials will be available for one season only, and that they will need to make provisions to save money for seeds or alternatively produce their own planning materials in the future.

The training provided to group participants by the project appears to be complex and time-consuming for most of the farmers interviewed. Most farmers in the project area cannot read or write. In the sessions observed by the evaluation team, it was clear that not all participants were able to understand all the materials that accompanied the lecture and there was not much discussion or dialogue between the facilitator and the participants. This issue is currently being addressed through revision of the training materials to be more concise, less theoretical, and more visually oriented. The number of agronomic trainings is also being significantly reduced.

The supply of inputs (especially improved seeds) and technical advice by the project have increased food availability in the household, particularly for vegetables with high micro-nutrient content. While the purpose of the group is to facilitate training and distribution of inputs, there is anecdotal evidence that some social capital benefits have emerged from the formation of the groups with members helping each other.

The groups formed by the project are designed to serve three functions: (1) to demonstrate new ideas and technologies being promoted by the program and become the resident source of technical advice on these, (2) to provide inputs such as seeds and seedlings, and (3) to be profitable to ensure sustainability. Many of the groups are effectively demonstrating the new ideas and technologies promoted by the project, although a few are not in production because of recent droughts. Based on the qualitative discussions and field observations, it appears that most, but not all, group participants come from food-insecure households.

Substantial progress has been recorded in reducing food insecurity. This has been accomplished through a number of interventions including;

- Provision of improved seed to all beneficiaries. This was undertaken through direct distribution to target beneficiaries.
- Training in various aspects of improved crop husbandry. This was largely accomplished through establishment of group demonstration fields, training in class sessions, and farmer-to-farmer visits.

- Training in post harvest handling to help preserve crop harvests.

Table 4 provides data on progress to date against objectively verifiable indicators. In general, ACDI/VOCA has made considerable progress in meeting the majority of its objectives under this strategic objective. Most activities are progressing at a pace that suggests the targets will be met by the end of the project. Other activities have already met or exceeded the target. For example, the percentage of households that adopted at least three sustainable agricultural technologies is 90.7 percent against an LOP target of 85 percent. Close to half of the target 170,600 farmers have been trained in agronomy and farming as a business. The number of grantee staff trained to enhance agricultural productivity is almost twice the LOP target.

Table 4: Performance tracking table for enhancing agricultural productivity

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	BASELINE VALUE	MID-TERM VALUE	LOP TARGET
IR-1.2: Enhanced agricultural productivity, farm management and marketing			
% of HH who adopted at least 3 sustainable agricultural technologies	69.6%	90.7%	85%
# of HH trained in agronomy (i.e. with a trained individual)	0	15,975	65,000
Number of farmers (individuals) trained in agronomy	0	86,766	170,600
Number of farmers (individuals) trained in Farming as a Business (FaaB)	0	36,610	170,600
# of HH trained in Farming as a Business (i.e. with a trained individual)	0	15,975	65000
Number of farmers (individuals) that received extension/outreach services during the FY	0	75,934	170,600
Number of farmers (individuals) trained in Post Harvest Handling/Marketing (PHH/M)	0	14,161	170,600
# of HH trained in Post Harvest Handling (i.e. with a trained individual)	0	15,975	65,000
Number of farmers (individuals) trained in Group Formation, Savings Mobilization and Management	0	40,944	170,600
# of HH trained in Group Formation, Savings Mobilization and Management (i.e. with a trained individual)	0	15,975	65,000
Number of individuals who have received USG-supported short-tem agricultural sector productivity training	0	86,766	170,600
Number of grantee staff trained to enhance agricultural productivity	0	263	160

Gardens

One of the major success stories of the MYAP may be household gardens. They are an integral component of not only agriculture, but of the environmental health and nutrition component as well. The mid-term survey found that most households have a garden plot. The primary reason for not cultivating a garden in 2008 was lack of water, suggesting that if the water issue was resolved and input supplies were improved almost all garden plots would be utilized.

It is interesting to note what garden products are being used for: about one-third of vegetables is consumed by the household, and the rest is sold/given to friends and neighbors. According key-informant interviews, this represents a significant change. Previously, most households with gardens tried to market most of their harvest, and little was consumed in the households. That almost one-third of product is now consumed in the household may be the result of the extensive nutrition training that has been provided by the MYAP.

Focus discussions among beneficiaries pointed out to the need to explore the implementation of school gardens as a pilot activity.

Challenges with the agricultural component

Although the agricultural component is relevant in addressing the food security needs of beneficiaries, greater attainment of this goal was limited by a number of factors.

The multiple shocks associated with recent droughts and floods are eroding the asset base of households to the point where recovery could be compromised. Some households are forced to take out consumption loans that are difficult to pay back. Most villages in all districts covered by the MYAP are vulnerable to droughts and floods.

Poor weather conditions experienced in the 2008-B season were even more severe during the 2008-A season. Output was greatly limited to about 40 percent of expected yield according to some estimates and much less for more vulnerable crops like groundnuts. Consequences of the poor weather were severe for both old and new groups that had received inputs from the MYAP, which lost a big proportion of what they expected to harvest.

While the 2008-A season generally had good weather conditions, crop performance was constrained by the late delivery of seeds to beneficiary farmers. An improvement in timing of seed procurement and delivery to farmers was made in the 2009-A season but poor weather conditions, as indicated above, greatly limited crop performance. ACDI/VOCA is aware of this issue and is

taking actions to remedy the problem in the 2010 rainy season. Budget shifts and projections for planning materials will be requested and approved several months before they are required to ensure on-time delivery. This will allow farmers to plant earlier, thus utilizing early rains and decreasing drought stress.

Crop performance was in some instances limited by the type of crops and varieties distributed to farmers. For example, some farmers groups in Amach sub-county, Lira district reported that they had received bean variety (K132) that grew very well but had few pods. They preferred smaller seeded varieties more suited to local conditions in northern Uganda and have a better market there. However these varieties were not easily available for procurement by grantees at the time seeds were sought. Some farmers groups would have preferred to receive sesame instead of sunflower, and others soya bean instead of rice, which they felt would have withstood the drought better. A cassava variety supplied by one grantee did not perform well due to disease issues with the variety. Planting of other drought-tolerant MYAP crops, including Cowpea and Pigeon pea should be encouraged as a drought mitigation strategy and because they fetch a premium in the market. It should also be noted that grantees are permitted to choose the crops they would like to promote from a list of approved MYAP crops. Often, farmers choose crops with which they have dietary familiarity or perceive to have commercial benefit or regional suitability. ACDI/VOCA training materials have discouraged intercropping as it is practiced by most farmers, which involves putting too many crops in too small a space, thus increasing drought stress.

Some farmers groups had problems with opening up sufficient land area for cultivation due to lack of oxen and associated land opening equipment such as ox-ploughs. This was particularly evident in Gulu and Lira areas, where vulnerable farmers who had recently returned from IDP camps were unable to open up sufficient land area with the hand hoe. At this stage of the project it would be difficult to integrate livestock into project activities due to lack of funds. However, grantees can be encouraged to approach other funding sources that deal specifically with livestock, and integrate these into existing farmer groups.

Some of the crop demonstration technologies were limited in their applicability. For example, the use of fertilizers posed a challenge to most of the areas because of high fertilizer prices and their non-availability in these areas.

Improved seed and planting materials (cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines) were greatly valued, according to surveyed farmers. The greatest challenge they faced was receiving the inputs in time for the planting season.

This evaluation suggests that while the small size of landholdings could potentially be a constraint on agricultural production, tenure arrangements are often more critical for household food security. A more detailed investigation of

local tenure arrangements would enable ACDI/VOCA to gauge how the different forms of ownership and tenancy affect investment, productivity, and the physical environment. Since a substantial proportion of female-headed households and single female-headed households fall into the "extremely vulnerable" category, a review of their specific constraints would be particularly informative.

The need for enhancing livestock productivity:

In northern and eastern Uganda, livestock provide important protein to household diets, a source of household income, and a critical means of transport. As such, animals constitute a critical component of the overall livelihood security strategy. Income earned off-farm--to the extent possible--is sometimes invested in the household herd as a form of savings as well as a means of coping with unforeseen and unpredictable difficulties. Most farmers expressed the need to have the project integrate livestock management components into its overall program. The role that livestock play as a savings mechanism and a household coping strategy is well documented in all districts covered by the project. Livestock provide important protein to household diets, are a source of household income and provide a critical means of transport. To the extent possible, income earned is often invested in household livestock as a form of savings as well as a means of coping with future difficulties. As such, animals constitute a critical component of a household's livelihood security strategy. In the current context**, i**nterventions directed toward the health and improved breeding of livestock would have a positive impact on the household economy. Farmers' view is that mitigation enterprise such as improved poultry and small ruminants can effectively help with the droughts and other emergency situations.

Farming as a business (Faab)

Farming as a business remained a challenge to many farmers groups that had only recently settled. Greater success in farming as a business was evident with more settled groups; however, many confessed that it remained a problem to keep records – although all who that attempted to make a record and analysis of their transactions found it very useful in guiding decisions for production or evaluating seasonal performances. However, this is problematic for many illiterate farmers. This problem could be remedied by encouraging record keeping at the group level, and emphasizing the creation of functional enterprises for FaaB members.

Post harvest handling (PHH)

Post harvest handling was appreciated in enabling farmers to improve means of preserving their crops. Nevertheless several concerns were noted:

High cost of some of the technologies being promoted. For example, some of the maize cribs cost between US$ 300-400. Many farmers took the initiative of adapting the traditional granary to concepts demonstrated in a modern crib, which basically covered aspects such as aeration, use of rat guards and having a good roof cover.

Tarpaulins distributed on a group basis were also an example of a technology that is well intentioned, but may be presently out of financial reach for the majority of targeted farmers. A number of farmers had improvised with locally-made mats that served the purpose of keeping crop produce off the ground.

Food security crops

Table 5 shows how beneficiaries ranked crops in importance relative to their food security needs. The crop seeds they received from the MYAP project are indicated in Table 6.

Table 5: Beneficiaries' importance ranking of crops relative to food security, by project area

Crops	Project Area			
	Acholi	**Lango**	**Teso A**	**Teso B**
Cassava	1	1	2	1
Sweet potatoes			4	
Groundnuts	5	4	1	5
Millet				
Beans	4	3		4
Cow peas				2
Maize	2	2		3
Upland rice	3			
Sunflower		6		5
Sesame	6	5		
Sorghum				

Agricultural improvements, including new cultivation techniques, adoption of improved seeds, etc. take considerable time for farmers to absorb, test, and adopt. ACDI/VOCA has chosen an important mix of agricultural improvements and,

according to the expertise of the evaluation team, the options that ACDI/VOCA is promoting are appropriate to the zone and should significantly increase yields. The main issues are the amount of time ACDI/VOCA is able to devote to each community, the low literacy rate of the population, and the number of farmers that can be reached through direct training or interaction with lead farmers.

Table 6: Crops provided to beneficiaries by the MYAP grantees, by project area

Crop	Project Area			
	Acholi	Lango	Teso A	Teso B
Cassava		X	x	X
Sweet potatoes	X			X
Groundnuts	X	X	x	X
Millet				
Beans	X	X		X
Cow peas			x	
Maize		X		X
Upland rice	X			X
Sesame				
Pigeon peas		x		
Green grams			x	
Sorghum				

ACDI/VOCA may be moving too fast with respect to nurturing behavioral changes with farmers. Since cropping seasons tend to vary from year to year, particularly with respect to rainfall and temperature, it is usually advisable to be flexible regarding the timing and duration of interventions in the community.

ACDI/VOCA has gained considerable experience in capacity building with the grantees. Reports on adoption of training messages have greatly contributed to evaluating the effects of training and how newly acquired knowledge is used at the household level and the impacts it has on agricultural production. However, a more systematic method of analysis is needed to assess more accurately whether or not the training is adequate.

Key behavioral changes aimed to increase agricultural production, such as the use of improved seed, line transplantation, and seedling density, may require reformulation of strategies in order to make significant progress. It may be that there is a systemic need that is not being fulfilled (e.g. farmers revealed that they

would like to use improved seed but they cannot find it or do not receive it in time for planting), or that there is a labor requirement that cannot be met (e.g. line transplanting and seedling density require more labor than is available to the household). With regard to line transplantation, it should be noted that while it typically increases crop yields, it is much more labor intensive than scatter planting, and may not be advantageous in labor constrained environments. Also, communities will likely require longer-term assistance, especially in light of the number of farmers who feel various techniques are complicated. In light of the limited national extension service, testing model farms and enhancing the role of model farmers may be the only way to effectively promote many of these changes.

1.1.4. Increasing road access to local and regional markets – IR 1.3

Access to services and markets is among the most critical problems in northern and eastern Uganda; ACDI/VOCA works in some of the more isolated areas of the region. The lack of an adequate road network system in the targeted rural districts is a major constraint to rural economic growth, seriously hindering information flow, the delivery of agricultural inputs and services, and market access.

To address this problem, ACDI/VOCA and its partners are facilitating road rehabilitation on roads suited for vehicular traffic. The rationale for rehabilitating the existing road network is to have an immediate and measurable impact on network traffic, mode of transport, and transport costs. Since roads are the primary means of mobility, improvements in the road network will also improve household access to markets, health facilities, and other service providers. Good roads also significantly cut the amount of time people spend traveling between different places.

Table 7: Performance tracking indicators for increased road access to local and regional markets and services

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	BASELINE VALUE	MID-TERM VALUE	LOP TARGET
IR-1.3: Increased road access to local and regional markets and services			
# of businesses emerging on rehabilitated roads	0	Not available	70
% HH with improved access to food markets	54.30%	Not available	60%
Kilometres of transportation infrastructure rehabilitated through USG assistance	0	22.8	295
Number of people benefitting from USG sponsored transportation infrastructure projects	0	Not available	3,000
Number of communities with improved infrastructure to mitigate the impact of shocks	0	79**	100

Table 7 shows a 22.8 km road was constructed by Africare from Arapai to Tubur in Soroti district. The construction started in May and completed in June 2009. An environmental impact assessment was initially undertaken that was approved by USAID. Another stretch of 22 km remains to be done as soon as funds are availed by ACDI/VOCA.

Movement of goods, people and services are now quicker as a result. New businesses have sprung up in the area. Community members of Admasco trading center requested support to cover other areas of Soroti district including parts of Amuria district. They also requested for placement of humps before the trading center of Admasco in Katine sub-county, as a means of curbing road accidents.

The distances covered may differ slightly from those agreed on in the MYAP because any road has to connect to some other road, which often means that there is a slight increase on the distance covered. Also, prices of both fuel and spare parts have risen, and current budget allocation may not meet the required road length.

There is clearly a lot of redundant personnel and machinery capacity in Africare that could be utilized to construct more kilometers of road. Africare itself admits that costing for road construction in the MYAP was based upon on their experience in southwestern Uganda, which is a very hilly and costly area for road construction. Costs in northeastern Uganda are lower. These savings could be utilized to construct or rehabilitate much needed road infrastructure in the MYAP project area.

Substantial institutional and financial support will be required to establish sustainable maintenance systems. Experience shows, however, that when people provide labor to improve a path or road, they are more likely to have an interest in maintaining the improvements. On larger roads, however, maintenance is problematic, as the ones who profit the most from using the roads (e.g., large trucks) tend not to pay their share in maintenance costs.

1.1.5. Enhancing capacity to withstand shocks – IR 1.4

Food shortages have recurred throughout Northern and Eastern Uganda owing to a variety of interrelated causes, including climate change; environmental crises and natural disasters; economic, social, and political inequalities; and violent conflict. Because the program area where ACDI/VOCA operates is vulnerable to shocks and disasters, the MYAP has included strategies to increase household capacity to respond to these shocks through "Farmer Savings Groups".

Ninety five percent of the population in the project area lack access to formal financial services. The ACDI/VOCA saving program enables women and men to organize themselves into simple savings and loan groups and address the needs of those who are unlikely to be reached by institutional lenders. Between 15 and

30 members voluntarily form a group that democratically elects officers, sets bylaws, regularly meets and collects money savings from each member for a communal pool. The funds are usually lent to members with interest and by consensus. Over time, the interest allows a group's funds to grow, giving each member greater access to money, and greater savings than they could feasibly save on their own. Among the principal advantages of the program is that since the group is lending its own money to its members, collateral is not required. Since the savings are internally generated there is more incentive to manage this money well. Collection seems to seldom be a problem, and available qualitative data suggests that repayment rates within the groups are high; funds steadily build over time if well managed. The money saved is used for bulk purchase of improved inputs and other income-generation activities. Group savings have also been used to pay for medical costs for members, reconstruction of houses, and school tuition costs. This specific program has improved women's control over decision-making, skills and knowledge.

The capacity of households to withstand shocks is a process that the MYAP has contributed to in a number of ways, including:

- **Group formation:** Most groups appear to have been quickly formed to fulfill the requirements of the MYAP; at times this has resulted in little cohesion at the beginning. Over time, however, most of the groups have built cohesion as a result of training and working together, and have now established functional structures.

- **Training:** Training farmers to adopt improved agricultural, hygiene and nutrition practices. There is appreciation of the knowledge received, which has gone a long way in building confidence, self-esteem and the adoption of various recommended practices.

- **Savings and Credit:** Table 8 shows that saving groups are spreading in the project are. All beneficiary groups have established the component of savings and credit. The capacity of these groups to save money varies from group to group (see Table 8), but the benefits are quite similar. In addition to helping groups come together to bring their regular savings or obtain loans, development of savings and credit helps group members to meet regularly. As benefits of savings become evident to members, more of them are encouraged to save or borrow more. In only a few cases did some group members borrow money to buy food. In the majority of cases, monies borrowed were used to invest in small-scale businesses or to buy assets such as livestock.

Table 8: **Savings by Farmer Groups in FY 2009 (from select grantees as at July 2009)**

Organization	Number of groups saving	Number of HH saving	Number of members saving	Cumulative Savings	Cumulative savings (US $)
1. NSARWU	66/75	1,352	1,810	7,613,150	3,625
2. CIDI	77/101	1,650	3030	10,257,510	4,885
3. CHAFORD	10/10	300	300	34,303,980	16,335
4. LWF - Katakwi	27/28	661	7562	69,059,700	32,885
5. FADEP	327/350	6295	8799	21,926,100	10,441
6. TPO	86/100	1401	1573	15,840,750	7,543
7. VEDCO	116/123	2144	2144	10,070,850	4,795
Totals	**709/787**	**13,803**	**25,218**	**169,072040**	**80,509**

Key-informant interviews revealed that group savings serve as significant safety nets, and help farmers reduce vulnerability to various shocks. This activity is viewed as one of the most useful for the communities.

While saving groups have grown in the project area, simplified adapted training materials are needed to improve management and record-keeping. Training materials are currently being revised with an emphasis on simplicity, and the number of trainings is being reduced. Once funds increase within the group, structures must be formalized to safeguard funds and improve transparency.

Seed Multiplication: A number of farmers groups are multiplying seed as a group. This covers such crops as beans, groundnuts, cassava and sweet potatoes. The capacity of these groups is increasingly built to produce clean planting materials of improved varieties. Not only are farmers in a better position to obtain for themselves such seed and planting materials, they are better enabled to sell their own seed to other farmers or organizations. This is an effective intervention in strengthening the capacity of beneficiary households and communities to withstand shocks associated with poor or unavailable planting materials in the market place.

Table 9: Performance tracking indicators: Enhanced community and household capacity to withstand shocks

Performance Indicator	Baseline Value	Mid-Term Value	LOP Target
IR 1.4: Enhanced community and household capacity to withstand shocks			
% of HH that are members of savings groups	19.1%	46.7%*	50%
% increase in the amount of group savings	0	47%	35%
% of HH growing wide variety of crops	0	94%*	70%
Number of communities with safety nets in place	0	79	100
Number of communities that had strengthened community capacity	0	79	100

There is strong evidence that the saving groups open up investment opportunities for women that would have otherwise been beyond their reach. Many of the investments that women undertake look profitable, but evaluation interviews also suggest that profits are rapidly consumed in meeting basic household needs. Focus group discussions suggest that the leadership positions of farmers' groups tend to be occupied by men and women from wealthy or influential families.

Natural resource management

The Natural Resources and Management (NRM) component is geared at strengthening the capacity of households and communities to improve their natural resources base, another pillar of withstanding shocks in the future. It seems to have been highlighted by a few grantees and partners but neglected or not understood by some others. It was conceived among some grantees as part of agronomy and treated as a small part of this component. Therefore limited attention is given to renewal of soil fertility, field water harvesting techniques and applicable aspects of agro-forestry management.

Some grantees had a structure of outreach to farmers, which involved having trainers, contact farmers (CF) at the community level. These provided training support to Field Extension Workers (FEWs) but these were deemed to be ineffective in delivery of extension messages. It has now been decided that all grantees will employ more qualified extension workers instead. The decreased

reliance on contact farmers (CF) is explained by the following reasons: First of all, CF performance was in many cases poor, and the low compensation had a lot to do with this. Secondly, CFs were mandated to do a lot of work, such as collecting a lot of M&E data, which is indeed an important and complicated business, better performed by FEWs trained directly by ACDI/VOCA staff. More FEWs have been hired—the number has approximately doubled—so that FEWs can better handle these responsibilities. Because trainings have been dramatically reduced, FEWs should have much more time to do the work. Much of the work that CFs were mandated to do should be done instead by FEWs. Many CFs do not speak English, and the workload required of them was unrealistic. CFs are now what a CF should be—individuals who assist FEWs in contacting farmers. They are the primary managers of the group garden, which is necessary, as group gardens were often being planted late, after farmers planted their own fields. In this capacity, CFs still have some community roles in promoting improved practices. What was done is to engage CFS in activities that they can do best, namely: mobilization of farmers for trainings and in some cases hosting of practical trainings including demo gardens. Given that ACDI/VOCA restructured farmer trainings in favor of more practical aspects, lead farmers/community trainers are still critical in training activities.

It should be appreciated that many CFs were effectively working for almost nothing—an allowance for bicycle repair that was perhaps adequate compensation for contacting farmers, but not for the work they were being assigned. Some grantee FEWs were also slacking a bit, depending on CFs for the bulk of the work.

It is mainly Africare who had an extensive NRM program including new agronomic training materials containing a strong element of conservation agriculture, which involves minimum tillage, residue retention, and permanent soil cover.By keeping the ground covered and by using minimum tillage, water infiltration is encouraged and erosion is decreased. Rotation with legumes is also encouraged, and non-rotation discouraged, which also benefits soil fertility.

Evidence shows that agroforestry may not be viable strategy at the moment: after decades of research, not only in Africa but also throughout the tropics, adoption rates have been almost zero.

Some grantees had a structure of outreach to farmers, which involved having trainers at the community level. These provided training support to Field Extension Workers (FEWs) but these were deemed to be ineffective in delivery of extension messages. It has now been decided that all grantees will employ more qualified extension workers instead, eliminating the need for community trainers. One of the arguments for this decision is that the training material is 'so technical', it requires well-qualified people to present it. This change may prove retrogressive with respect to strengthening the capacity of communities to have trainers who are the first point of contact for other farmers. In that sense,

elimination of community-based trainers may be a retrogressive step in strengthening the capacity of households and communities to withstand shocks.

Needs at the community level are overwhelming. The more often that groups and communities are linked with other programs in their areas, the greater their ability to withstand shocks will be. There was an example of a linkage with another organization: German Agro in Ogur sub-county under VEDCO. German Agro supported VEDCO's group dynamics training, covering the aspect of conflict resolution. This was particularly useful in the area because many of these groups had ex-combatants who greatly benefited from such training. German Agro was also involved in rehabilitation of rural feeder roads, which enhanced benefits to the community. In Amuria district, the Auparan farmers' group, in Auparan village, Kuju sub-county, under Africare had been linked to the NAADS program of government. They had received a Boer he-goat, which was to be used to improved the quality of their local goats

1.2. Assessment of Activities and Results under SO2

The second strategic objective of the MYAP is to reduce food insecurity and improve nutrition for people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) through emergency distribution of supplementary food.

HIV prevalence in Uganda rose very rapidly in the 1980s and early 1990s until 1992, when it began to decline rapidly. When it first began to be measured in 1985, it was already above 10 percent. By 2002, the decline in HIV prevalence had stabilized at around 7 percent. Overall knowledge of HIV and AIDS in Uganda is high, and many strategies for risk reduction and behavior change have been implemented. The new National Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS integrates AIDS control programs into national development goals. Evidence suggests that the transmission of HIV across Uganda as a whole was disrupted through the integrated efforts of government, NGOs and civil society.

AIDS is a unique type of shock to a household as a chronic and deadly illness. The incurable and fatal aspect of AIDS infection contributes to increasing dependency ratio, reducing productivity and impairs the inter-generational transfer of local knowledge and skills.

However, new evidence suggest that food and nutrition interventions can increase energy and protein intakes of people living with HIV/AIDS, reducing their vulnerability to weight and wasting that accompanies diarrhea and other opportunistic infection. Improvement in micronutrients intake can strengthen the immune system and lengthen survival of people living with HIV/AIDS, helping them to remain relatively healthy and active.

1.2.1. Background and overview of strategic objective 2

ACDI/VOCA treats its food distribution program to PLWHA and their families as a temporary intervention to allow the most vulnerable and nutritionally deficient PLWHA populations to adhere to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and to improve their overall health. ACDI/VOCA distributes food rations for up to six household members, which increases the impact in the larger households by reaching a greater number of vulnerable children. The recruitment, based on USAID's Household Food Insecurity Scale (HFIAS) for measurement of food access, gives priority to The AIDS Support and Counseling Organization's (TASO) most food insecure clients and to those taking anti-retrovirals (ARV). Recruited PLWHA are allowed into the food distribution program for a maximum of 12 months, after which they are graduated into ACDI/VOCA livelihood activities including agricultural activities and income generating activities. Once incorporated into smaller farmer groups, the clients receive start-up kits including agricultural inputs and are supported by technical assistance and training in agronomy, post-harvest handling, and nutrition and hygiene.

Prior to joining the food distribution program, clients are sensitized about the length of their stay in the program. With an eye on sustainability, after three months in the food distribution program, ACDI/VOCA staff work to transition selected beneficiaries to livelihood activities under Objective 1 of the program. Project-supported grantees play a major role by visiting food distribution points to recruit clients into their agriculture groups. In areas not served by grantees, ACDI/VOCA works to link clients to livelihood activities supported by existing USAID-funded, NGO or other donor projects in the area. For PLWHA and their families who cannot engage in agricultural livelihood activities, (for example those lacking land and/or family labor) ACDI/VOCA competitively awards income-generating grants to groups that present non-agricultural projects with potential of making economic impact.

The task of guiding clients through this complex process necessitates the early orientation into complementary livelihood activities. To help smooth the transition, project partner TASO will hire four Integration Assistants who will work in ACDI/VOCA offices. In addition, ACDI/VOCA's PLWHA Livelihood and Integration Manager will be placed in a field office to ensure a seamless transition of clients from the food supplements to livelihood activities.

Graduation of food distribution clients

During FY 2009, ACDI/VOCA continued to effectively implement the food distribution component of the Title II program. Perhaps the most significant

achievement was the graduation of food distribution clients who had been receiving food through the program since July 2007. As of July 2009, all food aid clients were rotated out of the food distribution activities to make room for 37,761 new clients in August 2009. ACDI/VOCA will ramp up this number to the LOP target of 42,000 beneficiaries by October 2009. As part of the program's graduation strategy, ACDI/VOCA worked with grantee organizations in FY 2009 to integrate the maximum number of food aid clients into livelihood activities. As mentioned above, the merging of the program's two original databases will increase the ease of tracking beneficiaries as they graduate from food aid into livelihood programs.

To maximize programmatic impact ACDI/VOCA has elected to hire three additional Food Aid Monitors through project partner, TASO. These individuals will be tasked with making random home visits with clients to ensure that food is being utilized appropriately and not being sold into the market. They will also be tasked with meeting with any primary beneficiary of the household who is registered into the program and who has missed three continuous distributions to check on their well-being. These candidates will be hired and deployed to cover the program's main food distribution regions: Acholi, Langi, Ateso and Kuman.

In addition, ACDI/VOCA staff members continued to implement cooking demonstrations for food aid beneficiaries at all 45 food distribution points (FDPs).

Corn Soya Blend, Vegetable Oil and Food Distribution Points

ACDI/VOCA will continue to distribute vegetable oil and corn soya blend (CSB) as they are highly nutritious and also offer a high degree of palatability for the food insecure beneficiaries. In FY 2010, ACDI/VOCA will continue to distribute supplemental food rations in Lira, Gulu, and Soroti regions and ramp-up food distribution client levels to 42,000 meeting proposed MYAP targets. To improve on the overlap with grantees providing livelihood training, ACDI/VOCA has incorporated new FDPs in Katakwi and Kaberamaido districts. It is anticipated that food aid will be distributed to households at regular monthly intervals throughout the year to assist beneficiaries who are taking ARV treatments as they require consistent access to food.

In FY 2010, ACDI/VOCA proposes to distribute 3,780 MT of CSB and 270 MT of vegetable oil to selected PLWHA beneficiaries. Neither the ration size nor the beneficiary selection criteria has changed since approval of ACDI/VOCA's program. The individual ration size is intended to provide the beneficiaries with 50 percent of their daily calorie requirement for a month. Food distribution beneficiaries will receive nutrition education information in addition to food

rations and, as possible, will be incorporated into the program's agricultural activities.

Two other agencies—The World Food Programme (WFP) and Mercy Corps—are engaged in food aid distribution activities in areas bordering ACDI/VOCA's area of implementation. ACDI/VOCA has exchanged detailed information on distribution activities with both partners. ACDI/VOCA has also received lists of WFP beneficiaries in areas of direct programmatic overlap to ensure that double registration of beneficiaries does not occur.

Table 9 summarizes the performance tracking indicator for this strategic objective. It should be noted that the performance tracking indicators for SO2 wereadded in late 2008, and were thus not available for the mid-term review.

Table 10: Performance tracking indicators for Strategic Objective 2

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	BASELINE VALUE	MID-TERM VALUE	LOP TARGET
SO-2: Reduced food insecurity and improved nutrition for particularly vulnerable people through emergency distribution of supplementary food			
IR 1.2: Improved nutrition and hygiene practices at the household and community level			
# of PLWA including their families receiving food aid	0	96,970	42,000
Amount of food distributed to households of PLWHA			
Oil (MT)	0	38278	969
CSB (MT)	0	554220	14,068
IR 2. 2: Improved health and nutrition practices			
Number of cooking demonstrations conducted	0	44	378
% of beneficiaries with increased knowledge in preparation of distributed food	0	Not available	80%
% of beneficiaries who applied what they learned in the cooking demonstrations	0	Not available	80%
% of PLWHA eating the recommended number of times per day	0	Not available	60%
IR 2.3: Increased access to complementary services for food beneficiaries			
Number of households that graduated from food distribution and joined agricultural groups	0	5775	7,000

1.2.2. Improving access to nutritious foods to 42,000 PLWHA – IR 2.1

The direct distribution of a family ration to 42000 PHLWA and their households has significantly improved food access among the most vulnerable households in the project area. The ration consists of 138g CSB and 15g vegetable oil per person per day. This ration provides 651 kcal per person per day, partially covering the gap between caloric consumption and caloric needs. The family food ration also provides 23.7g protein, 24mg iron and 3935 IU Vitamin A per person per day. CSB provides a complete protein source in diets dependent upon vegetable proteins. It is also high in iron, a micronutrient deficient in most Ugandan diets. Nutrition education messages are added to the program.

Currently 7,000 client households are being served with supplementary rations of CSB and cooking oil on an annual basis. Verification is first carried out to ensure that the right households are targeted. The numbers being served are however about 30 percent of those who are particularly vulnerable according to TASO estimates.

1.2.3. Improving health and nutrition practices – IR 2.2

Before each distribution of food there is a session to sensitize recipients about how the CSB and cooking oil contribute to their daily diet. It is stressed to recipients that what is provided is a supplement to their total nutrient needs; they must also eat vegetables, fruits and other foods. Since many surveyed recipients responded that rations provided by the food distribution program are not sufficient to meet daily nutritional need, it can be assumed that that there is increased awareness of the need for dietary diversity. However, there is no indication that households have found ways and means of adding on other foods in their diets.

Observed behavior-change education offered to grantees, involved the use of large colorful posters and banners with key nutrition messages. The delivery of key nutrition messages are enhanced by cooking demonstrations using foodstuffs, and are reported on as part of the IPTT indicators.

1.2.4. Improving access to complementary services for food beneficiaries – IR 2.3

Complementary services to food aid beneficiaries include benefiting from agricultural support services that are offered by ACDI/VOCA grantees. At the time of proposal development, there was no integration or linkage of food beneficiary clients built into the proposals made by clients. Many potential grantees could have been unaware of this ACDI/VOCA component, and thus unable to factor it in during their project designs. ACDI/VOCA later directed grantees to recruit food aid beneficiaries, especially in locations where there was overlap between FABs and agricultural projects. They have made a concerted effort to maximize agricultural grantee coverage where there are food distribution clients. The process of now integrating food clients into such

programs may not be smooth, given that grantees are working through already established groups, who may have already committed funds for inputs procurement to the original client groups with no funding to support potentially more vulnerable food clients.

The other challenge is that many of these clients are located away from target areas of the grantees. Even those who are located within these areas are not members of the grantee supported farmers groups.

Food beneficiaries however, continue to receive support from TASO, whose representatives are present at distribution venues. They are also able to access medical services as provided at health centers where food distribution is made. Registration with TASO also provides them with an opportunity to receive other support programs that are offered by various organizations that recognize TASO as credible umbrella organization supporting PLWHA.

1.2.5. Integrated food/programming

According to reports provided by ACDI/VOCA, food distribution to people living with HIV/AIDs (PLWHA) was expanded to many areas of northern Uganda for a total of 47 established food distribution points (FDPs) during FY 2008. A new uptake of PLWHA distribution beneficiaries (7,000 households or 42,000 people) has been identified and vetted jointly by ACDI/VOCA and TASO and they have started to receive rations in August 2009 as part of ACDI/VOCA's FY2009 work plan. The current distribution beneficiaries are eligible to receive twelve monthly food rations. The distribution commodities include vegetable oil, and corn soy blend (CSB). According to ACDI/VOCA staff, distribution commodity selection was based on their LIFE Program experience in terms of the PLWHA food distribution program, nutrient value, cultural acceptability and compatibility with local production.

During the time period of July 2009 through September 2009, ACDI/VOCA was still implementing the following ongoing activities under Strategic Objective 2 according to ACDI/VOCA's submitted FY09 Detailed Implementation Plan:

- Provide nutrition and hygiene training (TOTs) to Local Grantees.
- Demonstrate cooking of distributed supplementary foods.
- Conduct support and monitoring visits to partners and Local Grantees in nutrition and hygiene.
- Local Grantees conduct nutrition and hygiene trainings.
- Continue with selection and registration of beneficiaries with TASO.
- Track and review PLWHA beneficiary eligibility with TASO.

In Uganda, as in most sub-Saharan countries, prevalence of HIV infection is higher among women than men. Among Ugandan women, HIV prevalence is 7.5 percent compared to 5.0 percent among men, according to the 2004-05

Uganda HIV/AIDS Sero-Behavioral Survey (UHSBS). More women are infected at younger ages than men. The Uganda Government has adopted a national strategy to contain the HIV/AIDS epidemic, primarily by promoting sexual abstinence, mutual faithfulness among married or cohabiting partners, and condom use, especially in higher-risk sex. (This strategy is often known as the "ABC" approach, for "Abstaining, Being faithful, and Condom use). Uganda's strategy also includes voluntary testing and counseling (VCT), prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, antiretroviral treatment, and care and support services for people living with HIV and AIDS.

ACDI/VOCA and project partner TASO provide services to approximately 42,000 beneficiaries through the MYAP food distribution program with a stated targeting criteria to enroll food insecure people living with HIV and their families. Most of the "prime" or direct beneficiaries are women, and many are receiving ARVs. Within this partnership, TASO provides treatment, counseling and care to the beneficiaries. ACDI/VOCA recognized the role and the responsibility of maintaining TASO representatives on-site during food distribution activities. In response, ACDI/VOCA has proposed to increase TASO's budget so that they can have one dedicated field based staff person at each regional site during distribution activities.

The prime or direct beneficiary and their household members are linked to agricultural or income-generating activities by the project. Initially, this took off slowly because of the need to establish the grantee activities first, and then uptake the beneficiaries into them. ACDI/VOCA recognized the need to do more in this area, and so in early 2009 revamped their entire program. Within ACDI/VOCA Uganda, the PLWHA Program Integration Officer is responsible for developing integration between the grantees and the beneficiaries, and relation liaising with TASO in order to leverage the potential for sustainability and great self-sufficiency in meeting food needs in the PLHIV's post distribution phase. Although this position is currently based in the ACDI/VOCA Kampala office, in fiscal year 2010, the position will be based in the field. This is a positive move on the part of achieving greater program integration and linkages. USAID has established a regional office in the Gulu district to monitor the conditions of the Title II Program activities and to ensure greater donor and government coordination.

The ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II Program has been working closely with TASO Kampala based program staff to implement beneficiary criteria, identification and verification modalities and establish systems and processes. ACDI/VOCA's decision to move more staff positions from Kampala to field sites, including Integrated PLHIV Programming Officer and food aid monitors, should increase accountability, support, and monitoring efforts which should contribute to sustainability and an exit strategy.

The following observations and analysis were based on a field visit to the Soroti District Regional warehouse, and a final distribution point which is the venue for distribution of monthly food rations to the beneficiaries in that catchment area. This was the first distribution activity for this group of beneficiaries but the ACDI/VOCA and TASO staffers implementing it were using distribution management standards and processes established at the start of the MYAP.

Table 11: Site Visit Food Integration Quick Take Aways

Dimension of Quality	Characteristics Observed	Recommendation
Safety	No water supply observed.	PLWHA need access to safe and reliable water supply as part of nutrition guidance. Suggest MOH or TASO provide water point at site to reinforce practical dietary suggestions for PLWHA.
Effectiveness	Did not observe any monitoring of beneficiaries nutritional status during the distribution activity.	The food should help beneficiaries to improve nutritional status/and or weight gain. ACDI/VOCA has already purchased scales and provided them to TASO. Recommend MYAP collect monthly weigh-ins or BMI* readings for the prime beneficiary.
Technical Performance	ACDI/VOCA had two nutritional education posters at the site.	ACDI/VOCA and TASO should provide a demonstration kitchen garden at each distribution site to reinforce nutrition messages.
Continuity	TASO provides health care services while ACDI/VOCA provides food aid services.	Each one should maintain clear roles and responsibilities to ensure post program continuity and utilization of comparative advantages.
Confidentially	Recipients receive food with dignity insofar as there was no banner identifying this as "PLWHA food distribution site".	ACDI/VOCA should continue to provide banner and recognition to USAID as the donor at food sites per their branding and marking plan but not link food distribution to HIV status.
Appropriateness	Gender considerations shown – with mostly women enrolled due to their food insecurity as well as HIV positive status.	ACDI/VOCA should link-up with other programs to provide information within their geographical target areas with messages to encourage VCT so that more people, especially men, know their status.
Participation	TASO works with communities to identify appropriate prime	ACDI/VOCA should continue to maintain clear separation of duties so that it stays focus on the distribution

	beneficiaries based on HIV status as well as household vulnerability /food security	modalities at each site.
Sustainability	Ongoing efforts are underway to find other sources of nutritional support through linkages with Title II agricultural production and or livelihood activities.	ACDI/VOCA should continue to look at ways to incorporate technology to help map beneficiaries, available services and programs, and benefits received.

*BMI – (kg/m squared) is used to assess adult nutritional status.

Reinforcing/Integrating Linkages

Within Strategic Objective one (SO1), ACDI/VOCA and its grantee partners are identifying specific crops, varieties and conservative techniques to promote through agricultural production training classes. Food distribution beneficiaries (SO2) and their households are able to participate in activities covered in SO1. In addition to the agricultural production training, nutrition training is provided. At present, there is a barrier between robust information sharing and cross-fertilization between SO1 and SO2 from observing distribution site activity. This is especially true in the area of nutrition. For example, information from ACDI/VOCA's tool, "Improving Nutrition Practices among Rural Farmers in Uganda" and specifically materials regarding food groups should be tied-in with agricultural production and marketing e.g. pages 20-28 as well as linked to the training around setting up a vegetable garden (pages 45-49) at both the field instruction level as well as the distribution sites. To get this intentional linkage work started, ACDI/VOCA and TASO could approach the health centers that are used for food distribution sites to get their permission to create a demonstration plot that would reinforce the information and techniques provided at the SO1 trainings.

Even though the on-site distribution process only takes a few hours to complete from start to finish, there is already an assembled group who are waiting to pick up monthly food rations. This is a potential training opportunity. The target audience would be PLWHA, their families, caregivers and other clinic/health center visitors. This tie-in approach would contribute to the integration of the two SOs, and would simultaneously mutually reinforce the nutrition training messages. At the distribution sites, the program could reinforce diet plan training around practical dietary suggestion foods available in this community that contribute to nutritional health, and the seven foods within their community that boost body immunity. Photos of three food combinations that increase the energy density of a meal, based on seasonal food availability and calendar could be included. This type of information can be pulled from existing ACDI/VOCA Uganda materials found on pages 18 and 19 of "*Improving Quality of Life for People*

Living with HIV/AIDS through Better Nutrition." For ease of understanding and literacy considerations, this information could then be presented with contextually appropriate pictures and visually displayed at demonstration kitchen gardens and/or distribution sites to reinforce and integrate with other MYAP training and nutritional messaging.

Women as the Focus of Health Change Agents in Livelihood Activities

Ugandan women are at a substantial educational disadvantage to men. For example, according to the 2006 UDHS, 19 percent of women have no formal schooling versus 5 percent of men. This constraint contributes to economic disadvantages. For example, the 2006 UDHS reports that 19 percent of employed women are paid in cash versus 34 percent of men. Furthermore, 30 percent of employed women receive no payment for their work versus 13 percent of men. Women often act as the primary managers of food in their households and thus are responsible for allocating food and other resources to their family. ACDI/VOCA Uganda's Title II MYAP could look at ways to address food insecurity through the development of business skills and income generation opportunities, and simultaneously create positive health outcomes through a comprehensive health education program. In Mozambique, Unilever partners with NGOs in similar income generation projects, a strategy which both expands the market reach of the company and provides business opportunities for vulnerable rural populations. Encouraging women to take over program responsibilities and become self-sufficient peer educators and saleswomen is a key program goal. How does this work? In Mozambique, Unilever makes initial sales kits available. Products in the kit include basic household items such as detergent, rice, sugar, cooking oil, school notebooks, seeds and soap. The latter item, soap[1], is highly desired within households and hand washing with soap is a very effective way to reduce diarrhea. After all of the items in the kit are sold, the woman repays the cost of the kit and keeps the profit. Women graduate from the program once they have sold the initial three kits of stock. Graduates are then independent sellers and are encouraged to invest their profits back into their business.

A second benefit of the program is that women are equipped with basic health information. Why is this important? The 2006 UDHS asked women and men if a person can reduce the risk of getting HIV by adopting the three safer-sex "ABC" behaviors. While the vast majority of women and men know about these behaviors, men are more informed than women. Women are also less likely to have comprehensive knowledge of HIV and AIDS. In the UDHS, comprehensive knowledge is defined as: knowing that consistent condom use during sexual

[1] Distribution beneficiaries and TASO staff also asked about its available during the visit to the distribution site. Evidently, there is some level of demand for soap.

intercourse and having just one uninfected faithful partner can reduce the chance of getting HIV; knowing that a healthy looking person can have HIV; and rejecting the two most common local misconceptions that HIV can be transmitted by mosquito bites or by supernatural means. Among women, 31 percent have comprehensive knowledge versus 42 percent of men. In northern Uganda, health issues, such as widespread illness and death from HIV/AIDS and malaria, can greatly reduce agriculture productivity and devastate livelihoods. Women can be empowered to be change agents through livelihood activities targeted around the "Unilever Women's First" example.

In the Uganda context, this livelihood activity could have a two-fold approach by improving the economic status of women through small business skills training, the provision of rotational in-kind credit and the establishment of a sustainable supply chain of marketable products; and strengthen the knowledge of women in regards to basic health care and HIV/AIDS prevention. ACDI/VOCA or a grantee partner (a possible private/public partnership) could identify and provide intensive training to prepare a pre-existing women's group to form their own business or association. ACDI/VOCA could draw upon its own pre-existing standardized health curriculum for program participants to use. TASO could help to provide linkages between groups and health resources, such as hospitals, HIV testing centers and community health outreach centers. This would help reinforce health messaging and expand access to material and knowledge based health resources. This approach has the potential to contribute to sustainability since the women are able to more effectively utilize information about disease prevention and nutrition. Those women should be healthier and therefore better able to earn a livelihood for their families.

Match.Com Approach

In FY 2008, ACDI/VOCA incorporated a Geospatial Information System (GIS) system (geographic information system) to better utilize and present programmatic information. Mapping of all MYAP FDPs and program intervention areas has been completed and will continue to be updated throughout the life of the MYAP. Recent programmatic maps have been shared with the USAID Mission. This mapping technology could be taken a step further by linking it to a "livelihood matching" website. In order to cast a search for a wider range of livelihood activities, potential grantees and other funded projects to link up with the MYAP, ACDI/VOCA should consider the development of a "livelihood matching" website modeled after "Match.com." This website could be developed and managed by a grantee and has the potential to be self-sustainable. For those unfamiliar with "Match.com," it is a registered web-based company that is involved in online relationship building by collecting as much information as possible from clients to achieve best results and compatibility (sustainability) with other clients. The purpose of using this "Match.Com" model is to show how ACDI/VOCA and through its grantee program could

build a web site around online livelihood relationship building with other donor funded programs or even private programs through using GIS mapping software. The information fields collected could be organized to map responses to client requests for data for categories such as "sub-district/parish" search, business development search, careers search, success stories search, media room search, contact and promotions search and private company sponsorship search. This "match.com approach" could be a creative and innovative model to find livelihood matches especially for beneficiaries who may feel isolated from the current offerings of agricultural production activities.

Role of Technology

As mentioned in the distribution section, the utilization of technology can help ACDI/VOCA to achieve greater accuracy, efficiency and on-time reporting as well as free-up management staff to engage in more field level program monitoring. In terms of contributions to the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II food security programming, technology, such as cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs), can be integrated in program interventions to enhance the reach of nutrition counseling education and HIV/AIDS prevention awareness or counseling through SMS or text messages; and or link up two-way project level food security or price data collection and sharing with RATIN (Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network) and/or FEWSNET (Famine Emergency Warning Systems Network). Another possible area to explore is public/private partnerships. Mobile agriculture advice is growing within Uganda as a means to bridge gaps in traditional channels of communications, like agricultural extension workers and instructional pamphlets. Google, MTN and the Grameen Bank have paired up to launch Google/SMS, a mobile service that offers agricultural advice to farmers in Uganda. The service is only offered in Luganda and English but plans are underway to expand it to Swahili and Runyakole. In order to help with sustainability as well as leveraging available information services, ACDI/VOCA may want to look at engaging Google/SMS or other emerging public/private partnerships to link-up via the grantee program as an innovative way to provide a greater scope and range of coverage of agricultural information support to the integrated programming activities and interventions.

Nutrition and ART

The FANTA-2 Project has on staff a specialist to provide HIV/AIDS and nutrition technical support to USAID and the Title II Programs staff. Although it is not an intended part of this MYAP, one value-added recommendation would be for ACDI/VOCA's programming to link-up with this HIV/AIDS and Nutrition advisor to receive HIV/AIDS, food and nutrition technical support as well as to share lessons learned to help inform other Title II program implementers. ACDI/VOCA's staffers have been quite transparent and honest in what has worked, and what has not worked as detailed within the programming section. This is invaluable information that should be written up,

and shared with USAID PEPFAR programmers and staff to better understand what works, and should be scaled-up, and what does not work, and why. The ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP is unique in its focus on PLHIV, and thus this provides an additional operational research opportunity to look more closely at food and nutrition and ART or the role of nutrition in HIV infection. In particular, this might be an opportunity for USAID (jointly Title II and PEPFAR) to study whether or not there should be a different mix of such strategies in resource-limited settings where undernutrition is prevalent. Another study could focus on the effects of improved household food technology, dietary advice, and provision of food given during the distribution, health centers/and or TASO-led community care on nutritional recovery, disease progression and quality of life? Another timely question to ask in Uganda particularly with the rising HIV/AIDS prevalence rates among adults, is what is the impact of poor nutritional status on susceptibility to and transmission of HIV between adults.

Information Dissemination and Capacity Building Leadership Role

Overall the ACDI/VOCA PL 480 Title II Program one pagers are very effective at providing quick information about USAID Food for Peace funded programming in Uganda. However, there are some in current use, such as "Improving Hygiene and Nutrition Practices among Food and Beneficiaries", that need to be updated. For example, this document reports that "this food security effort is implemented through four partners: Africare, Catholic Relief Services, TASO and World Vision". By updating this information, it may mitigate any potential misunderstandings on the part of beneficiaries, press, government representatives, donor or others. In addition, by updating the material it will help to be in sync with other recent positive changes made by the Title II Program staff, and its grantee partners.

ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II and HQ staffers could prioritize identifying and disseminating valuable lessons learned and promising practices in the area of integrated programming to help other organizations build their institutional capacity in the areas of HIV/AIDS, food, and nutrition. The following are some topic suggestions that ACDI/VOCA programming field and HQ staffers may consider sharing with other donors, NGOs and technical groups to help enhance institutional capacity and future program design in the following areas of integrated food programming, HIV/AIDS and nutrition:

How has the MYAP contributed to mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on nutrition and household food security and to the prevention of the disease?

How may the MYAP have encouraged the spread of the epidemic, increased the stigma of people living with HIV/AIDS or aggravated the impact of HIV/AIDS on nutrition and household food security?

How sustainable are the outcomes of the MYAP?

How can the project extend support to HIV/AIDS-affected households in a cost-effective way? (Consider costs in the short, medium and long term.)

What is the potential for replicating or scaling-up the MYAP program's interventions?

What lessons have been learned about mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on nutrition, household food security and livelihoods?

What process and impact indicators have been included in the monitoring framework in order to adequately capture the changes in nutrition and food security among HIV/AIDS-affected households and people? How will these indicators be verified and by whom?

Another recommendation for the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II staff is to review the plan of operations and monitoring framework and discuss whether they want to include specific HIV/AIDS-related activities and indicators. If so, the indicators should include measurements for changes in nutrition and food security as key livelihood outcomes.

1.3. MONETIZATION

1.3.1. Monetization

According to ACDI/VOCA's materials, since 1989 the Uganda office has monetized 160,000 MT of USAID Title II commodities on behalf of other PVO's and almost 135,000 MT for ACDI/VOCA's own programs and distributing almost 40,000 MT of commodities to people living with HIV. Based on this depth of staffing experience and proven capabilities, ACDI/VOCA handles procurement, logistics and monetization of U.S. food aid to Uganda. ACDI/VOCA and its MYAP partners, Africare and Lutheran World Federation (LWF), work in areas that are complementary to those served by WFP programs. During the initial start-up phase of the ACDI/VOCA Title II MYAP (FY06 and FY07), there was an overlap with two other Title II MYAPs (Save the Children and World Vision International). ACDI/VOCA continued to provide umbrella monetization services to those two MYAPs during part of FY09 as it had also provided to Africare when it had its own Title II MYAP. At the time of this mid-term evaluation, both Save the Children and World Vision International MYAPs were closed out.

To meet its FY09 funding needs, the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II program made two monetization related calls forward. Nearly an equal amount of tonnage was called forward with each one for a total of 14,700 Metric Tons of hard red winter (HRW) wheat. In FY10, ACDI/VOCA plans to schedule two monetization call forwards to meet program proceeds, and buyers supply needs.

When ACDI/VOCA prepared its FY2009 resource request in July 2008, it anticipated that the exchange rate at time of the monetization sale would be 1,700 Ugandan Schillings to the US dollar. For 2009, the actual rate has fluctuated between 1941 and 2000. For comparison purposes, the historical information below was prepared to show the actual exchange rates and the extent that the Uganda Schilling has fluctuated in value to the US dollar.

Time Period	Actual Schilling Rate to US$[2]
10/1/07	**1761**
01/1/08	**1716**
10/1/08	**1681**
01/1/09	**1941**
08/1/09	**2000**

During the year, exchange rate fluctuations affected cost recovery on US dollar-based landed costs. However, higher than projected high hard red winter wheat monetization sales prices helped mitigate losses due to fluctuating exchange rates. According to ACDI/VOCA staff, in the event that ACDI/VOCA experiences a shortfall in monetization proceeds from unfavorable exchange rates or lowered sales prices, they will adjust program activities as necessary to minimize any negative impact on project results or objectives.

Cost recovery

Title II monetization sales in Uganda are done on a competitive basis. Wheat sales are tendered and about eight buyers will bid on available tonnage. ACDI/VOCA negotiates final sales agreements with the highest bidders maximizing the overall sales price. ACDI/VOCA has on averaged yielded a cost recovery of 80 percent on the hard red winter wheat sold in Uganda during the current MYAP. As mentioned earlier, hard red winter wheat is the only Title II commodity monetized in Uganda in 2009.

At the time of the mid-term evaluation, ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II staffers were working closely with their headquarter counterparts completing their FY10 resource request (PREP). Staff indicated that the MYAP would require approximately US$ 8 million for FY10 planned activities. In FY09, ACDI/VOCA anticipates utilizing approximately US$ 13 million (including interest) in funds generated from the sale of monetized wheat during FY09 in addition to carryover funding from FY08. For comparative purposes, fiscal year (F09) was projected to

[2] Source www.oanda.com.

be the peak year for resource needs in alignment with planned program implementation, and resource needs would be decreasing in subsequent years.

At the time of this mid-term evaluation, ACDI/VOCA was still waiting for the latest Bellmon that USAID had contracted for, and was planning to soon release. In past years, ACDI/VOCA would have been responsible for the completion of the Bellmon and/or update, which would have provided information to inform it in the annual resource request preparations (PREP). With fewer commodity options available, and more commodity management considerations needed for delivering US food aid in a landlocked country, good open communications with the donor are critical in order to manage and maintain the program's supply chain, commercial relations and proceeds. The market situation is dynamic in Uganda, and ACDI/VOCA should continue to play a role in providing market knowledge and intelligence to USAID's analysis.

Umbrella Monetization Consortium

Save the Children, World Vision, Africare, and Mercy Corps staffers were contacted to comment on the commodity/monetization management arrangement known as the "Umbrella Monetization". All agencies agreed to participate in the mid-term evaluation interviews. Overall, the general feeling expressed was that, under this arrangement partners strengths were maximized and weaknesses minimized by working together to each organization's comparative advantage. Umbrella monetization partners consistently identified ACDI/VOCA Commodity Management and Monetization staffers as knowledgeable and experience and being proactive with problem solving. Examples of knowledge sharing or capacity building included such support as helping out to obtain import permits, host country agreements and providing Regulation 11 reporting and requirements guidance. Two organizations indicated that they found it much easier to approach the lead agency with specific questions than to approach a donor who might have assumed that the specific organization should have that knowledge.

None of the "Umbrella Monetization" stakeholders identified any delays in project implementation related to commodity handling specifically or that have resulted from delays in monetization sales proceeds transfers. In fact, Save the Children and Mercy Corps, both cited examples of how ACDI/VOCA tried to find solutions, bridge funding gaps and otherwise support all program needs to the fullest extent possible. All stakeholders (Save, Mercy Corps, Africare, World Vision and Finca) praised ACDI/VOCA for timeliness and accuracy of reports and other updates. This information allowed each agency time to complete their reports for USAID. The only related concern or issue mentioned by Save was that for follow-up purposes with their Save US office, it would have been helpful or more timesaving if ACDI/VOCA sent reports electronically to them. All reports were provided in hardcopy form to each partner, and with each NGO representative responsible for signing off on it.

The Umbrella Monetization members felt that there were clear roles and responsibilities for the lead monetization agency (ACDI/VOCA) that were articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). All tonnages were pooled for monetization and the proceeds shared proportionately to each member's tonnage contribution to the pool. Consistent with Regulation 11 requirements, proceeds are put into an interest bearing account and an independent surveyor is utilized to ensure accountability of commodity received. Financial meetings were held often where receipts and payments and monetization distribution accountability were reviewed and each member acknowledging status of information.

The mid-term evaluation team found that the umbrella monetization partners supported this model. The umbrella monetization appears to have successfully minimized administrative costs, and maximized comparative advantages between Title II recipients.

Monetization Buyers: Sales, and Logistics Process

ACDI/VOCA Uganda maintains current price information to ensure maximum proceeds for partners, and minimized impact on the local market. Title II hard red winter (HRW) wheat is sold using a combined competitive bid and negotiated sales process. Wheat has been, and will continue to be sold to about eight millers located in Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Kabale and other upcountry locations. The ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP management does not anticipate any decrease in demand for US HRW wheat. It is in high demand, as millers prefer it for its blending properties with locally grown soft wheat. According to staff, it is not uncommon for ACDI/VOCA to received bids for twice the tonnage tendered for any one sale. In-person interviews with wheat buyers confirmed their strong demand for US HRW. ACDI/VOCA sold a total of 27,400 MT of US HRW wheat in Uganda in FY2008. ACDI/VOCA plans to sell a total of 14,700 MT of US HRW wheat in Uganda in FY2009. From the wheat buyers' point-of-view, they are satisfied with the process of purchasing monetization wheat from ACDI/VOCA. As individual companies, most of the Ugandan millers cannot afford to order 10,000 to 20,000 metric tons of wheat, which is the minimum, a vessel can take as an order to be competitive.

Wheat sales are finalized prior to vessel berth at the port of Mombasa and the grain is delivered directly to the buyers on Free on Rail or Free on Road basis according to ACDI/VOCA documents. Storage for wheat grain is for the account of the buyer's upon clearance of the customs at Kampala or buyers rail siding. Consistent with Regulation 11, upon receipt of commodities in the warehouse and at the buyer's premises, the ACDI/VOCA representative, the freight forwarder representative and the surveyor conduct a delivery survey and tallying.

In sales negotiations, Ugandan flour millers are most concerned about assurances of timely delivery of their wheat. They cannot have a break in their supply pipeline, which may result in shutting down their milling process or slow down production. As commercial wheat purchases require up-front payments, delivery delays also can cause cash flow problems. In response to those need, ACDI/VOCA issued the inland freight tender for the FY 2009 monetization commodity with provision for transporting the wheat half by road and half by rail. This split allocation eliminated primary reliance on the railways, which are erratic in their services. The prompt delivery of the most recent wheat consignment shocked many millers who were unprepared but very happy at the speed. They were use to the past delays of rail transport, and so when their wheat was trucked to their storage facilities within three days of clearing customs in Mombasa this was a welcomed surprise. Greater assurance of a delivery date and risk mitigation management of a break in their wheat supply pipeline helps to build further trust in the buyers, who will respond with paying higher prices and repeating business.

ACDI/VOCA is looking to help foster and facilitate ways that the millers can work together as a trade association to advocate for positive tax and trade policy for the importation of wheat in Uganda and within the landlocked countries of the Great Lake Regions. The millers need to mix their Title II wheat purchases with commercial wheat imports to fully utilize their milling capacity and grow their business. Given that Uganda is a landlocked country, the cost of importing supplies from Mombasa or Dar Es Salem adds significantly to their production costs and the millers would benefit from working together as an association. ACDI/VOCA is continuing to look at ways to help the millers to consolidate their commercial wheat purchases so that they might be able to realize economies-of-scale and cost savings through bulk purchases and shipments.

Business Building and Due Diligence

According to documents provided by them, ACDI/VOCA/Uganda started the PL 480 Title II program with 10,000 MT of vegetable oil in 1989. By 2007, vegetable oil was no longer sold as a Title II monetization commodity in Uganda. Due to a gradual expansion of local and national production of edible oils, the Bellmon and usual market requirement (UMR) analyses determined potential disincentives to local production if the Title II vegetable oil sales continued. It was challenging to locate some of the former participants in the vegetable oil monetization program – simply because they are busy business operators and or they have changed locations or business with no forwarding contact information. Of those vegetable oil buyers contacted, they expressed that they were disappointed that ACDI/VOCA is no longer monetizing this commodity. However, they indicated that ACDI/VOCA informed them in advance of the end of sales to minimize impact on their businesses. ACDI/VOCA engaged

quite actively with the vegetable oil buyers to help them to participate in the small-lot tender system. There were even women traders who participated in the sales tender. ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II program staff helped to train the traders – in some cases using local languages – on how to bid, complete tender documents and how the sales procedure worked. Interviewees mentioned that they had never participated in such a system before but ACDI/VOCA may it easy to learn how to participate. Another interviewee mentioned that he mostly dealt in cash only business transactions and many did not have a bank account before their participation in the monetization program.

Operational Procedures and Standardized Manuals

ACDI/VOCA has established a series of operational and process manuals to address standardization in such areas such as receiving, damage, reconstitution, and delivery reports for the warehouse operations. Another set of forms record tender submissions, tender bids, sales agreement, contract terms and conditions, receipt of payment, and delivery authorization. Another set of procedures are used to obtain and account for funds on deposit and to voucher project expenses and account for the petty cash fund. ACDI/VOCA has also developed a series of spreadsheets summarizing commodity sales data and tender calls and the price of competing edible oil sold in Uganda. A commodity tracking system has been developed to monitor the location and status of each call forward until it arrives at a warehouse in Uganda. The reporting is very thorough and detailed. For example, the sales data and tender call summary report records each tender date, tonnage available, bids received, exchange rate, total tonnage bid, bids accepted, tonnage sold, total sales in Ugandan shillings and US dollars, average prices per metric ton (MT) in Ugandan shillings and US dollars, average commodity, insurance and freight (CIF) value per MT, and cost recovery as a percent of estimated CIF Kampala. Manuals and processes are periodically updated including a recent commodity management manual that was completed in this fiscal year. Based on the mid-term evaluation team assessment of ACDI/VOCA's manuals, tools and procedures used for commodity management by the Uganda program, they either met or exceeded USAID commodity management guidelines (Regulation 11) and industry commodity management best practices.

Based on the mid-term evaluation team findings of the monetization process, and umbrella partner satisfaction, it is recommended, that all monetization be handled through ACDI/VOCA. This recommendation is based on their ACDI/VOCA's monetization outreach to the buyer community, and solid support from monetization umbrella partners.

1.3.2. Logistics

According to ACDI/VOCA logistics report, the port of Mombasa is the premier port of East and Central Africa, handling approximately 11.9 million tons of

cargo each year including 2.4 million MT of transit cargo. However, the poor condition of the railways in Kenya and Uganda has hindered commodity transport from the port to Kampala. Rift Valley Railways (RVF) and Kenya Railways (KRC) have suffered from many years of disrepair, lack of rail wagons and mismanagement and this has affected overall performance. The concession agreement with RVF remains in force awaiting, judicial review but on July 29, 2009, KRC took legal action in an attempt to possibly terminate the contract signed in January 2006 due to RVF's underperformance. In a market driven environment with functioning infrastructure, conventional wisdom holds that it would be less expensive to ship cargo by rail wagon than truck. However, due to the poor state of the Kenya-Uganda railway line which has not been renovated since its establishment almost a century ago this does not hold true. Often commodity losses would occur due to wagon derailments. Lack of available wagons meant that commodities could sit at the port for months. More recently during the post election riots in Kenya, ACDI/VOCA Title II commodities were looted. Petroleum prices have gone done in recent months, and due to fewer cargo shipments between the ports and within the Great Lake Country Region, trucking transport costs are highly competitive. Consignments are received in Uganda within three days of arrival in port, thus reducing their exposure to loss or damage. Given current rail transport difficulties, ACDI/VOCA has built flexibility into its inland contracts to maintain a reliable commodity pipeline, port and transport options, and overall reduction in commodity losses.

Transport providers[3] claim that food short landed from vessels remains one major reason for Title II food losses during food transportation. The second common factor behind vessel food losses is reconditioning or reconstitution of bags after commodity spillage during port operations. Cases of water damage foods were also identified. One shipment of distribution commodity arrived in Mombasa recently with damage occurring during the ocean freight transport point.

All distribution commodities are initially stored at the ACDI/VOCA warehouse facility in Kampala. From there, transporters are contracted to bring food from the main ACDI/VOCA/Kampala warehouse to the regional warehouses and from the regional warehouses to the food distribution points as needed. The ACDI/VOCA Kampala warehouse has ample space to accommodate Title II distribution commodity with a total floor area of 3,000 square meters according to ACDI/VOCA's reports. An industry best practice of a first in/ first out method is used in rotating stocks out of the warehouse. Consistent with Regulation 11, upon receipt of commodities in the warehouse and at the buyer's premises, the

[3] Spedag mentioned this problem during their interview with the mid-term evaluation team.

ACDI/VOCA representative, the freight forwarder representative and the surveyor conduct a delivery survey and tallying. The entire commodity stored at the ACDI/VOCA Kampala warehouse facility is insured for fire and burglary based on monthly inventory. Armed guards patrol the perimeter, and guard the front entrance around the clock. Additional, motion sensors have been installed inside the warehouse for enhanced post business hours security.

Theft and infestation are the two main causes of in-country Title II food losses in most programs. The mid-term evaluation team found based on reviews of records and reports that ACDI/VOCA Uganda was able to program relatively large quantities of commodity with little in-country loss, shortages, damages or delays. ACDI/VOCA was able to work with and between Title II agencies and WFP to ensure food distribution coordination and pipeline information exchanges. The mid-term evaluation team reviewed April 2009 records, which revealed WFP Swap Out/Swap In updates were current. Additionally in terms of USAID Title II commodities, records revealed no differences reported for April 2009 or May 2009 Commodity Status Reports (CSRs). Those reports were prepared, reviewed and approved by three separate distribution officers. ACDI/VOCA has a series of rigorous warehouse inventory checks made monthly, at the end of the fiscal year, at the end of the calendar year and reconciliation after each commodity discharge/dispatch. USAID and other external parties are invited to participate and verify inventory. Food infestation or loss is kept to a minimum through regularly scheduled fumigation, first in, first out stock rotation schedules and well ventilated and maintained warehouses. ACDI/VOCA's commodity warehouse management system follows Regulation 11 and meets industry best practices standards. The mid-term evaluation findings of the internal review of ACDI/VOCA's food loss trends indicate that it is within an acceptable level with monitoring systems in place and staff responsible for multiple reviews of documents to ensure integrity, transparency and accuracy. One suggestion is to consider incorporating the use of technology such as "smartcards" which is discussed later in this report to enhance in-country loss monitoring and reporting of food commodities.

Commodity Quality Monitoring

ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II commodity staffers are exhibiting great care for the USAID Title food aid commodities. Staffers monitor food aid by contract numbers on the packaging for quick identification of any quality problems (i.e. VEPE or VEPD numbers). In addition, staffers are using the first in/first out (FIFO) commodity rotation process as well as registration of commodities by best used by Date (BUBD) if available. Solid supply chain management principles deployed by and understanding of by all staff even those in regional warehouse locations. A visible inspection of the main warehouse in Kampala, and the regional warehouse in Soroti District were made. Storage conditions in each location were well maintained. There were no signs of odor, spoilage, mold, bird or rodent droppings, unusual temperatures or insect infestation. Corn Soy Blend

(CSB) bags were intact, no discernable problems including torn or wet. Vegetable oil tins or jerry cans were intact, no discernable problems including stained boxes, dented or leaking.

As mentioned earlier, one shipment of distribution commodity arrived in Mombasa recently with damage occurring during the ocean freight transport point. Testing is being conducted to determine if the commodity is deemed fit for human consumption – following USAID Regulation 11 guidelines, with samples taken and a thorough plan of destruction developed, if needed. Previous Title II commodities deemed unfit for human consumption and the physical appearance and condition have been well documented with photographs.

While in-country, there were no reported complaints made or reported by beneficiaries after consuming Title II products e.g. discoloration, unexpected texture, unusual taste or unusual smell. However, at each distribution site – ACDI/VOCA has a help desk officer who is responsible to follow-up if product problems are reported at a specific location of the affected beneficiary(ies). To reduce complaints by beneficiaries, ACDI/VOCA staff whether at the main or regional warehouse, exam cartons, tins, and bags prior to loading on trucks for any signs of discoloration, odor, spoilage or mold.

This mid-term evaluation recommends that ACDI/VOCA should continue the process in place that emphasizes quality monitoring end-to-end supply chain management. This system established to monitor commodity quality, and reporting helps provide better information for identifying routine packaging problems, future monitoring and or response to the donor, HQ staff, and the beneficiaries. ACDI/VOCA model and process should be shared with other Title II organizations to assist with their commodity management if it is not done currently. This is already being done within Uganda, and ACDI/VOCA's other Title II programs.

Institutional Capacity to Monitor

Field experienced headquarter staffers consistently conduct reporting audits of food aid commodity documents before they are submitted to the donor. ACDI/VOCA Uganda provides ample opportunity for umbrella partners to adequately monitor as well as sign-off on reports. There were no indications of late and or unexpected arrival of food commodities that has negatively affected the ability of ACDI/VOCA to properly plan for and handle Title II food programs. ACDI/VOCA based on their many years of prior experience implementing and monetizing in Uganda had an existing logistics supply chain established prior to the start-up of this MYAP. The ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP was able to quickly have proper staffing in place, with appropriate skill-sets, and USAID Regulation 11 experience from the beginning of this MYAP in FY07. Consequently, the mid-term evaluation team did not find any delays in

obtaining duty-free permits, host country agreement and or conclusion of inland freight contracts from the Port of Discharge to the final distribution points.

Distribution section

ACDI/VOCA manages from end-to-end the logistics of the commodities that are distributed to the program beneficiaries. The commodity is transported from ACDI/VOCA's main warehouse in Kampala to three regional warehouses in Lira, Soroti and Gulu districts before it is taken to final distribution points (FDPs) for deliveries to beneficiaries.

According to ACDI/VOCA staff and documents, each warehouse serves approximately 10-15 food distribution points (FDPs). Each FDP is the venue for between 100 to 200 primary beneficiaries to receive their food ration each month. ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II field based staffers are positioned at each warehouse, and are responsible for all aspects of the food distribution points. Those responsibilities include managing transportation of the commodity and non-food items[4] to the FDP, beneficiary verification, help-desk support, food weighing and distribution, and organizing any complementary educational or evaluation activities.

The field level distribution activities are supported and supervised by a Kampala-based Distribution Coordinator, and assisted by a Monitoring Officer to help assure proper security, procedures, and reporting from the warehouses. Additionally, the Distribution Coordinator oversees the Regional Distribution Officers responsible for the warehouses.

The mid-term evaluation team visited field distribution sites, and warehouses. The following observations and analysis were based on a field visit to the Soroti District Regional warehouse, and final distribution point, which is the venue for distribution of monthly food rations to the beneficiaries in that catchment area. This was the first distribution activity for this group of beneficiaries but the ACDI/VOCA and TASO staffers implementing it were using distribution management standards and processes established at the start of the MYAP. The evaluation team observed that the distribution site was promptly established with a protective tent that afforded shade and shelter to both the Title II food aid items, beneficiaries and the staff. This was a critical detail considering that this is the normal start of the rainy season in Uganda. The ACDI/VOCA distribution staff reminded the beneficiaries why they are enrolled in the program, and what must be done to remain in the program including consuming at the household level all of their food items. The distribution staff helped beneficiaries with questions where appropriate, while TASO staffers were responsible for others related to care and eligibility. The entire distribution process was extremely orderly, transparent and efficient.

[4] Those items include the distribution tent, vegetable oil containers and poly bags for the beneficiaries and education and USAID branding and marking posters.

Table 12: Site Visit Distribution Quick Take-aways

Dimension of Quality	Characteristics Observed	Recommendation
Safety	Food Supply is secure from warehouse point to final distribution point	None. Appropriate systems are in place although smartcard technology could enhance inventory control.
Safety	Food supply is free of contaminants and safe to eat (covered under tarp or tent from end to end)	None. Appropriate systems are in place.
Access	Distribution site is convenient for recipients – road access – and beneficiaries confirmed 30 minutes to site.	None. Appropriate systems are in place for observed site.
Access	Distribution occurs as scheduled	None. Appropriate systems are in place although cell phone or text messaging technology could be used to inform beneficiaries of distribution schedule.
Effectiveness	Was not observed – if recipients consume food as intended.	Recommend that ACDI/VOCA utilize technology to monitor, and use staff to conduct more post-distribution visits to local markets to determine any leakage or resell as well as random visits to households to ensure uptake.
Technical Performance	Food provided is nutrient rich, and is acceptable to recipients.	Did not observe any food preparation instructions. Recommend that it is provided especially at the start of the distribution cycle to ensure maximum benefit from ration.
Efficiency	Food aid is directed to beneficiaries most in need	ACDI/VOCA should continue to do the beneficiary verification for accountability and transparency as well as for cross-reference with wrap-around services and sustainability identified in a timely manner. This could be enhanced with smartcard technology
Continuity	Based on review of ACDI/VOCA's food records, there were no gaps in coverage or timing of food provision.	None. Appropriate systems are in place due to existing supply chain management process.
Appropriate-ness	Food provided meets household need up to a maximum of six.	TASO and ACDI/VOCA should continue to cross-check with data provided by applicants and modify as needed. This could be enhanced with smartcard technology.

Upgrade Commodity Tracking and MandE Systems with Biometrics and other Technology

ACDI/VOCA field-level based distribution staff are setting up and distribution food each work day leaving little time for other areas of management such as report writing and capacity building exchanges. This could lead to staff burn-out, increased human error, and less time to dedicate to monitoring. If the program budget will not allow for more staff positions than one recommendation is to look at ways to include more time saving technology investments or upgrades into the program to cut down on manual inputting time. This investment could have immediate payoffs to the program in areas such as enhanced data accuracy, efficiency and timeliness of reports. Some specific technology that ACDI/VOCA could consider based on its program reporting, accountability and monitoring needs are use of smartcards, personal digital assistants and biometrics technology at the distribution sites.

ACDI/VOCA has in use a commodity tracking system that tracks commodity movement from end-to-end at the in-country final distribution sites. Once the food commodities are received at the distribution sites, tracking of actual food distributed to beneficiaries is largely manual, and while there are internal systems to ensure that beneficiaries get what is entitled to them, the current system can potentially result in inappropriate use of food and all that it implies. Due to the manual nature of tracking food distribution data, indentifying problems associated with food commodity distributions can be time consuming, and generating statistical data related MandE data collection can be labor intensive and inaccurate due to human error.

ACDI/VOCA should consider biometric smart card technology in its commodity programs as a tracking and gathering key monitoring and evaluation data related to its food distribution program, demonstrate integration between distribution and programming interventions and for monitoring receipt of indirect complimentary services from other donors/sources. Due to the manual nature of tracking food distribution data, identifying problems associated with food commodity distributions can be time consuming, and challenging to quickly produce statistical data related MandE data collection for donor reporting needs on short notice or for off-cycle requests.

Software and biometrics technology is currently in use often in support of related data collection during distribution of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) drugs.[5] For example, a private South African company specializes in providing access to communication networks using smart card biometrics technology in "remote areas" without necessary traditional infrastructure to support this. This system is capable of tracking ART drug distributions to the end user and has the ability

[5] Possible contact points for further information: JSI-Deliver or Supply Chain Management Systems (SCMS). Both have offices in Northern Virginia, and have essential medicines supply-chain management experience with USAID.

to authenticate and verify important information pertaining to ART stock inventories, patient history and services received. This type of system would include the following key components:

Smart Card/Biometrics. The smart card, which is about the size of a building access card, contains electronic data relating to the various aspects of the distribution process and can hold up to 64 kilo bytes of data. Currently, beneficiaries are using their thumbprint to verify receipt of commodities. All information is entered into databases by hand increasing possible human errors or loss of documents. In the case of the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II program, this card can store data relating to food dispatched from the warehouse for distribution, food received at the distribution site, food received by the beneficiary, and other beneficiary related data. For example, in the event of any "damaged or quality compromised food aid", this data could easily identify households impacted for follow-up purposes.

Smart card reader. The standard smart card reader comes with a portable, rechargeable battery, which is a plus given the potential that some locations may not have access to reliable electricity sources. It also has a built in fingerprint reader, which validates the owner data on the smart card. This means that only the holder of the smart card (or secondary used by ACDI/VOCA as a back-up commodity receiver) can receive food with that card. This feature helps to minimize cases of fraud or photo misidentification. The smart card reader also has a numeric keypad for data entry and an LED screen to guide the provider with key information for the beneficiary. At a minimum, this information could be the name of the beneficiary, expected commodity, ration, size, strategic objective interventions accessed and so forth. Each warehouse dispatcher would need to be issued with a smart card reader.

Database. This would be on a server database where information is exchanged between the smart card reader and the database, which could be achieved through a dialup or broadband connection. From there, data can be transferred to ACDI/VOCA offices via a secured file transfer link.

Software is already available for tracking supplies although back end adjustments may be made to link with ACDI/VOCA's needs. This system could be installed so that there would be information on commodity type, quality dispatched, date dispatched, warehouse representative and commodity shipment number from the main warehouse in Kampala to the regional distribution centers and then the distribution site operations. Some quick expected outcomes from a technology upgrade: ability to demonstrate integrated programming of food and training for MandE purposes, only the designated owner of the biometrics smart card can use it to obtain food rations; beneficiaries cannot receive more than the appropriate amount of commodities in any month; potential inappropriate use of commodities at distribution centers minimized due to higher level of accountability through use of provider

biometrics smart cards; able to generate reports more quickly and accurately. The cost of this type of technology investment and training is between US$ 80,000 and US$ 100,000, which can pay for itself in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in reporting, accountability and management. Additionally, it enables human resources to be utilized in face-to-face household monitoring and evaluation. Within Uganda, telecommunications infrastructure is improving with a number of cell phone providers competing for business throughout the country. Cell phones and their use in data collection could also be considered as a way to improve effectiveness and efficiency in reporting, accountability and management. Cell phones or text messaging can also be used by the MYAP staff to let beneficiaries know when the next food distribution is scheduled or perhaps to find out why a beneficiary has not shown up.

1.3.3. Changing nature of food aid in Uganda

At the time of this mid-term evaluation, Uganda's food security situation has been stretched thin by the global recession, an increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the adult population, high inflation, and a delayed onset of the rainy season in a country that is largely agricultural based. The combined effect of these natural and human-induced shocks will mean that the food security situation in Uganda will be stressed and any food aid responses will require flexibility and a delicate balance with ongoing Government, WFP and other donor efforts to stimulate self-sufficiency within the region. (Please see Annex 7 for more country contextual information.)

With the many changes in food aid in Uganda, the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP staff will need to consider broader program implications as well as potential emerging opportunities in the last two years of food aid distribution programming. Initially, the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II and World Food Program programs were complimenting one another with food distribution interventions, geographical coverage and beneficiaries through food aid in northern Uganda. According to WFP sources, at one point they were providing food assistance to some one million beneficiaries in northern Uganda. However, in the past year, World Food Program has modified its approach to, and role of food aid in Uganda. This has resulted in a ramping down of direct gift in kind food aid to a large geographical area and beneficiary case load use that were receiving distribution commodities but not simultaneous livelihood or programming support. In place of food aid, World Food Program is focusing on improving small-scale farmer access to markets. One concrete application of this approach is the World Food Program - Purchase for Progress (P4P). Although Purchase for Progress is in its early phases in Uganda, it is envisioned to connect small-scale farmers to markets. Through P4P, WFP plans to expand its local food procurement activities (reportedly US$ 53 million last year to US$ 100 million this year), as a support to local markets, so that they better support sustainable crop production and help to address the root causes of food insecurity. The vision behind this initiative is that by 2015, a significant number of smallholder

farmers – including women – will produce large surpluses of food, sell them at a fair price and earn better incomes. Indeed, this may be attainable in the future, but the immediate need is to see how those smallholders can access agricultural extension information, seeds, inputs and linkages to producer groups or associations and market access. This will take time, coordination and planning. In practical terms, as WFP grows interventions related to its new global direction, this means some of the former one million food insecure WFP food distribution beneficiaries, including WFP HIV/AIDs food aid beneficiaries must be integrated into new programs. ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP through TASO's identification process has worked to uptake beneficiaries, if and where appropriate, but many other highly vulnerable people remain outside of ACDI/VOCA's geographical target areas. This is an area though where WFP Uganda and ACDI/VOCA Uganda offices should continue to dialog about to ensure that rapid food assessments are maintained, and information shared to ensure mitigation against shocks, and a realistic timeline for transitioning.

While WFP Uganda may be ramping down actual food aid distribution, this may provide the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP with an opportunity to leverage linkages with its agricultural production beneficiaries and WFP's P4P small holders development plans to establish sustainability and linkages with greater food security. ACDI/VOCA also has much to offer WFP in realizing its Purchase for Progress plans – improving small-scale farmers' access to markets. ACDI/VOCA has much institutional capacity building in the area of value-chain development and a deep pool of volunteers and farmer-to-farmer experience technical staff that could be called upon to assist WFP with developing local capacity to identify and set-up warehouses with cleaning and drying equipment, rehabilitating feeder roads, training farmers' groups in better post harvesting handling.

Nutrition and Fortification

Nutrition has gained policy attention within and outside of global health. Nutrition has also gained a measure of attention within the high-level discussions around food security, and the food-price and financial crises. Several policy documents related to the food crises have acknowledged the need to pay attention to food quality as well as quantity eg. (e.g., staple food fortification, vitamin A capsules, ready-to-use therapeutic food, "sprinkles"). Looking ahead ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II MYAP staff may want to look at the timing for increased focus on the nutrition package within its program. National nutritional planning and engagement is increasing in Uganda. For instance, the Government of Uganda national nutrition plan has been developed, including expanded micronutrient interventions with the help of USAID and the creation of productive linkages between public and private sectors through GAIN. Title II wheat buyers indicated their active role in the fortification of flour products.

ACDI/VOCA may want to consider opportunities to further develop linkages with the private/public sector in the area of fortification.

With renewed policy attention to issues of agricultural productivity, trade in commodities, food aid and in-country subsidy mechanisms, and local agricultural market development, the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II Program also has a chance to draw attention to the importance of quality (not just quantity) of available food. This could be addressed through the program's agribusiness activities, and could address some of the nutrition issues related to seeds, which produce more nutritious crops and increase yield, and types of crops to promote, which are rich in vitamins and micronutrients.

1.3.4. Forward strategy

In an informal meeting, the USAID Food for Peace representative in Uganda suggested that Uganda may no longer be eligible for Title II food aid after this cycle of approved MYAPs ends given the country priority on agricultural self-sufficiency. If true, ACDI/VOCA Uganda will need to work pro-actively to ensure an exit strategy in order to continue to provide commodity and monetization services for Mercy Corps, and inform Title II wheat millers about the market exit strategy. ACDI/VOCA's MYAP is scheduled to end on September 30, 2011. Mercy Corps is completing the first year of their MYAP in August 2009.

Final Thoughts on the Commodity Management/Monetization System

Despite the changes in food aid in Uganda, ACDI/VOCA has managed to operate a very professional supply chain from end-to-end. The staff displayed a huge sense of ownership in the process, a proactive problem-solving approach, and application of business principles in day to day operations, and financial cost management. ACDI/VOCA Uganda's reputation among partners is that it ensures strong management and ongoing coordination from surveyors, freight handlers and transporters through clear and frequent communications, and the application of consistent and standard tender processes and commodity management tools (e.g. ACDI/VOCA Commodity Manual and Pastel commodity software system). ACDI/VOCA Uganda staffers are accountable full-time for the results of the Title II Program. This is in sharp contrast to some NGOs. ACDI/VOCA staffers are never pulled between competing roles and responsibilities: private versus public funds, relief responses, advocacy, fundraising or other missions. This level of professionalism should be recognized as a model. Even though there have been some major staff changes over the past few years (e.g. previous Chief of Party retired), partners, commodity buyers, and commercial providers all felt that ACDI/VOCA Uganda has consistently provided timely reliable information and responses. In part, ACDI/VOCA is able to maintain this high level of output through well defined

staff roles and responsibilities, standardized and documented processes and procedures and intentional capacity building and utilization of industry best practices.

1.4. Special Areas of Investigation

The evaluation team explored key cross-cutting issues related to the way the program has been implemented up to the time of the mid-term evaluation in order to highlight constraints that have affected progress to date, or current or potential constraints that may impede future progress.

1.4.1. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is considered to be a collection of specific indicators in order to inform management and the key stakeholders about the achievement of objectives. Monitoring should be used to adjust certain aspects of the program if this is considered necessary. Evaluation is an analysis of an activity in order to inform project managers and stakeholders about the achievement of objectives and about other results and the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the activity.

There is strong evidence that beneficiaries have access to, are using, and are satisfied with project services. There is strong indication that the project is offering relevant services and that most of the stated objectives are likely to be met.

ACDI/VOCA and its partners utilized primary and secondary data collection methods in monitoring key indicators. Primary data collection methods included information gathered by the on-going activities of the Monitoring Unit. Grantees are required to provide ACDI/VOCA quarterly and yearly reports that include information such as production levels, the number of training participants, and performance of activities. However, the observed monitoring system focuses more on input and process indicators.

The MYAP Baseline Survey, which is the basis for monitoring and evaluation, was behind schedule and completed only in July 2008. The baseline incorporated data in the districts in which the program is focused. The collected information includes crop production levels, household consumption levels, household size, months of household food provisions and dietary diversity. The time between the baseline study and the mid-term evaluation is short (one year).

It is difficult to assess how well capacity to withstand shocks and response has been strengthened without seeing the response during an emergency. However, knowledge about what to do during an emergency can be assessed against standards that are necessary for a timely response. A knowledge and attitudes survey should be implemented with a sample of villages to determine what is known about how to respond if a shock or an emergency occurs. In the absence

of baseline information, a control group sample will also need to be drawn from areas not being served by the project. Adding control villages in the monitoring system would be useful for the final evaluation of the program.

The current monitoring and evaluation system is complex, and it has generated a large volume of very useful data. However, the analysis of the data and the integration of this analysis into project management have not been maximized and should be expanded. The existing GIS component should be improved by adding new layers of information into the system in order to revamp data collection, analysis, and reporting systems. Such changes will increase efficiently and effectiveness of program monitoring.

There is an urgent need to improve the capacity of the monitoring for close attention to the provision of management information, both to support the implementation of projects goals and to feed back into the design of new initiatives in changing environments. Most grantees found the MandE database hard to manage, making updating of information cumbersome. Objectives and indicators should have been discussed in great length in consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders, so that objectives and targets are jointly "owned". Most of the grantees felt that the indicators were “parachuted”.

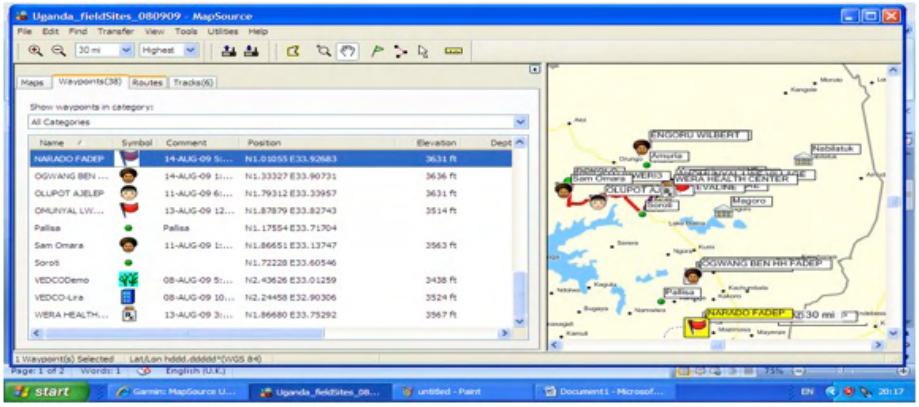
There are exogenous indicators (e.g. floods and prolonged dry spell leading to poor harvests, young returnees with no prior experience in agriculture, high rate of illiteracy) that cover factors outside the control of the project but which are severely affecting the outcome of the project’s current leading indicators. Concerns to monitor both the project and its wider environment call for a data collection capacity outside the project and place an additional burden on the project's MandE effort. A recent example of droughts in the project area demonstrates the importance of monitoring risk indicators.

Given the greater transparency now expected of the development community, ACDI/VOCA needs to strengthen the current monitoring system. The quality of record keeping in the field should be standardized for a better use of the data and merits careful attention. MandE supervisors should examine existing record-keeping and the reporting procedures used to assess the capacity to generate the data that will be needed. At the same time, they should explain how and why the indicators will be useful to field, intermediate, and senior levels of project management. The inclusion of simple household level data linked with key break variables such as the village or parish should significantly improve the scope for analysis. One approach is to structure reporting from the field so that aggregates or summaries are made at intermediate stages. In this way, field staff can see how averages or totals for specific villages, or districts, enable comparisons to be drawn and fieldwork improved.

The systematic use of geographic information could improve the efficiency of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a set

of computer programs used to input, store, analyze and output geographically referenced data. In projects related to livelihood and food security, GIS has become an indispensable tool for adequately collecting analyzing multiple parameters involved in monitoring key indicators. An improved GIS system should: boost productivity, improve coordination, create base to make better decisions, and enhance service thereby making better use of MYAP resources. We recommend that ACDI/VOCA develop an integrated information system enhanced by the use of a GIS as a useful tool in project monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 3: GIS data of households and villages of surveyed sites



Some of the advantages in expanding GIS use in program monitoring and evaluation include:

- Allows a user to tell a visual story – "a picture is worth a thousand words"
- Can help to eliminate ambiguities in the baseline – baseline data can be easily integrated in a MYAP district
- Illustrates linkages in related systems which allows for a more comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation by overlaying related data sets that are available which can link direct and indirect program impact
- Makes data standardized and more accessible to people with non-technical backgrounds
- 'Before and after' changes due to program activities are clearly visible, can be animated and are a more convincing representation.

- The consultants would like to note that the recommendation of using GIS is oriented towards increasing the use of GIS since ACDI/VOCA has already begun using GIS and has mapped all the food distribution points and geographic coverage of the agricultural components of the MYAYAP. In addition, a GIS volunteer will be coming out to increase the organization's capacity in that area. ACDI/VOCA collected producer group data from USAID funded activities in the North and data on storage facilities build with USAID funding in the North. This information will be shared in the monthly USAID implementing partner coordination meetings. The GIS information will help identify overlap with other projects and target discussions on how to maximize complimentarity.

1.4.2. Gender

Women are the most active participants in MYAP activities in all sectors, and are the majority of small farmholder group members. Women are thus the driving force in ACDI/VOCA activities and the project has significantly increased women's visibility and leadership in the community. Women are involved in all activities of the MYAP and the ACDI/VOCA and its partners have demonstrated commitment to continue targeting poor and vulnerable women in its program approach. The evaluation team lauds the efforts to promote gender awareness within the organizational culture and environment.

Obstacles for participation in some of the activities include:

- Women are very busy with housework and field work and don't have time to attend the all the training sessions.
- Focus groups revealed that some women have problems accessing training and demonstration sites (limited road access and lack of transportation).

However, at the rural level, few women are placed in decision-making positions. Gender equity still remains a challenge and it is necessary to reinforce gender awareness for all staff and beneficiaries in the project interventions. While the number of available candidates may be limited, the MYAP should further its gender awareness efforts by establishing targets for hiring women in upper management and field-based decision-making positions.

1.4.3. Program management

The evaluation team concluded that the management of the MYAP project has been effective overall. The team acknowledges the programming results that have been demonstrated during the implementation of the project. ACDI/VOCA clearly runs a 'tight ship' with clear procedures and guidelines for project operations. This is necessary in order to smoothly run a large and complex organization and operation like the MYAP.

There are, however, specific issues to be addressed in the remainder of the MYAP:

- Under present conditions, the staff is overworked. Difficulties in identifying qualified individuals to fill vacant positions and rapid turn-over has resulted in over-taxed staff with insufficient time to remedy perceived problems and implement new approaches. Given these conditions, management should prioritize staff responsibilities, focusing on those most important to achieving overall strategy goals.

- Some aspects of program management seem to constrain operations of some partners and grantees. A case in point is the monthly financial reporting and accountability requirement. This measure helps to keep track of financial flows within the MYAP but could also be limiting attainment of project targets.

- The one month financial accounting and reporting requirement would be fine with most grantees if clarifications were quickly sought and funds released within the first ten days of the next month. The reality appears to be that many grantees receive their funds towards the third week of the following month, or even later. The result is that many fuel stations are reluctant to extend credit. Field staff are therefore sometimes rendered redundant, unable to move into the field due to lack of fuel, in some cases for as long as half the month. It should also be noted that ACDI/VOCA must comply with USAID accountability rules, and that this has been part of the reason for the delay in disbursement of funds. Grantees also bare some of the responsibility; timely disbursement relies on timely submission of correct financial reports and early planning of input procurement needs.

- An aspect of project management as reported by grantees are the numerous changes being made to reporting requirements. This leaves grantees in suspense about what could be coming next. A lot of grantees' management time is expended trying to make adjustments to the changes. A grantee reported that communication that involves commitment of funds is sometimes made by telephone from ACDI/VOCA, yet such communication is not followed up in writing. This puts grantees at a disadvantage particularly with their auditors.

- ACDI/VOCA will need to pay attention to competitive staff remuneration if it is to avoid a high turnover. Excessive turnover will potentially undermine the ability to consolidate achievements and aim for excellence. This will not be possible if human resources and effort must be devoted to getting new staff up to speed. This issue was addressed in 2008 by raising local staff salaries as a result of identified need.

1.4.4. Program integration

It has been recognized by ACDI/VOCA that some aspects of the MYAP are not well integrated. These include the integration of food beneficiaries with agricultural programs of the grantees. In retrospect, aspects of the food distribution could have waited until after the roll out of agricultural programs in order to foster synchronization of programs. However, the program was not able to delay food distribution until the agricultural grantees had been brought on board. The MYAP began with a large quantity of distribution commodity carried over from the DAP. There was an urgent need to ramp up the food aid distribution immediately to avoid the loss of commodity due to the best used by date. Another limiting factor was the large distance of some grantees from field warehouses. The increased financial support to TASO to hire more field staff to monitor the program is recognition of this.

Otherwise, there appears to be good integration between the monetization arm of the MYAP and the grant and development component. Commodities are regularly monetized with funds used to support the various programs of the MYAP.

1.4.5. Capacity-building, partnership and sustainability

Capacity building is widely acknowledged to be important, but is often poorly defined. It entails:

- upgrading skills in monitoring and evaluation, which includes: project analysis, design of indicators and reporting systems, socioeconomic data collection, and information management;
- improving procedures to create functional systems that seek out and use information for decisions; and
- strengthening organizations to develop skilled staff in appropriate positions, accountable for their actions.

One of the central goals of MYAP is to increase capacity for beneficiary communities to continue and expand project activities after the eventual departure of ACDI/VOCA. The main elements to ensure sustainability over time are the small farmholder groups, and community actors involved in extending project activities on a volunteer basis. Most communities believe that their groups will continue to function at the end of the project. In addition, neighboring villages and small farmholder associations have begun collaborating with each other and this is an area that could be greatly expanded during the remainder of the project.

In general, there is good collaboration between ACDI/VOCA and its partners. However, better coordination is needed between ACDI/VOCA and Africare, to deal with challenges. Part of the problem could be the way the partnership was established in order to win the MYAP, but it is necessary for both organizations

to try and find common ground, which can foster project implementation. Africare clearly has its own system of financial and technical reporting, which runs its course before submissions are made to the principle partner ACDI/VOCA. For greater efficiency of the MYAP operations, this system needs to be modified and tailored so that there is greater speed in releasing needed funds for operations in the field.

The evaluation team has compiled a set of priorities and recommendations to improve program sustainability. To be sustainable, the program must address the issue of droughts and explore ways to make water available for both agricultural and domestic use. The project should promote the development of water harvesting techniques and small-scale irrigation schemes and occasional micro-dam construction in order to increase agricultural productivity by reducing rainfall dependence in the drought prone food deficit regions.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to high levels of food insecurity in target areas in Northern and Eastern Uganda, ACDI/VOCA and its partners, Africare, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Aids Support Organization (TASO) and local NGO grantees, initiated a five-year USAID Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP). Although ACDI/VOCA's USAID Title II Food Security program in Uganda officially began on October 1, 2006, ACDI/VOCA began active implementation of the program on February 1, 2007, due to a four month unfunded extension with the previous Title II program.

The central goal is to reduce food and livelihood insecurity by 2011 for vulnerable households in seventeen districts. The strategic objectives are (1) to improve food security and increase nutrition status through better production and use of food by 170,600 farmers;(2) to Reduced food insecurity and improve nutrition for 42,000 particularly vulnerable people through distribution of supplementary food. The program seeks to enhance economic opportunities for poor, vulnerable groups through increased crop production and income generating activities and to improve the quality of life through better health and nutrition.

This midterm evaluation is a study aimed at gaining a fundamental understanding of how ACDI/VOCA's MYAP is being implemented, how its implementation track will result in changes that the project is attempting to bring about on household and institutional participants, and what changes, if any, could improve its performance during the remaining implementation period. The evaluation, conducted at the mid-point of implementation, also provides insight into why certain goals and objectives are more likely to be accomplished.

In general, ACDI/VOCA and its partners in Uganda have made considerable progress in meeting the majority of its objectives. Throughout the evaluation, it was evident that ACDI/VOCA MYAP in Uganda has had numerous positive impacts on the lives and livelihoods of participants. All focus groups reported positive changes in living conditions since the beginning of the project.

The program has successfully increased community awareness regarding the importance of proper food hygiene behaviors, improved farming practices including post harvest handling and storage techniques, the need to improve nutrition practices and the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS. The program has been successful at promoting the formation and management of farmer's savings and loan groups.

One of the key lessons learned in the project is the sense of solidarity, group spirit and mutual assistance in communities. Through the project people have increased their trust and willingness to engage in group activities and productive community- driven initiatives. There is a growing sense of ownership and pride group activities such as saving groups, vegetable gardening, farming as a business and post-harvest handling. Participants feel that they are gaining the tools to take charge of their own development activities.

By doing so, the project has provided opportunities to increase good governance and management, and transparency at the village level by forming village level farmer farmers groups with elected positions. This is especially important at a time when Uganda is undergoing political and administrative change and decentralization and local communities will have increasing opportunities to get involved in governance. Another positive aspect is that communities are learning how to mobilize resources to manage their own projects and extend the program activities in other domains.

Technically, beneficiaries have been exposed to many new techniques in agriculture, nutrition, hygiene and management that will have lasting effects in improving the quality of life beyond the life of the project.

The status of women is progressively changing as a result of the high level of women's participation farmer saving groups. One woman commented on the collective spirit engendered among women saying, "Now we get together to make decisions." Women's visibility and leadership has increased through their engagement with the project and their participation in all project activities. Women see saving groups as an effective and sustainable tool that enhance capacity to withstand shocks. This is one successful story that ACI/VOCA and its partner should build on for future programming in Uganda.

This evaluation suggests that while the small size of landholdings could potentially be a constraint on agricultural production, tenure arrangements are often more critical for household food security. A more detailed investigation of local tenure arrangements would enable ACDI/VOCA to gauge how the different forms of ownership and tenancy affect investment, productivity, and the physical environment. Since a substantial proportion of female-headed households and single female-headed households fall into the "extremely vulnerable" category, a review of their specific constraints would be particularly informative.

The multiple shocks associated with recent droughts and floods are eroding the asset base of households to the point where recovery could be compromised. Some households are forced to take out consumption loans that are difficult to

pay back. Most villages in all districts covered by the MYAP are vulnerable to droughts and floods.

ACDI/VOCA continues to effectively implement the food distribution component of the Title II program. One of the most significant achievements of this component of the program is the graduation of food distribution clients who had been receiving food through the program since July 2007.

ACDI/VOCA Uganda is responsible for the monetization of hard red winter (HRW) wheat to finance operations and development activities. Monetization proceeds are disbursed to partners and local grantees for approved activities and budgets over the life of the MYAP. Title II distribution commodities include corn soy blend (CSB) and vegetable oil will be provided to 42,000 PLHIV and their households.

Food aid has been undergoing a number of changes in Uganda. Title II NGOs are no longer responsible for completing their Bellmon Analysis, and or annual updates. Given the increase in local production, vegetable oil is no longer available as a monetization commodity in Uganda. This means that only hard red winter wheat is being monetized in Uganda. Since the start of the ACDI/VOCA Uganda MYAP in 2007, there has been a simultaneous decrease in umbrella monetization participants due to a reduction in the total number of Title II Programs in Uganda in 2009. Presently, ACDI/VOCA and Mercy Corps are the only two Title II Programs in Uganda. There is one USDA monetization program operating in Uganda through FINCA but it operates largely outside of existing donor coordination working groups within Uganda. There has been a downsizing in scope and range of monetization commodity options within Uganda, and even greater need now for coordination between USDA and USAID on planned monetization programs in-country.

ACDI/VOCA is engaged in frequent value-added communications and regular face-to-face meetings with Umbrella Participants where reports and updates on status of commodities and the receipt and transfer of sales proceeds from the sales agent to the Title II cooperating sponsors were provided.

Umbrella Participants concluded that ACDI/VOCA led monetization sales generated proceeds that met or exceeded their program budget requirements and therefore there were no delays in project implementation due to monetization sales proceeds transfers. ACDI/VOCA brought much value-added to the role as an Umbrella Monetizer for all Title II programs in Uganda, including responsibility for coordinating sales, managing logistics and accounting for proceeds. ACDI/VOCA was very professional and business-like in their approach and management of risk. It is staffed with very experienced and technically knowledgeable specialists in the field and at headquarters.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from a combination of focus group discussions, key informant interviews and the follow-up plenary session with field agents, project managers and stakeholders. During the field assessment, beneficiaries were asked to contribute their recommendation and suggestions to improve the project. The recommendations are presented by programmatic sectors. They are designed to enhance the impact of the program both in the remaining two years as well as after the ACDI/VOCA program has been completed.

A. Priority Recommendations

1. **Focus more on excellence and impact at the household level**. It is clear that the program has completed scaling up both geographically and programmatically. Everyone in the surveyed districts recognizes that the focus now needs to shift more on quality and excellence. But the question remains what does quality mean and how the program should begin to enhance the quality. The monitoring unit should focus on that direction. ACDI/VOCA and USAID should review and adjust quality indicators and efficient information gathering tools should be developed to obtain information about the quality (in terms of impacts). The consultants recognize that changing indicators, especially impact indicators, at this point in the program might result in inaccurate results due to the fact that certain information may not have been collected from the beginning of the project. Review the format of Monthly, Quarterly, and Annual to hold more discussion on the quality of work completed, not only on the quantity. A "top-down" personality has evolved in the Program. This has been useful in getting the project to where it is now, fully scaled-up on a solid foundation.

   Given the need to address the quality of the program, it is time now to give more attention to finding best practices and capitalizing on lessons learned. Reward staff that practice excellent learning behavior. At the moment staff are recognized and rewarded for having completed planned work, and the work has been focused on getting outputs produced. Now that it is time to improve the quality of the program, those staff members who are making progress in improving the quality with new ideas and best practices should be recognized and rewarded

2. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

   - There is an urgent need to improve the capacity of the current Monitoring and Evaluation Unit for close attention to the provision

of management information, both to support the implementation of projects goals and to feed back into the design of new initiatives in changing environments. The program has established extensive M&E systems that monitoring production of outputs; the next step is to expand the system to be able to monitor quality of outputs, adding GIS tools.

- The use of geographic information could improve the efficiency of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. GIS has become an indispensable tool for adequately collecting analyzing multiple parameters involved in monitoring key indicators. An improved GIS should: boost productivity, improve coordination, create base to make better decisions, and enhance service thereby making better use of MYAP resources. We recommend that ACDI/VOCA develop an integrated information system enhanced by the use of a GIS as a useful tool in project monitoring and evaluation. The use of GPS units should be improved to geo-reference project data and show distribution of activities on a map of the project area. This will help ACDI/VOCA to map out all the indicators and increasing transparency and accountability at all levels and attracts future funders with solid data and an innovative monitoring technology.

- Need to disaggregate data (a) regions & districts and (b) to compare results between areas where all SOs are working and areas where only one or few IRs are working. Different program activities have different levels of impact on different types of groups. In order to understand this and identify upon whom the program is having greatest impact, data need to be disaggregated.

3. **The project should go beyond simple message delivery to ensure that participants internalize messages and apply them into their own households.**

    - The Program is doing a good job of developing behavioral change strategies, targeting specific messages and utilizing multiple communication channels. However, implementation of the strategies across all strategic objectives is being hampered somewhat by the methodologies being used at the front lines to transfer information. These tend to focus on top-down, lecture methodologies, ensuring that the message is stated. More rapid and complete behavioral change can be achieved by using methodologies that are more interactive and reflective, ensuring that the messages are understood and internalized. Program

leadership should work toward developing sustainability strategies to uphold the impact of the program.

4. Better integration better the food aid component and the others components of the MYAP.

5. Explore creative ways with USAID and other donors to provision food for disasters when they occur in the project area regardless of the type of disaster. This MYAP is a Title II food program and this, by definition, is supposed to be able to respond to emergencies when they occur.

6. **Commodity Management/Monetization**

   - ACDI/VOCA field and HQ staff should continue to communicate closely with USAID field and HQ staff in order to have either input in/or early access to Bellmon analysis/recommendations, as well as other future Title II plans for Uganda to ensure positioning of commodities, timing of sales and calls forward and development of annual PREPs.

   - Beyond ACDI/VOCA Uganda's existing umbrella monetization sales management and coordination role, USDA and USAID must communicate more closely to ensure that approved USDA Food for Progress programs are managed and coordinated with USAID Title II monetization programs. This should be reflected at donor level communications, included in Bellmon Analysis/Updates, and triangulated with ongoing ACDI/VOCA field level market price information and sales schedules.

   - ACDI/VOCA should continue with their inland transport service tender/bid process for each call forward shipment. Transport providers liked this approach since it is consistent with industry practices. ACDI/VOCA Uganda will be able to pay for services based on prevailing market prices with flexible logistical options based on competition.

   - ACDI/VOCA Uganda should consider for increased management efficiency, and greater programming/distribution activity integration and means of beneficiary verification should consider employing "smartcard, cell phone and biometrics" technologies to reduce human inputting error, increase accountability and account for services provided to each

beneficiary.

- While not always possible or practical, alternative ports in-country and trans-shipment through third countries may be effective and efficient options for shipping to countries that have poorly functioning ports or inland infrastructure. ACDI/VOCA could build a case study around its recent ability to identify alternative routes for shipments. This "back-up plan" information could help to inform other Title II organizations and or other PEPFAR related supply chain management projects based in the East African Region.

- Even though the typical distribution process only takes a few hours, it is an already assembled group and a potential training opportunity. At the distribution sites, SO1 information can be shared, for example reinforce diet plan training around practical dietary suggestion foods available in this community that build the body and 7 foods within their community that boost body immunity. This type of information can be pulled from existing ACDI/VOCA Uganda materials found on pages 18 and 19 of "Improving Quality of Life for People living with HIV/AIDS through Better Nutrition".

B. Other Recommendations

7. Expand groups in targeted districts to include more female-headed households. The evaluation team found a growing number of female-headed households who appear to be one of the most vulnerable households in the communities. The program should renew efforts to include those from lower wealth categories in the group formation process.

8. In northern and eastern Uganda, livestock provide important protein to household diets, a source of household income, and a critical means of transport. As such, animals constitute a critical component of the overall livelihood security strategy. Income earned off-farm--to the extent possible--is sometimes invested in the household herd as a form of savings as well as a means of coping with unforeseen and unpredictable difficulties. **Farmers believe that mitigation enterprises such as improved poultry and small ruminants can effectively help with the droughts and other emergency situations.**

9. Peace & Conflict resolution in the training component (Example of VEDCO working with German Agro working on conflict resolution. Some of the beneficiaries are ex-combatants).

10. Focus discussions among beneficiaries pointed out **to the need to explore the implementation of school gardens as a pilot activity**.

If the implementation of the program continues in its current form over the remaining two years, the program is very likely to be judged by the final evaluation to be a "good" program. If significant progress is made on the recommendations proposed above, however, this MYAP has the potential to be viewed as a "great" program, one that achieves high levels of sustained impact on large numbers of (in this case) the most food insecure.

C. Proactive Management

The consultants would like to point out that ACDI/VOCA has been proactive in re-evaluating the activities of the program. Most of the changes initiated by the management are in line with the consultant's recommendations. Some of the examples of changes in management initiated prior to the midterm evaluation include: a) improving the capacity of the current Monitoring and Evaluation Unit with GIS components; b) the trimming down of training material; c) the posting of additional staff in the field to help monitor activities better. Meanwhile many of the other activities proposed by the Evaluation team are already integrated in the ACDI/VOCA restructuring process.

ANNEX 1: SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE FIELD

▶ Africare Support Rescues Malnourished Boy and Enhances Community Awareness of Nutrition Issues

Fifty-one year old Mary Angweno, is a beneficiary farmer under *Awimon* Food Security Group, facilitated by the Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) of Africare in her marital village of *Awimon*, Kaberamaido District in Uganda. Her four-year grandson *Obongonyinge* is the sixth child in a family of seven children. His Father, Eyoku Richard, a fisherman on Lake Kyoga and Mother, Angwau Christine are separated. The mother returned to her maternal home with three of *Obongoyinge*'s seven siblings leaving behind *Obongonyinge* and three others. Because of the nature of his trade, *Eyoku Richard* is often away from home leaving the four children to fend for themselves for weeks.

Under the MYAP, Africare is implementing interventions to enhance food security through improved production and better use of food. *Mary Angweno* and other farmers under Awimon FSG have benefited in Community nutrition interventions including establishment of backyard/kitchen gardens, cooking demonstrations, hygiene and sanitation education, family life education and basic health education.

In September 2008, while doing a round in the village, an Africare Community Nutrition Extension worker learnt about *Obongonyinge's* condition. *Obongonyinge* had difficulty playing with other children in the neighborhood because he had a big stomach, pale skin, brownish-hair, and was emaciated weighing 10Kg (22 pounds). In addition, was coughing, complaining of stomach aches and was passing bloody stool. It was a case of severe malnutrition (*Marasmus* and wasting)

With support from USAID, *Obongonyinge* was rushed by Africare to Soroti Hospital Nutrition Unit. He was hospitalized for four weeks while undergoing therapeutic feeding in two phases; stabilization and rehabilitation. Africare provided support in linking him to a feeding program under ACDI/VOCA. He now receives a food ration of Con Soy Blend (CSB) every month. Africare staff visited him while in hospital and at home after he was discharged. He had gained weight to 10.5 Kg (23.1 pounds)

▶ Children's chances of schooling improved through increase in household incomes

Sophia Okello in picture below (51 years of age) is one of the female members of Lobo dongo farmers group consisting of 30 members in Alimo kuc village,

Alanyi parish and is managed by CIDI with support from USAID. She joined the group at its inception in April 2008. Sophia is married to Okello, cares for 7 dependent children. The children were struggling to stay at school due lack enough of money to send all of them at once. Since joining the group, Sophia has seen positive changes within her household, her business and her position in the community.

"the project has empowered me as from the income I get from sale of agricultural produce. My children and other dependants are back in school, their feeding has greatly improved! I received several trainings in the six technical areas under the project and received improved seeds and farm implements. From a simple beginning, I have managed to buy an ox, goats after sale of produce. I am also practicing good nutrition and sanitation in my home than before."

She speaks very enthusiastically about her future plans. Continuous use of improved seeds, attending trainings and acquiring skills for improved crop production, opening more land and acquiring another oxen and procure an ox plough and raise more money for group savings and getting more assets; things that she could not do before joining the project. CIDI's keen staff asked her to advise other community members. Well she had this to say:

Keto ngeci me pur, cil pacu ikare kare, Tic igurup/ lonyo tye ikweri, Gwoko cente, Pwonyo otino ikop me cil pacu kede pur , Nwongo ngec kom Extension staff (oponye). Meaning; putting all knowledge got out trainings in practice

"APWOYO CIDI". Meaning, Thank you CIDI"

►Group savings rescues 2 vulnerable children's education career

Betty Akello (18) and Timothy Andrew (16) live in Kalaki Village in Kaberamaido district. They were brilliant students who enjoyed education until death took their parents. They were taken up by guardians who belonged Kalaki widows & PLWHA's group, however, have minimal capacity to carter for school fees and other needs. Good news is that the group having seen the desire of the students offered to take them to vocational college for further studies. This was only possible with group saving. Members save and borrow at an interest agreed upon by members. This initiative has enabled communities mobilize resources to withstand shocks or provide for community members who are in need.

Using their little savings, Kalaki widows & PLWHAs managed by TPO has brought a smile on Timothy and Betty who are now back at school thanks to the knowledge received from ACDI/VOCA training on savings. Betty is doing tailoring and Timothy is doing brick laying. The hope of continuing with education had vanished, but with group savings, it has been rescued. The group expects them to gain knowledge to assist the community in two years time.

Improved household food security, improves quality of life for vulnerable children

Otwele Paul a peasant of Obarute village in Ongongoja sub county joined Amoata Farmer Group in October 2007. He says joining the group was a revolution in his life. Being in a group member helped him acquire knowledge on farming as business, hygiene and nutrition and improved farming practices from LWF project staff. Paul has ten dependants in his household that include his own children, his wife and other relatives. Before the project, meeting their basic needs was a big hussle and in particular, children who are biologically not his. He started by establishing a small vegetable garden of 7m X 7m, which he expanded into a large tomato garden after realizing the benefits. He sold the tomatoes and accumulated up to over 800,000 Uganda shillings that enabled him to buy five goats, ten local hens and one improved cock. He added onto the available resources, 300,000= and bought eight acres of land that he has planted cassava. Paul further explained that his family's health has improved due to eating vegetables regularly. Selling tomatoes enabled him to meet other basic needs like buying soap, salt, treatment and being school requirements like uniform and books for the children without segregating. Even the children render support towards the project to make it successful. He feels the knowledge he has acquired will continue helping him in many ways.

- In kalaki, a farmer group called Kalaki widows & PLWHAs reported having taken the initiative to take two vulnerable children under their care for vocational courses notably tailoring and brick laying using their consolidated group savings and other benefits accruing from the project.
- Ribere en teko youth farmer group in Kalaki accumulate up to 4 Million of group savings by the April 2009. By the time of reporting, this group had started constructing a group store in their village using part of this money. They plan to use that store to store their crop produce after the harvest as well as buy from other farmers for resale. The group is also been lending savings to their members who repay the loan with interest.

▶ As a result of training in FaaB, the farmers have learnt that selling off their harvest immediately after harvest would make them realize very little profit, therefore, they have kept their harvest and are waiting to sell them when the market price is high in order to get more profit. They have also kept improved seeds for planting this season.

▶ **Off-season Vegetable Gardening Benefits a Farming Household in Amuria Eyumu** . Simon Peter is a beneficiary farmer of the kitchen gardening intervention in Akileng farmer group in Amuria district, Uganda facilitated by

the Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) through Africare. Through trainings at the demonstration gardens, Eyumu Simon Peter and 65 other farmers learned techniques for improved cultivation of vegetables including how to set up vegetable nursery beds, transplanting of seedlings and maintenance of a kitchen-backyard garden as a way of improving the nutrition and health in the household. They were also introduced to the concept of off-season planting of vegetables so as to have vegetable supply in the household year-round. By the end of the trainings, Eyumu had learned all the steps in cultivating different varieties of vegetables. These varieties included tomatoes, onions, cabbages, egg plants, carrots and pumpkins. He had also learned how to set up and maintain a kitchen-backyard garden for his household. In the dry season, Eyumu applied what he had learned by growing off-season tomatoes. He regularly watered his garden so as to keep the tomatoes healthy. As a result, he was able to harvest 16 basins of tomatoes (240 kilos). This yield was too much for his household to consume. He sold an estimated 200 kilos of tomatoes for UGX 203,000 ($100) to community members. From the proceeds, Eyumu was able to buy meat for his household as well as pay for his children's school fees. Eyumu says of his experience, "Africare has taught me to use simple farming techniques to make a difference in the health of my family. I'm glad I participated in the kitchen gardening trainings."

▶ The Wind of fortune: a tale of moving from dustOkwir Karol comes from Amononeno central village, Amononeno parish in Abako Sub County. He is one of the founder members of Cam kwoki farmers group that started on the 15th April 2008 which coincides with the inception of the CIDI-ACDI/VOCA USAID food security project in Lira district. Okwir lived in a small mud and wattle grass thatched house together with his entire family. He had limited knowledge on basic hygiene, sanitation and nutrition practices as well as agronomy and post harvest handling techniques. He was food insecure (often eating one meal) having spent a long time in internal displaced peoples camp. The Okwirs' received seeds of sunflower, Maize, Rice and Ground nuts. He also received Cassava cuttings, pawpaw and orange seedlings, hoes and a panga from CIDI. This was accompanied with specialized training in Agronomy, nutrition sanitation hygiene, post harvest handling, farming as business, natural resource management and savings and credit management. The couple has been able to increase on production as result of improved seeds and specialized training, able to increase on income and they were food secure last six months. He was able to use the previous year's earning from the produce to construct themselves a very nice iron roofed house that was not in his dream. His children are back to school. Okwir beams an elegant smile when tasked to explain the trick behind his achievements. "CIDI omedo rwom me pura. CIDI omia a bedo kede kare me gero ot abati. Rwom me kec/can odok cen pacona". When asked what the couple's plans were in there new found avalanche of fortune. They had this to say: Continue use of improved seed varieties, save within the group, collective procurement and marketing with other group members.

▶ Small beginnings reward :In Usuk Sub County, Apeleun farmers group (a first year group 2007) has been saving in the last two years and in a meeting held in March to discuss sharing of interest accrue, a resolution was made that each group member buys a goat as a tangible reward from the scheme.

Farmers promote bulk marketing and value addition initiatives:Omabule Farmer Group in Abarilela sub county is a group that was supported by the project (2007/2008).It has managed to save up to 1,340,000/= (One million three hundred and forty thousand shillings) in nine months i.e. between April 2008 - December 2008.With part of the savings 646, 000, (Six hundred and forty six thousand), the group bought and stocked 18 bags of groundnuts. Collectively, the group hand shelled it and sold at 980,400=.

▶ Success story in savings mobilization and credit:Oyoo Alwak farmers group (located in Alenga Parish, Dokolo sub-county, Dokolo District) was fully formed on 1st July 2008, when 30 members met at Omara Faustino's home digging for the host, as a group. Each member was paid 500 shillings and those who didn't participate were fined 2,500 shillings each. All the money collected was kept with the treasurer. This was after a training they received on Group development, Savings and Credit from NSARWU.

On 29th August 2008, members met and discussed ways of raising money to save. Major avenues of savings as had been suggested would be through digging and pulling from own pockets every month. At this time, all the members had saved a total of 441,650 shillings. With this amount, it was suggested that they begin lending out to fellow members at soft interest rates to help them solve home problems including school fees, medical care, and small businesses. Through lending, Oyoo Alwak would also earn interest.

Members borrow money mainly for school fees and medical care at an interest rate of 10% per annum. Non members borrow at a higher rate of 15% per annum. Loan disbursement is done at a general meeting (monthly) and the loan applicant must have two guarantors with clean savings and borrowing records. Borrowers are given a maximum of three months to pay back the loan. There is a task force elected to follow up loan recovery and verifying the security offered in case of loan repayment failure. However, there have not been any cases of loan defaulting reported.

▶ Members want their savings to grow to a level that will make each household construct a semi-permanent house through continuous digging. The group has hired 3 acres of land where they will plant Simsim and returns will boost their savings. They also plan to invest in other ventures especially produce buying which will increase their profits.

Central storage is also looked at as a profitable venture. Members with support from ACDI/VOCA hope to construct a Central store where they will keep their produce awaiting marketing. They hope to contribute labour, bricks, sand and other locally available materials. Members praise their leaders for keeping them together. They are honest, trustworthy, committed, and hard working.

Edisa Kamalikoli—Farming for Food & Development-Eastern Uganda (FADEP-EU). Of the thousands who have benefited from nutrition and hygiene training is Edisa Kamalikoli of Naboa Sub-County, Budaka District whose vegetable garden is pictured below. The family of Edisa, made up of seven members including the husband did not include vegetables most of the times in the family meals before MYAP. This situation was to change after Edisa joined the Kakule Group under FADEP (ACDI/VOCA grantee) in 2007. After attending training in Nutrition and Hygiene where vegetable garden was promoted, Edisa established a vegetable garden where she planted and maintained throughout the months at least four varieties of vegetables. This has ensured that the family includes fresh vegetable in its meals everyday. It is expected that regular consumption of fresh vegetables will increase the family's Vitamin A and Iron intake, and thus increased immunity. Ever since I started eating these vegetables I fall sick less often and my children are stronger and healthier', said Edisa.

▶ Mr. Ekullu—Farming for Food & Development-Eastern Uganda (FADEP-EU). A clean, well planned and organized compound with four beautiful grass-thatched huts welcomes you to James' home in Boliso I, Puti-Puti Sub-county in Pallisa district. Seated under a shade in his compound, James jumped onto his feet to welcome me, the day I visited his home on 17th/06/2008 during my study tour of FADEP field activities. "You have really worked so hard on this compound", I greeted him in return, and as a way of opening up my conversation with him. Mr. Ekullu James was full of excitement when I introduced myself as a student on research who was interested learning about in his work as a beneficiary farmer under FADEP. Mr. Ekullu took me through an interesting narration of his baseline and current achievement under FADEP, and I felt as if I was back in the lecture theatre being taken through a lecture on cause, effect and solution of rural poverty. I was overwhelmed by the analytical abilities this ordinary farmer had developed. Mr. Ekullu then accepted to freely conduct me around his compound and gardens.

In his home I saw an amazingly clean pit latrine, surrounded with a flower garden and a small Jerry-can filled with water hanged on two poles, which he explained to me was a tip-tap useful in cleaning his hands after leaving the latrine – to avoid carrying along possible germs from the toilet. He then took me to an impressive back-yard garden of vegetables; neatly planted in rows, and in small sub-gardens, many of them containing various kinds of vegetables planted in staggered stages of growth – he explained, "Ejasi ekiyarin olilota" – literally meaning the green vegetables have vitamin A that helps to fight infections. He

then took me to a facility he uses to ensure hygiene in process of sun-drying his foods such cassava, which he called a 'drying rack'. It contained grain which was being dried – too clean to be a reality in remote poor household in a village! Between the main hut and kitchen is a double-stair plate-rack; with a sock-pit to drain dirty water. Also beneath the plate-rack was container, which he explained is used to collect waste water to used to water his vegetable garden when the weather is harsh – "this is one of the reasons why his vegetable garden is called a kitchen", Mr. Ekullu explained. Far on the eastern end of his compound stood a nursery bed for tree seedlings – set with support of FADEP. "I am managing it for, and on behalf of my group of 299 other farmers in the sub-county", he explained.

Lastly, Mr. Ekullu James then took his gardens, not far away from the home, which narrated were his production efforts for season 2008A. He planted 2-acres of maize (longe 5), 1-acre of beans (K132). The maize seed was purchased from money obtained through sale of the produce he had received from the 5kg received as material assistance from FADEP at start of the project in 2007B, while the beans were planted from the home-saved seed. He also had 1-acre of cassava (variety 00067 or 'akena' – meaning laughter, for the relief it gave after the traditional cassava crop had nearly been wiped out by the mosaic disease). There was also 1-acre of G/nuts. Mr. Ekullu expects to harvest big!; and indeed his well drawn records indicate that he expects to get 4000kgs of maize from the two acres, 600kg from the 1-acre of beans, and 800kgs of the G/nuts.

When asked of his achievements since FADEP intervention in his family, Mr. Ekullu sums up by boosting that;

- He is now food secure
- Receives high income from good quality produce.
- He has business skills
- He no longer frequent hospitals for treatment due to improved hygiene and sanitation
- He has skills and keeps up to date records, so he can now be consulted by many other farmers
- He is now a respected member of the village.

He concludes that "should life be there for him", he plans to;

- Open up a local poultry unit and piggery enterprises as diversified source of income to enable him fully educate his children
- Construct an iron-roof house for his family by end of 2009.

As a challenge, Mr. Ekullu explains that whereas he has benefited from FADEP-EU, many equally poor households were left out of the support, and although they are trying to learn by imitation, their efforts still need direct attention of a "clean, hardworking NGO like FADEP". "Many people are living on fate, like he

was before FADEP support", he sorrowfully puts it. "Is it possible for FADEP to extend its support to others", he wonders.

ANNEX 2: SCOPE OF WORK

USAID P.L 480 Title II Food Security Program in Uganda

ACDI/VOCA Mid-Term Evaluation

Consultancy Title:	**Mid-Term Evaluation Consultant**
Project Name:	**USAID PL 480 Title II Food Security Program**
Location:	**Uganda**
Timeframe:	**JUly 15, 2009-August 22, 2009**
Level of effort:	**Up to 34 work days; number of work days to be extended only upon approval from project supervisor**

I. Introduction

ACDI/VOCA will conduct a mid-term evaluation of its five year Title II food security program in Uganda for submission to USAID.

II. Purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation

An evaluation is a learning process and an ideal opportunity for a project team to take stock of its achievements, reflect on the project's strengths and weaknesses and strategize about the best options for the future. The mid-term evaluation is also an opportunity to use the knowledge gained during the years of implementation to validate assumptions made in the original analysis and to adjust accordingly. Teams may need to fine tune activities and outputs to achieve the project's intended outcomes on schedule. An evaluation helps determine the best course of action.

The MYAP Title II mid-term evaluation has a number of key purposes:

- The evaluation should asses the project's progress in meeting its expected results and the likelihood of attaining its outcomes and impact as defined in the agreed Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP);
- The evaluation should help improve the project's performance by highlighting and identifying ways to strengthen management and achieve sustainable results;

- Suggestions and recommendations made in the evaluation report should inform the post-evaluation action plan that will be prepared by the project team. This will guide the project in its remaining years and confirm the continuing relevance of goals, objectives and methodology; and,
- A mid-term evaluation should provide accountability to all stakeholders: USAID, ACDI/VOCA, project partners, beneficiaries and the Government of Uganda.

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the achievements to date and identify areas for improvement in the implementation of ACDI/VOCA's FY 2007-2011 MYAP. The evaluator will carry out evaluation activities and produce a concise, readable report that assesses and documents the impact of ACDI/VOCA's activities both expected and unexpected with respect to project objectives. Additionally the report should highlight the relevance, performance and accomplishments of certain program components. The report will be presented to USAID upon completion.

III. Project Background

In 2006, USAID awarded ACDI/VOCA a five-year $74 million Title II Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) in Uganda. The program aims to reduce food insecurity and increase nutrition awareness and best practices for vulnerable populations in northern and eastern Uganda in 17 districts (Amolatar, Dokolo, Amuria, Apac, Gulu, Amuru, Katakwi, Kitgum, Lira, Pader, Kumi, Soroti, Oyam, Bukedea, Pallisa, Budaka, Kaberamaido) in the sub-regions of Lango, Acholi, and Teso. The project is an outgrowth of efforts that began in 1989 when ACDI/VOCA began managing a USAID-funded P.L. 480 Title II program with the objective of transforming smallholder subsistence farmers into viable commercial producers through the introduction of modern farming techniques. Over the years, ACDI/VOCA has implemented seven other projects in Uganda and will build on its past successes through the implementation of its new project. Along with project partners Africare, Lutheran World Federation, The Aids Support Organization (TASO), and local non-governmental organization (NGO) grantees, ACDI/VOCA will work towards alleviating food insecurity in Uganda through two strategic project objectives:

- Reduced food insecurity and increased nutrition status through better production and use of food by smallholder farmers.
    - Improved nutrition and hygiene practices at the household and community levels
    - Enhanced agricultural productivity, farm management and marketing
    - Increased road access to local and regional markets and to social services
    - Enhanced community and household capacity to withstand shocks

- Reduced food insecurity and improved nutrition for particularly vulnerable people through the distribution of supplementary food rations.
    - Direct distribution of supplemental food to 42,000 PLWHA including their families
    - Improved health and nutrition practices through behavior change education
    - Increased access to complementary services for food beneficiaries

Key program activities include:

- Providing training of trainers (TOT) to local NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in a dual approach that both strengthens organizational and financial management and develops technical capacity to assist farmer groups to increase their overall food security;
- Facilitating the demonstration of improved agronomic practices and post-harvest handling (PHH) technologies and the construction of hygiene facilities;
- Rehabilitating rural feeder roads to improve smallholder farmer linkages to markets;
- Equipping farmers with the skills that enable them to plan their farming activities, project incomes, and market produce with a focus on profitability;
- Promoting better dietary practices for rural Ugandans by providing them with useful dietary information and helping them establish kitchen gardens for home consumption;
- Distributing monthly corn-soy blend and vegetable oil rations to 42,000 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs);
- Working with PLWHAs to ensure long-term food security.

The Program also currently serves as the Umbrella monetization manager for all other Title II cooperating sponsors in Uganda.

IV. Scope of the evaluation

The mid-term evaluation should include findings, lessons learned and recommendations of ACDI/VOCA's FY07-FY11 Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) in Uganda. The evaluation team, taking into account information provided by project staff, will make a determination of project sites to visit.

The mid-term evaluation will provide an opportunity to identify and document impact, key lessons learned and sustainability of certain components. In this regard, the evaluation and report shall address the following at a minimum:

- *Relevance and attainability of the objectives*: Are project activities addressing food insecurity and improving nutrition? Are the project objectives still relevant?

- *An analysis of how efficiently project planning and implementation are carried out:* Are management arrangements of the project such that efficient execution and implementation is guaranteed?
- *Analyzing the sustainability of certain program components:*
    - Credit activities through local savings schemes;
    - Local grantee organizations' sustainability;
    - Production increases and the likelihood that these will continue;
    - The degree to which farmers are moving from subsistence to commercial farming;
    - Adoption of improved farming and post-harvest handling techniques;
    - Knowledge and adoption of good nutritional practices;
    - The quality and sustainability of road rehabilitation activities;
    - The impact of food supplements for PLWHA beneficiaries;
    - The impact of income generating activities (IGA) on the transition of PLWHAs; and,
    - The transition of PLWHA food distribution beneficiaries to agricultural activities.
- *Assessing which activities are contributing the most to achieving the food security goals of the project:* What is the level of impact?
- What project activities are currently working to achieve project goals and what is not working?
- What activities are providing the best return in terms of developmental impact per funds utilized?
- What changes could be made in current activities that would enhance their contribution to the fulfillment of objectives, taking into account funding availability?
- What aspects of the ACDI/VOCA Uganda PL-480 Food Security Program could be usefully replicated in other countries?
- Are linkages and relationships being established and strengthened between the project the Government of Uganda (GOU) in terms of food security?
- How is the program viewed by donors, NGOs and private sector in terms of impacting food security?
- What are additional ways to improve coordination with other food security partners in Uganda?
- Do the project's monetization activities have developmental impact? What are the effects of monetization on the local, regional and national markets?
- Are the initiated activities likely to continue after donor funding ends? Will positive results continue after the project funding ends?
- What are some issues and constraints that have been encountered during program implementation and how can they be addressed?

- Are the criteria for beneficiary selection appropriate? Is the Title II program reaching the most vulnerable in target geographic areas?
- Is the transfer of knowledge between lead farmers, extension agents and farmer group members efficient? What results did farmer groups realize from the technical trainings?
- How can ACDI/VOCA ensure an efficient and effective transition for project beneficiaries into the private sector? How can ACDI/VOCA ensure that project beneficiaries will continue to see value in investment of their own resources to purchase supplies on the open market?

The evaluation will also examine and comment on the extent to which the project is responding to the food security objectives of USAID/Uganda.

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V. Evaluation Methodology

The mid-term evaluation should include but not necessarily limit to the following methods:

- Desk review of relevant documents (project document, quarterly and annual project reports, minutes of technical meetings, reports on project activities, relevant national policy documents etc.);
- Individual and/or group interviews with members of the grants development unit (GDU), logistics department and any other relevant staff members;
- Individual or group interviews with representatives of partners and additional stakeholders in country;
- Interviews with project beneficiaries;
- Meetings with representatives of USAID/Uganda;
- Meetings with local government officials and Government of Uganda officials, as appropriate;
- Field visits to services developed/supported under the project; and,
- Questionnaires.

The evaluation consultant should present a detailed statement of proposed evaluation methods in the submitted technical proposal.

Participatory Nature of the Evaluation

As a lesson learned from previous evaluations, the mid-term evaluation needs to be carried out in a participatory fashion, forming a team that, in various places and times, includes a range of managers, implementers, community leaders, partner agency staff and stakeholders. The study will note the views of the target groups with regard to their respective projects, paying particular attention to any significant gender-based differences in those views. It will also provide any other information that may further support or clarify the impact of the program. The process and findings are expected to enable ACDI/VOCA and its partners to clearly and easily evaluate the quality of programming over the last two and a half years.

Program Management

The evaluator will comment on ACDI/VOCA's performance in managing the program based on the criteria outlined in the MYAP. The evaluator will measure whether ACDI/VOCA is managing the program with enough full-time staff and has effectively utilized available host-country consultants to carry out project activities.

Monetization

Through the Umbrella Monetization agreement with USAID and other cooperating sponsors in Uganda, ACDI/VOCA currently manages the monetization component of all Title II programs in Uganda. The evaluator should report on the following:

- The utility of ACDI/VOCA serving as an umbrella monetizer;
- The timeliness with which payments from sales are made to cooperating sponsors;
- Delays in project implementation, if any, that have resulted from delays in sales proceeds transfers;
- Regularity and timeliness of reports and updates from ACDI/VOCA on:
  a) the status of commodities at the port, en route to Kampala and upon delivery

  b) the receipt and transfer of sales proceeds from the sales agent; and,

- ACDI/VOCA's protection of monetization proceeds from currency fluctuations.

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VI. Outputs/Deliverables

The evaluation will utilize both qualitative and quantitative methodology to assess progress towards targets. The evaluation will analyze existing reports and will obtain additional insights through informal interviews, focus group discussions and participatory rural appraisals.

From this information, the evaluator will prepare a report focusing on: (a) the results of ACDI/VOCA's project in relation to baseline indicators, life-of-activity targets and key assumptions; (b) reasons why targets were achieved or not achieved; (c) significant trends and differences between planned and actual performance; (d) the roles of beneficiary participation, feedback and inter-sectoral cooperation in activity implementation; (e) the significance of ACDI/VOCA's accomplishments; and, (f) the extent to which the project has accomplished its set objectives as documented in the MYAP proposal. The report content and structure should follow any applicable mid-term evaluation report guidelines from USAID Office of Food for Peace and ACDI/VOCA's project agreement. The final report should be submitted both in hard copy and electronic formats.

The evaluation will examine the quantitative measures of actual *vis a vis* scheduled progress for all targeted performance indicators (Refer to the Program's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan).

List of documents to be provided by the project team

- MYAP proposal
- Performance Monitoring Plan
- Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)
- Annual Results Reports for the program
- Annual Resource Requests (PREPs) for the program
- Quarterly Reports
- Monetization Agreements
- Previous Impact Reports

b. Proposed timeline

Level of Effort: Up to 34 days. The final version of the mid-term evaluation should be available by August 20, 2009 in order to allow project partners to adjust implementation plans if needed. The evaluator will travel with ACDI/VOCA representatives to several parts of the country to visit program activities. On returning to Kampala, the evaluator will prepare the draft report which will be presented to the program's senior management team and selected project partners before departing the country.

The following timeline is proposed:

Activity	Deadline
Submit the mid-term evaluation workplan	July 20, 2009
Field data collection	July 21, 2009-August 8, 2009
Preparation and submission of the preliminary report	August 10, 2009-August 14, 2009
Debriefing meeting with GDU and selected project partners	August 17, 2009
Submission of the final report	August 20, 2009

VII. Desired Qualifications

- Familiarity with Title II programming and monetization activities
- Experience with rural agriculture training/and or food distribution programs

- Experience in conducting mid-term evaluations in sub-Saharan Africa for USAID projects
- Experience working with PVOs or other international organizations
- Experience working with USAID reporting and assessment tools
- Strong organizational and reporting skills, attention to detail, and ability to meet deadlines
- Ability to work with a diverse group of individuals in a sometimes challenging environment
- Proficient in use of Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) and SPSS statistical software

VIII. Travel

Travel to north/northeastern Uganda is anticipated for field data collection. A driver and car will be provided for travel outside of Kampala, Uganda.

IX. Expenditures

The consultant will be eligible to receive per diem (lodging and meals/incidentals) for time spent in Uganda as well as for time spent traveling to and from Uganda. Additional expenditures will be reimbursed on the basis of expense reports backed by receipts. Allowable expenditures consist of phone/fax charges related to the consultancy, photocopying, inner city transport to meetings, and travel (based on approved itineraries). No danger pay will be provided.

X. Logistical Support/Needs

The Consultant will provide their own laptop computer and will provide all documents in Microsoft Word and Excel formats.

ANNEX 2: LIST OF CONTACTS

Name	Org,/Title/Location
Lee Forsythe	USAID/FFP Uganda/Kampala
K.K. Radhamohan	Kengrow/Chief Executive/Kampala
Mr. Patal	Nile Agro Industries, Ltd./Director/Jinja
Humphrey Pule	Kenfreight/Operations Marketing Manager/Kampala
Michael Kayakih	Kenfreight/Managing Director/Kampala
Joram Nyanzi	M&R Spedag Group/General Manager/Kampala
Michael Bubendorf	M&R Spedag Group/ Commercial Manager/Kampala
Florence Namayanja	M&R Spedag Group/ Head Projects/Kampala
Hussein Kiddedde	Road Freighters/Managing Director/Kampala
Maureen Kekirunga	TASO/Program Officer /Kampala
Paul Howe	WFP/Program Officer/Kampala
Sarah Larson	The Lutheran World Federation/Program Coordinator/Kampala
Brown Ayella	The Lutheran World Federation/M&E Officer/Kampala
Vickie Kobusingye	Africare/Senior Accountant/Kampala
Francis Musinguzi	Africare/Program Officer/Kampala
Hyghten Mungoni	Africare/Country Representative/Kampala
Darius Radcliffe	MercyCorps/Country Director/Kampala
Lorin Fries	Save the Children in Uganda/Livelihood and Food Security Specialist/Kampala
Issac	World Vision/Financial Officer/Kampala
Fabian Kasi	FINCA/CEO/ Kampala
Thomas Gibb	ACDI/VOCA/Country Representative/Kampala
George W.K. Bamugye	ACDI/VOCA/Monetization Coordinator/Kampala
Ruth Nansikombi	Monetization Sales Assistant
Timothy Kalugye	ACDI/VOCA/Logistics Coordinator/Kampala
Margaret	ACDI/VOCA/Gulu Distribution Officer
Edith A	ACDI/VOCA/Warehouse Officer/Kampala
David Slane	ACDI/VOCA/Kampala
Phoebe K	ACDI/VOCA/Soroti Distribution/Kampala
James Charles	ACDI/VOCA/Soroti Project Manager/Soroti District
Jane	ACDI/VOCA/Soroti Project Officer/Soroti District
Judy	ACDI/VOCA/Soroti Data Officer/Soroti District
Pius	ACDI/VOCA/Soroti Commodity Warehouse Officer/Soroti District
Michael	TASO – Soroti District Project Liaison
Amy Latrielle	ACDI/VOCA/PLWHA Livelihood Integration Manager
Mr. Saaka	Saaka Ltd./CEO/Kampala
Mr. Kamal	J.R. Kays Enterprise/CEO/Kampala
Jerome Binois	SDV Transami/Managing Director/Kampala

Gerald Peter Emoyo	ACDI/VOCA/Team Leader, Savings & Credit Specialist/Kampala
Ahmadou N'Diade	ACDI/VOCA/Development Projects Manager/Kampala
Barry Elkin	ACDI/VOCA/Commodity /Monetization Manager/Washington DC
Ashleigh Mullinax	ACDI/VOCA/Senior Project Coordinator/Washington DC
Emily Byron	ACDI/VOCA/ProjectAssistant Food Security/Washington DC

ANNEX 3: TOPICAL OUTLINE

Dear partner or grantee,

As part of the Mid-Term Evaluation, we are sending you this questionnaire to all partners or grantees to get your opinions and views about the program and the partnership. The objectives of the Mid Term Evaluation are to assess the impact to help ACDI/VOCA and its partner organizations to decide what is working and what is not working. This is the opportunity to all of us to make necessary changes to the program for the remaining life. We believe that there is always room for improvement even when things are doing well. We are looking forward to your honest opinion. Thank you!)

1. Name of Partner or Grantee:

2. Start date of your first MYAP activities:

3. Operational areas:

    3.1. Name of districts:

    3.2. Name of counties:

    3.3. Numbers of sub-counties

    3.5. Number of Parishes:

    3.6. Number of old groups:

    3.7. Number of new farmer's group:

    3.8. Number of regular salaried staff MYAP:

    3.9. Number of Field Agents:

    3.10 Number of volunteers:

4. In addition to this MYAP what other programs do you implement?

    4.1

    4.2

    4.3

5. In general, how effective has the management of the MYAP been from your perspective over the last few years? What has worked well? What has not worked well?

6. How well has the vision for the program been articulated? How effectively has this vision been imparted to program partners?

7. How well has the program communicated with you? Have you noticed any change over the last few years? What has worked well? What has not worked well?

8. How have problems been solved? What has worked well in terms of problem solving? What has not worked well?

9. How does the MYAP fit into the wider program framework for your organization?

What complementary activities are you undertaking in conjunction with the MYAP?

What benefits have resulted from this interface? How could this interface be strengthened? What additional benefits could be realized?

10. What would you like to see improved in the current MYAP?

11. What would you like to see done differently in the MYAP?

12. What have been done so far to enhance the capacity of your organization to implement the MYAP effectively? What additional capacity building activities are needed?

13. Do you have any specific recommendation to strengthen the partnership between ACDI/VOCA and your organization to enhance the impact of the program?

14. Do you have any plan and resources to continue any of the activities after the end of MYAP? If yes, please tell us which activities. How you will manage the resources?

15. Specific comments on the monetization aspects

16. What are the 3 most important success stories you would like to share with us?

17. What are the 3 most important lessons learned?

18. What are the 3 most important modifications you would like to propose?

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR RESPONSES DIRECTLY TO ME BY AUGUST 17, 2009

Dr. Mamadou Baro, Tango-International USA.

Email: baro@email.arizona.edu

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

ANNEX 4: COMMODITY MANAGEMENT/MONETIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you describe your business?
2. How long have you or your company been involved with the ACDI/VOCA inland freight contract or monetization sales program?
3. What service is the ACDI/VOCA Title II Program providing? And to whom?.
4. Tell me about your experiences with the inland freight contract/ monetization sales?
5. Who was your contact person at ACDI/VOCA if you have a question/problem? (communication/contact)
6. If you had a complaint how was it handled? (Customer Service) We always get prompt attention to our phone calls or e-mails..
7. Did you receive any pre-bid training? (capacity building) Did you know who won, and why? (transparency)
8. Did you know who won, and why? (transparency)
9. Are there any suggestions on how the inland logistics tender bid to contract/monetization sales program could be improved?
10. How is your business changing to continue to be competitive in the market?

ANNEX 5: COUNTRY ADMINISTRATIVE &STATUS BACKGROUND

Macro Overview

Uganda is relatively isolated from global markets principally because of the high transfer costs traders face in shipping commodities to and from landlocked Uganda (IFPRI 2008). In addition, Uganda is self-sufficient in food production nationally.

The Republic of Uganda is located in East Africa. It is a landlocked country bordering Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, Rwanda in the southwest, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, and Sudan in the north. The country is administratively divided into approximately 85 districts. However, this number is an approximate because of a recent increase in the creation of new districts. Each district is further subdivided into five categories: village, parish, sub-county, and country/sub-district.

Administrative Unit		Governing Body
1.	Village	Local Council 1
2.	Parish	Local Council 2
3.	Sub-County	Local Council 3
4.	County/Sub-District	Local Council 4
5.	District	Local Council 5

Uganda has a decentralized system of governance, and several functions, including the setting of funding priorities for primary health care interventions. The central government retains the roles of policymaking, standard setting, technical oversight, and overall program supervising.

Uganda has a population of roughly 30 million people. More than 85 percent of Uganda's population lives in rural areas. According to the 2006 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Uganda's annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP) varied between 4.7 percent and 6.6 percent from 2001 to 2006.

The economy is predominantly agricultural, with the majority of the population dependent on subsistence farming and light agriculture-based industries. Coffee accounts for most of Uganda's export revenues. The country is self-sufficient in food, although its distribution can be uneven and some areas prone to shocks including civil unrest, drought and floods.

- Civil unrest and transnational guerilla activity in the northern, western, and southwestern parts of the country have created an estimated two million internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- According to a July 2009 FEWS NET Report, "The first rainy season, from March to June/July, is a major cropping season in northern Uganda's Acholi

> region. In the districts of Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader, the season generates upwards of 60 percent of total annual production. However, a nearly four-week delay in the onset of the rains, and sporadic precipitation since then, will likely lead to a poor harvest. Crop harvest losses could reach as high 60 percent."

Meanwhile, "foodstuff prices have declined drastically due to the ongoing harvest season in most parts of the country", according to an article in the Kampala newspaper, *New Vision*. The agricultural market report for August prepared by Info Trade Uganda, a farmers' organization, indicates that fresh cassava costs between sh280 and sh1,000 (wholesale) and from sh300 to sh 1,000 (retail) in most urban centers across the country. In Gulu, a kilogramme of dry cassava goes for sh900 (retail). It costs sh400 in Nakawa, while in Jinja and Mbale, it is as low as sh300 and sh160 respectively.

ANNEX 6: MONETIZATION MULTIPLIER EFFECT VIGNETTE

The vignette provided below is from the ACDI/VOCA Uganda Title II Program. The purpose of including this vignette is to provide a human interest side to the monetiztion section of this evaluation section. It shows how the monetization process has acted as a business development tool in Uganda.

Gaster Lule humbly began as a cake vendor in 1980, but his shrewdness and hard work has seen him build Ntake Bakery Company Ltd, which he started in 1987, into a multibillion bakery-cum-grain-milling enterprise. The 48-year old entrepreneur, who studied only up to Senior Four, runs one of Uganda's most successful bakeries, employing over a 100 workers. Under the same company, Mr Lule also owns a state-of-the-art wheat mill with the capacity to process up to 200 tons (soon to be expanded to 300) of wheat a day.

Based in Kampala's suburb of Najjanankumbi along Entebbe Road, Ntake Bakery is well known for its popular Premium Bread, while the wheat mill, based in Nalukolongo Industrial Area in another Kampala suburb, produces Horse brand for bakeries and Kaswa home baking flour.

The wheat mill, where another 50 workers are employed, was commissioned in September 2003, to replace a smaller one (with a capacity of 50 tons) that had been in operation at the Najjanankumbi premises since 1997. Mr Lule is now looking for a buyer for the old mill.

He informed The Enterprise that his new mill was bought and installed at a total of $3m. Another $1.2m was used up in buying the Nalukolongo plot and putting up the factory building, while up to $1m has been invested in working capital to put the mill into operation, bringing the total investment to an equivalent of about Shs 9bn.

Mr Lule attributes his admirable success in business to among others, his own determination to work hard to achieve his vision; support from his wife Edith, with whom he has built Ntake from scratch; Tropical Africa Bank, which accepted his "minimal collateral" and lent him $600,000 to buy the first mill in 1995, and another $1m which contributed to the amount he used to buy the new mill in 2003; and ACDI/VOCA, an American NGO, that supplied his company the initial wheat grain that enabled him put his first mill into operation and thus, expand into agro-processing.

Born in Najjanankumbi near Kampala, Lule grew up in a trading family and started as early as his Senior One to tend a family shop. At the time, he went to a day school where different classes attended in shifts. He and his elder brother, the late Godfrey Muwanga, alternated in tending the shop and attending school until Senior Four.

Thereafter, Lule took to full time trade in all kinds of merchandise between Busia and Kampala. But in Idi Amin's Uganda of the 1970's, that wasn't easy, as the government used crude ways to collect taxes and its vicious soldiers often robbed business people of their goods. In the late 1970's, Lule suffered a serious setback when under the guise of fighting smuggling, soldiers rounded him up with other traders and torched their goods and market stalls. That ended Lule's first attempt at business and left him and his then young family with no means of survival.

At that time, he was renting a house that belonged to a baker, who out of sympathy advised him to try baking cakes so he could get money to buy food and pay rent. Lule obliged and was initiated into the baking business, where he started with just a single carton (24kg) of wheat flour. He remembers selling his first cakes at a polling station during the 1980 general elections.

Lule and his wife baked cakes and buns using their domestic utensils, and Lule rode a bicycle to sell them mostly in Wandegeya market. But as their business gradually grew and the Lules employed their first worker about two years later, it became increasingly difficult to get wheat flour, the main ingredient in baking.

He would ride his bicycle to Jinja, which is about 50 miles away from Kampala, to buy flour from Uganda Grain Milling Company (UGMC). But due to the scarcity at the time one had to bribe his way or at least have a chit from a high-ranking government official to buy flour from the government company, which at the time was the sole domestic supplier. Besides, the flour's quality was rarely satisfactory.

To go round the problem, Lule soon found partners in business with whom he teamed up to begin importing his own flour from France, part of which he sold to other bakers at a profit. It worked miracles for him, and by 1987, he was in position to register his first formal business in the names of Ntake Bakery Company, after importing modern baking equipment.

From then on, Ntake prospered by leaps and bounds as his bread became increasingly popular and his sales grew. His decision to expand into wheat processing came in 1993 after he attended an international exhibition of baking technology in France, on the invitation of CFCF Paris, a France-based company, which at the time was supplying wheat flour to his bakery.

"I was so impressed by the exhibition," he recalls, "There were many manufacturers of equipment for all stages of baking and confectioning that I saw an opportunity to expand into new areas. I returned with product catalogues from many exhibitors of equipment. Our initial intention was to get into biscuits but we later found that wheat milling was a better option since it would strengthen our existing bakery business."

The Lules were even encouraged by the government's investment promotion policy, which offered tax incentives, including a waiver of taxes on machinery imports and a five-year corporate tax holiday.

They undertook a feasibility study and started to solicit for funding. Tropical Africa Bank bought their business idea and agreed to lend them $600,000 for the wheat mill they imported from Turkey in 1995.

After successfully completing the installation of the mill two years later at the bakery's premises, the Lules had a stiff challenge putting it into operation as they found it extremely difficult to obtain wheat grain. During their feasibility study, they had expected to buy their grain from direct importers in Mombasa, but later found the process of obtaining, clearing and transporting it to Kampala tedious and costly, particularly because of their inexperience.

There are favourable conditions in parts of Uganda to support wheat growing, but production remains extremely low, and was even much lower in the mid-1990's. The quantities from Kasese and Kapchorwa, the only two districts producing wheat in the country, are insignificant when compared to the total demand from the various millers.

Fortunately, 1997 was the year ACDI/VOCA started to auction wheat grain in Uganda under its PL 480 Title II Program. Previously, ACDI/VOCA was auctioning only USA Vegetable Oil, and Mr Lule already knew the bidding process because he had been one of the oil's first bidders when ACDI/VOCA's PL 480 Title II Program started in Uganda in 1989.

ACDI/VOCA sells the oil and wheat to local traders through regular auctions to raise money to finance various development programs aimed at alleviating poverty in Uganda. The auctioning of wheat grain couldn't have started at a better moment for Mr Lule.

"ACDI/VOCA really came at a time when we most needed them," he says, "As beginners, we had serious difficulty figuring out how we could obtain grain from Mombasa; it helped us put our mill to work and we have remained bidders ever since."

Lule's only complaint however, is that with a higher capacity mill, the quantity of wheat obtainable from ACDI/VOCA is insufficient. "We would have wanted to buy all their wheat but it is not possible because they have to ensure that as many millers as possible get a share to avoid the risks involved in depending on a single buyer."

"ACDI/VOCA have been one of our most supportive partners," Mr Lule told The Enterprise, adding that although the volume they can offer is limited, many times it fills the gaps whenever Ntake is unable to transport imported wheat

from Mombasa to Kampala. There are frequent interruptions in the train service and road transportation is expensive.

Local wheat millers depend on imported wheat, sourced from different parts of the world – Russia, Argentina, Kenya, South Africa, etc – and recurrent interruptions in the transport system usually cause shortages, leaving many Ugandan mills silent for lack of grain. During such times, ACDI/VOCA's supply helps fill the gap since the auctions are done right in Kampala.

Wheat processors face a serious problem of getting wheat from Mombasa to Kampala because railway operations are on and off while transportation by road is very expensive, Lule explains.

Despite the market having become more competitive, Ntake remains one of the biggest bakeries in Uganda. One reason is that Mr Lule has always emphasized quality in for all his products.

When he set up the wheat mill, he became a supplier of wheat flour to other bakeries – his competitors. With time however, the output could not satisfy the demand. In fact, some bakeries felt he was deliberately refusing to supply them because they were his competitors.

That is why he chose to invest in a mill of higher capacity. The new mill's current capacity is four times higher than the old mill, and plans are underway to increase its daily capacity by 100 tons of wheat (33%). Giant as the Swiss-made mill is, the highly automated piece of technology needs only one person to operate the entire system via a computer placed in the control room, from where hundreds of production stages are controlled as the wheat grain is cleaned, conditioned, milled, graded and packed.

But some of these advantages of the mill have actually turned out to be a source of challenges. The excellent quality of its output for example, has created such a huge market that the mill needs to run non-stop to satisfy demand. Yet given the current difficulties in importing grain via Mombasa, Ntake has never really had sufficient supplies of wheat grain since the new mill was commissioned in 2003. In fact, its four silos (each with a capacity of 2,500 tons) have never filled even half way, and on average, the mill runs only four days a week.

Another challenge relates to the lack of market for the by-products like bran, which affects the company's revenue. The flour yield from grain is about 70%, leaving the rest as by-product, only good for animal feed. Due to under-developed livestock sector, the demand for the by-product is low. A ton of bran, which goes for an equivalent of about Shs 150,000 in Kenya, sells for only Shs 60,000 in Uganda.

Even with such challenges however, the baking industry is Mr Lule's destiny, and will remain the focus of investments now and in the future. His current pre-

occupation is to establish his Kaswa brand of home baking floor, introduced in January, firmly in the market; venturing into the regional export market; and ensuring that quality remains his best selling point in an increasingly competitive market. In the long-term, he should streamline the supply of grain, expand capacity and probably develop a wider range of products.