

LIVELIHOOD EXPANSION AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT (LEAD) PROGRAM

WITH FUNDING FROM USAID AND GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE



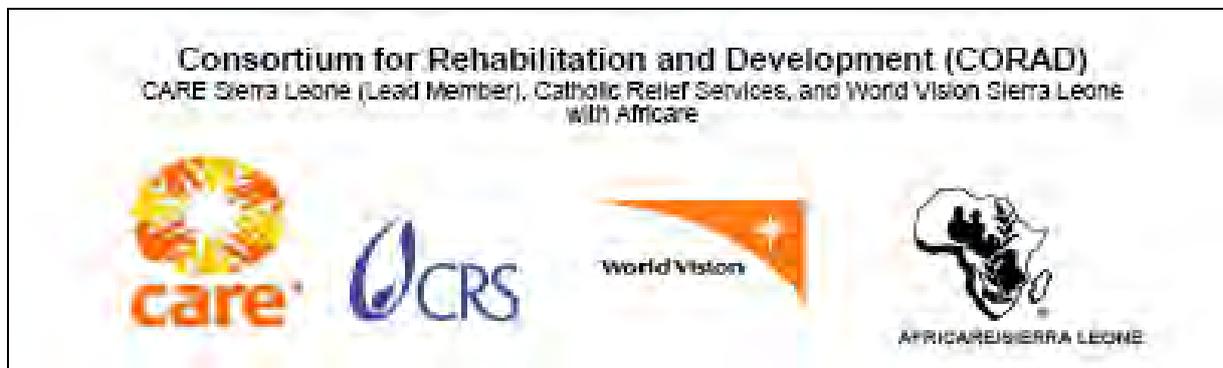
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CONSORTIUM FOR REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

LEAD MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT

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Glossary

<i>Acronyms and Abbreviations</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCU	Coordination and Compliance Unit
CHC	Community Health Committees
CORAD	Consortium for Rehabilitation and Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DRP	Developmental Relief Programme
EBF	Exclusive Breastfeeding
EPI	Expanded Programme of Immunization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFA	Food for Asset
FFP	Food for Peace
FFS	Farmer Field School
FFW	Food for Work
GMP	Growth Monitoring and Promotion
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IR	Intermediate Result
LEAD	Livelihood Expansion and Asset Development
LOA	Life of Activity
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MCHPs	Maternal Child Health Posts
MED	Micro-Enterprise Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MYAP	Multi Year Assistance Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PD/Hearth	Positive Deviant/Hearth Model
PHU	Peripheral Health Unit
PITT	Performance Indicator Tracking Table
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendance
TOR	Terms of Reference
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
USG	United State Government
VDC	Village Development Committees
VDHC	Village Development Health Committee
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VS&L	Village Savings and Lending (Associations)
WFP	World Food Programme
WG (or TWG)	Technical Working Group
WVI ("WV")	World Vision International
YMED	Youth and Micro-Enterprise Development (Working Group)

Acknowledgements

This evaluation would not have been possible without the contributions of time and support by many people. Many thanks to the USAID team, who listened to the rationale why a qualitative evaluation would make most sense given the particular situation in which the LEAD project found itself at its mid-point. Without their support, it would not have been possible to conduct this review as hoped. I would also like to thank the CORAD Steering Committee, for not only providing support, but indeed as individuals committing time to visiting villages and writing case studies. This contributed strongly to the quality of the cases themselves and the depth of issues discussed in them. My thanks further goes to the other members of the case study teams, all of whom juggled their various other assignments to be able to complete the task at hand in the time given. Sincerest gratitude to the many LEAD field staff who assisted with logistics, introductions, and translation willingly and with a compelling spirit of cooperation. It is my hope that they also learned from taking time out to reflect with communities about what LEAD has done in the previous 15 months and their current situation. In addition, thank you to the LEAD project staff who took the time to complete the staff questionnaires—your honesty and candor brought up points that would not have emerged otherwise. I would also like to thank the Technical Working Group chairs and indeed all of the members for their strong contributions to developing recommendations for the key points raised in the MTR review meeting.

Last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to the eight communities visited. All of us were amazed by your hospitality and dedication to the development of your communities. Thank you for being so willing to share a small piece of your world with us for a few short days—even such superficial glimpses keep us focused on what you and the other communities you represented see as the bottom line, as it should be.

May we all keep our efforts fixed on a better future for rural households in our targeted areas. I hope that all readers will take the time to enjoy the incredible case studies presented in Annex 2—they are truly a testament to both communities and the project team alike.

Meg Audette
CORAD M&E Manager
October 2008

Executive Summary

To mark the mid-point of the Livelihood Enhancement and Asset Development (LEAD) project, the Consortium for Rehabilitation and Development (CORAD)¹ conducted a Mid-Term Review (MTR) exercise from June-September 2008. This review was conducted in lieu of a formal Mid-Term Evaluation of LEAD as at the mid-point of the project, the consortium had not yet been implementing its full range of activities for an entire growing season (making the chance of seeing changes in the food security situation in communities through a quantitative survey unlikely). The MTR used a staff survey and eight community case studies as the basis for project stakeholders (both field staff and project leadership) to reflect upon the implementation-to-date and use the views and opinions of community participants to shape recommendations as to changes the consortium could make in the second half of implementation. The questions of the MTR were purposely general to encourage those involved in the reflection to be guided first and foremost by what communities saw as the main changes and remaining challenges in their lives, as well as what “frontline” field staff thought represented the key challenges affecting their ability to implement LEAD to the best of their collective abilities. Thus, after the data collection was completed, CORAD conducted a one day Reflection Meeting that brought together stakeholders from CORAD and USAID to analyze the data and develop the main findings. The Technical Working Groups (WGs) subsequently reviewed these findings and developed recommendations, which were further reviewed at a Progress Review Meeting held in September.

This report summarizes the key findings and recommendations made by the project stakeholders that participated in the data collection and analysis for the MTR. One of the main positive findings was that CORAD had been true to its original intention to empower communities through actively engaging them in utilizing their own resources and ensuring that communities had the authority within LEAD to take key decisions. Specifically, project participants highlighted the Village Savings & Lending (VS&L), Positive Deviant/Hearth (PD/Hearth), Farmer Field School (FFS), creation of by-laws, social safety net planning, and EBF support groups (baby friendly farms) as methodologies that gave communities a space to use their own resources to their best advantage to bring about sustainable change in their communities. Although Food for Asset activities do highlight the role of community members in providing local materials and establishing mechanisms to ensure maintenance of the assets when in use, CORAD’s desire to harmonize food norms among the four partner agencies means that communities can only prioritize the types of assets they feel will best assist them in addressing their needs, not propose other assets that CORAD had not identified (and on which it had not established clear food norms). This will be addressed at the upcoming Food Working Group (WG) meeting. In addition to findings on participation, communities noted that these activities were contributing to raising the sense of unity among community members through facilitating the establishment of common priorities and emphasizing communal responsibility and action.

Those involved in the MTR noted that there was a correlation between many of the activities with a high degree of participation and those activities for which there were early findings of sustainability (reasonable given that community satisfaction is a strong contributor to sustainability). One key difference was that although community members did articulate that the social safety net planning was very participatory, one group raised questions about the viability of communities assuming the responsibility for caring for their own vulnerable members over the course of a three year project. The Food WG has already met once on this issue and will be documenting both the best practices and sharing lessons learned among members during subsequent meetings. Questions likewise remain about the sustainability of health interventions that link communities served with health services provided by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS), in that although CORAD has successfully engaged with the MOHS to provide those services over the course of LEAD, it is not clear if they will have the ability to do so after the project’s close—already the need of the

¹ CARE (prime), Catholic Relief Services, Africare, and World Vision.

Peripheral Health Units to charge for certain services that are supposed to be provided free of charge constrains the ability of the least economically secure households in communities to access these services (for example, growth monitoring and promotion if households cannot afford the fees sometimes required for under five cards). To address this, partners have identified the Steering Committee as a body that can plan an important advocacy role; the WG chairs are now mandated to provide advocacy issues to the Steering Committee in advance of their meetings so that agency heads can meet and discuss possible courses of action.

CORAD had improved from the earlier Developmental Relief Program (DRP) upon its coordination and quality assurance within its key sectors of intervention through establishing a clear Terms of Reference (TOR) for each of the WGs.² Specifically, the WGs have successfully facilitated rolling out certain methodologies or otherwise building capacity around such concepts as VS&L, PD/Hearth, and good governance. Stakeholders within CORAD at all levels are aware of the WGs and defer to their technical leadership. However, the WGs have not yet been successful in ensuring the desired degree of consistency among consortium members in certain key areas. For example, although governance trainings are all conducted using the consortium's training manual, the Governance WG has not yet developed its best practices around how the consortium can facilitate the creation and adoption of by-laws by the groups. Several findings were made about areas that remained to be standardized around start-up and capital grants. To address this, the relevant WGs have already met and discussed the activities of the different partners, and are planning at their upcoming meetings to take decisions about the types of grants that will be given out, and to whom.

Integration was another key area of findings in the MTR—notably that there was a tendency within LEAD teams within an agency to be “silo-ed” and relatively uninformed about the work of other sectors. Given that food security is a cross-cutting issue, it is essential that CORAD and the communities it serves look at the issue holistically and work not only on food security issues related to a particular sector, but also at the linkages between sectors. For example, if agriculture staff have a working knowledge of maternal and child nutrition, they can introduce these concepts into the FFS, promoting the growth of necessary food crops; this is already happening to a limited degree with the baby friendly farms that are operated by many of the EBF support groups. CORAD has begun the process of examining not only functional and structural integration (focusing on the practicalities of logistics and communication), but also on conceptual and programmatic integration that encourages staff to view their own work and that of their colleagues as supporting the same overarching goals, rather than as complimentary but essentially distinct activities.³

The LEAD MTR has thus far been extremely effective in focusing consortium staff around the barriers they see to implementing an effective and efficient program—indeed, the level of engagement by decision makers in this process is indicative of the enthusiasm that stakeholders have brought to this process. In this respect, it was successful in contributing to the consortium's ability to learn from communities and examine its own activities with a critical eye.

² The sectoral WGs are Agriculture and Environment, Health and Nutrition, Food, Governance, and Youth and Micro-Enterprise Development (YMED). WGs are also in place for M&E and Finance.

³ Draws on the concept of the five fingers of integration. For more information, please see Solomon, Tom, Carlos Piedrasanta, Polly Arnold, Colette Powers, and Steve Goudswaard, *Integration*, World Vision United States, 2007.

1 Introduction and Background

The Livelihood Enhancement and Asset Development (LEAD) project is slated to run from October 2006 to September 2009,⁴ and was funded by USAID/Food for Peace under Cooperative Agreement number FFP-A-00-04-00020-00_US. The project, which is implemented by the Consortium for Rehabilitation and Development,⁵ is being executed with the goal of reducing food insecurity among vulnerable populations in 32 chiefdoms (including five major towns) in the districts of Kono, Kenema, Kailahun, Koinadugu, Tonkolili, and Bombali in Sierra Leone. LEAD has the following four major objectives:

1. Human capabilities of farmers in 16,000 poor farm households, 3,400 economically marginalized youth, and pregnant and lactating women/children in 16,000 poor farm households protected and enhanced.
2. Livelihood capacities of 16,000 poor farm households and 3,400 economically marginalized youth protected and enhanced.
3. 375 rural communities have improved community infrastructure and stronger linkages to service providers.
4. 990 community-based organizations in both rural and urban areas are able to practice and demand the basic principles of good governance, i.e., transparency accountability and representation.

From the initial proposal, CORAD made clear that as the LEAD MYAP would run for three years, it would be conducting a review exercise rather than a full-scale mid-term evaluation (MTE). Due to a late approval by the donor, LEAD did not actually begin until March 2007, with a baseline conducted in May. Given the small amount of time between the actual start and the theoretical midpoint of the project, not much change would be anticipated in the key project indicators measured through a quantitative household survey (such as average farm size planted in selected crops and percent of women practices exclusive breastfeeding with their under six-months old babies). At the time of the mid-term (May 2009), CORAD had also not yet received approval for their FY 08 Pipeline Resource Estimate Proposal (PREP), meaning that the funds for such a survey were also limited. Instead, CORAD proposed to conduct a qualitative mid-term review (MTR) that would create a space for CORAD partners to reflect on their lessons learned and discuss improvements that could be made for the second half of the project.

In keeping with this idea, the purpose of the MTR was *to provide qualitative information and insights from community participants and field staff to the leadership of the consortium agencies, to inform a discussion on any changes for the second half of the program.*

2 Methodology

2.1 Composition of Teams and Participants

Each of the eight case study teams consisted of two members: one CCU or M&E representative (all of whom serve the consortium as a whole) and one agency representative. Agency representatives did not visit their own areas of operation, but rather collected information in other agencies' areas of work to avoid any intentional or unintentional bias.

Agencies were given the option of either nominating one person who would then be responsible for completing two cases, or two people (each of whom would complete one case). The CCU nominated four people, each of whom completed one case, while the M&E Unit nominated three people, with two people responsible for one case each and the other person completing two cases. Given that the time commitment for the agency team members was minimal, it was hoped that more

⁴ With the possibility of extension until April 2010.

⁵ CORAD consists of CARE (prime), Catholic Relief Services, Africare, and World Vision.

senior agency staff that are usually available to participate would be able to take part in this exercise. This was largely correct: of the 14 people who participated in producing the case studies were two Country/National Directors and seven other senior managers.⁶

2.2 Key Questions/Themes

The MTR was designed to answer the following key questions and sub-questions:

1. What is CORAD/LEAD doing well, according to end users?
 - How do community participants and field staff think the process of implementation is going? Are there any recommendations for improvement?
 - What preliminary impacts are visible and tangible for people at the field level (partner agency staff and community participants)? What can be done to capitalize on these preliminary successes?
2. What do field-level stakeholders feel are the main challenges?
 - What internal processes represent barriers to success, from the perspective of the field staff and community partners? What can be done to eliminate or reduce some of these barriers, to improve relationships and streamline the process of implementation?
 - What external constraints is the consortium facing in its implementation? What effects are these having, and are there ways that these effects could be mitigated?

2.3 Main Review Activities

There were two main activities for the MTR: community visits that used observations, focus groups, and interviews to develop case studies of a small number of selected communities, and a voluntary staff survey. These were both carried out during the period of June-July 2008.

2.3.1 Case Studies

To develop the case studies, teams of two⁷ were instructed that they should arrange to travel together to selected communities, and spend **at least one day and one night in the community**. The case study teams were not given a formal plan of activities or specific instructions as the aim of the exercise was to understand from the community's perspective what were the most important elements of their daily life (which can vary greatly from one community to the next). Instead, they were given guidelines which focused more on their own behavior than what questions they should ask or what activities they should undertake while in the community.

The majority of teams met with a few community groups (either requesting the meetings or attending meetings that had been previously planned), spent time with particular households, and worked alongside groups within the community (for instance, assisting children in hauling water, or walking with youth to the mines where they are employed). In several cases, it was particularly the late afternoon and evening hours (which are not a typical time when visits from higher-ranking development agency staff would be planned) in which community members had time to talk freely about a wide variety of topics.

2.3.2 Staff Survey

To further augment the learning about the key questions of the MTR, a staff survey was conducted on a voluntary basis with field staff. Each partner agency provided a contact person in each of their offices, who served as the point person for staff to drop off their filled surveys.

The response from staff was mixed in terms of the number of questionnaires received. CRS returned 36 filled questionnaires, CARE returned 27, WVSL 12, and Africare 6. On analysis, agency structures probably played a role in the response as WVSL and Africare both have a number of staff

⁶ Please refer to the list of contributors on the cover page for the names of the participating team members.

⁷ Please refer to Section 2.1 for more information.

who live and work out in communities and do not regularly travel to the Base/Project offices during the rainy season.

2.4 Sampling

Eight communities were sampled in all, selected by the DME Manager with purposive sampling, according to the following geographic spread:

District	Agency	Chiefdom	Village
Kailahun	Africare	Mandu	Madina
		Jawei	Senehun
	CRS	Upper Bambara	Joie
Tonkolili	CARE	Gbonkolen	Ropapa
Kono	World Vision	Gbane	Waiyor
		Sandor	Bumanja
Koinadugu	CRS	Diang	Nerekoro
	CARE	Sengbeh	Ismaia

It was not possible to select communities randomly as accessibility was a main factor as the rainy season had begun. In addition, given the nature of the MTR, it was desirable to ensure that a broad spectrum of activities and areas was represented in the sample. As already noted, the objective of this exercise was not to target a statistically significant sample, but rather to provide an in-depth picture of randomly selected LEAD communities; to sit together with community stakeholders of all ages and both genders, and learn together with them.

As the staff survey was entirely voluntary, no sampling was necessary.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data (in the form of survey results and completed case studies) was analyzed at a one day workshop conducted with representatives from all agencies on 29 July 2008 in Freetown. After presenting background information to remind agency representatives about how the MTR fieldwork had been done, participants were divided up into groups of 4-5 people, each of which was given two cases and the staff survey. The groups were asked to document their answers to the following questions to present back to the groups:

1. What activities were implemented in these communities (as per the cases)?
2. What common themes do you see developing across the cases? What conclusions can you make from these themes?
3. What issues/points from the case do you find most interesting (either good or bad)?
4. What points do you wish to clarify (if any) with agencies or case study teams?

In the afternoon, the groups again got together to answer some more in-depth questions related to the data they had reviewed earlier:

1. Based on your reflections on the cases, would you say the activities of the LEAD program are relevant in these communities (by sector/theme)? Why or why not?
2. Based on the cases, in what areas do you think the LEAD program has had the greatest impact in these communities (by sector/theme)?
3. Based on your reflections on the cases, would you say the activities of the LEAD program (by sector/theme) that have been implemented have been effective and sustainable (or, if recently implemented, will be effective and sustainable)? Why or why not?
4. Based on the cases and the points coming out of the staff survey, what internal and external factors do you think have contributed to your answers to questions 5 and 6?
5. What steps can the CORAD consortium (and/or the implementing partner) do to improve the implementation of LEAD (to make the program more relevant, sustainable, and effective by sector/theme)?

This information was again presented back to the plenary. The day ended in participants summarizing the key points, and agreeing to task the five sectoral Technical Working Groups (TWGs)⁸ with developing recommendations for each of the key points raised. These recommendations were reviewed during the Progress Review Meeting held on 17 and 18 September 2008. During this meeting, some additional recommendations were made and some key points cutting across sectors were agreed for follow up at the consortium level.

2.6 Limitations

As noted in the “Introduction” section above, the structure of this exercise was itself limited in the sense that it will not attempt to broadly look at LEAD’s target areas through focus group discussions with many different communities or a HH survey. Instead, the MTR attempted to deeply look at the experience of a few communities.

Another limitation was that to be in-line with the approximate mid-point of the project, the MTR had to be conducted at the start of the rainy season. Although this proved useful to many of the teams in terms of being able to gather information about communities during one of their most difficult (i.e. most food insecure) times of the year, it did present some constraints in terms of access and logistics. These were overcome by the case study teams, in collaboration with the project teams working with the various communities.

It was not possible for each of the case study teams to have a member of each gender, which would have been preferable in terms of being able to freely converse with women in their homes and while they were engaged with traditionally female tasks. This affected some teams more than others; only one all-male team reported feeling frustrated that they were not able to talk freely with women (other teams may have visited more open communities, not noticed barriers to engaging women due to their own gender-lenses, or have managed to overcome this challenge).

Given the careful matching of the team members and the support given by the project teams, no real language or cultural limitations were noted.

⁸ They are: Health and Nutrition, Agriculture and the Environment, Governance, Youth and Micro-Enterprise Development, and Food.

3 Main Findings

As has been noted, the findings and recommendations of the MTR were developed by approximately 20 CORAD stakeholders at a one-day meeting, on the basis of the eight case studies and staff survey that had been conducted. The main points raised are summarized by technical area in Table 1, and are subsequently discussed in Sections 3.1 to 3.8 according to key points related to the themes of relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability that framed the MTR Reflection Meeting.

Table 1: Summary of Main Findings of LEAD MTR

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points
Cross-cutting Issues	
Integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although activities do have relevance in their own right, the true relevance of LEAD interventions comes from the integrated “basket of activities” that LEAD offers.⁹ However, CORAD has had limited success in truly integrating the various LEAD activities. 2. There is still a “silo effect” where the majority of staff seem themselves as responsible only for activities in their sectoral area. 3. Although the process varies from agency to agency, CORAD field staff are generally more concerned with achieving targets than achieving impact, and are not always empowered to give supervisors the feedback that achieving targets might lead to low impact (for example, if capital grant recipients are not demonstrating adequate capacity to receive a grant on the schedule of the agency).
LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high commitment to development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects. 1. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development 2. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing. 3. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?
Health	
Strong evidence of adoption of positive health and sanitation behaviors, questions remaining about sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong examples of women in communities regularly taking children to be weighed, practicing exclusive breastfeeding, using drying posts/lines for clothes, and using plate racks. 2. Although it is encouraging that community members are adopting positive behaviors, many of the health topics covered have been on the NGO agendas for some time. Why would this be, and why do we think that CORAD will be successful in supporting sustained behavior change.
Service delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health programming successfully facilitating DHMT outreach services and creating community committees to oversee health practice (VDHCs or CHCs). Questions remain about to what extent the DMHT will continue providing services after the end of LEAD—is bringing service providers closer to communities a part of the mandate of community committees? 2. GMP successfully raising awareness about children’s nutritional needs among women (especially beads). Most effective when paired with activities like Baby friendly farms and PD/Hearth that focus on improved utilization of locally available food (this is not occurring in all areas or among all partners).
Agriculture and the Environment	
Although capital grants are relevant, effectiveness and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some agencies have noted that capital grants can have low sustainability, particular capital grants of agro-processing equipment. For this reason, they require potential grantees to raise a substantial match contribution, which is set aside (in some cases in a bank account) to handle maintenance other expenses.

⁹ Food supports agriculture, which both support health; youth are a cross-cutting target group; MED activities support agriculture; health supports food and agriculture in return; governance supports all areas.

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points
sustainability is low. CORAD lacking uniform strategy on grants, particularly capital grants ¹⁰	2. Some partner agencies focus more on providing grants to individuals, while others focus more on groups.
	3. CORAD continues to provide agro-processing equipment to communities on the basis of its clear relevance; however, the difficulty for community groups to procure spare parts decreases the effectiveness and sustainability.
	4. Partners do not have a uniform approach to providing agro-processing equipment (some are providing mechanized equipment while some are providing manual equipment).
Low understanding among CORAD staff of the viability of certain types of enterprises ²	1. Many CORAD staff are not themselves knowledgeable on how to develop a sound business management plan, and so are not able to assess the viability of certain enterprises. For example, in a given area, what is the saturation point for rice hulling businesses? Do our capital grants take this into consideration?
	2. Although CORAD is providing business management training, many new entrepreneurs (particularly capital grants) do not understand the concept of net income, and so are not creating business plans that allow them to cover their expenses to stay in business. Some CORAD agencies do not require business plans for capital grants.
Although proposal captures key elements, CORAD does not have a fully-elaborated agriculture strategy	1. The LEAD proposal makes clear that agricultural activities are supporting the aim of household food security, and generally outlines the support that the program will give to production (under IR 1.1) and marketing (under IR 2.1); however, partner agencies continue to emphasize different elements, and to support community agriculture without a clear picture of the end result. (For example, smallholder farmers that grow a mix of rice and cassava on 1-2 acre plots would still lack adequate food to meet household needs, but lack the ability/network to collaborate with other farmers to effectively market crops.) Strategy would detail what steps need to be taken, and what milestones should be reached for each step.
	2. WV's clustering of the FFS needs to be further studied by partners as a best practice.
FFS highly successful in building capacity of farmers on agricultural skills, concerns about sustainability of increases in production	1. Many farmers noted how their knowledge had increased on new techniques such as planting methods/spacing.
	2. Some field staff expressed feeling that experimentation through the FFS was less valuable than marketing.
	3. Not clear to what extent increases in production will be sustained—production capacity may exist, but lack of storage facilities, lack of marketing skills and poor road network, lack of sustained access to agro-processing facilities (see comments on capital grants), and rising cost of agricultural inputs may undercut production increases
Youth and MED	
Does CORAD have a clear strategy for working with youth?	1. Although CORAD agencies have had good success with targeting youth for some activities such as the FFS, in some areas, youth are working outside the communities for the majority of the time, and thus are not fully benefiting from LEAD. This begs the question about whether CORAD has a clear and distinct strategy for working with youth, and what are the main elements of this strategy.
LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high commitment to development	1. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects.
	2. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development
	3. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing.
	4. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?
VS&Ls high impact and sustainability	1. VS&L groups having high impact on communities' understanding of and ability to save money
	2. Groups self-replicating, have high transparency, and are low cost to CORAD; loans

¹⁰ Also applies to MED.

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points
	increase amount of money in circulation
Food	
Good governance and FFA projects ¹¹	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How participatory are the methods used to select what FFA projects should be undertaken (proposal specifies PLA activities, but is this the case in reality)? Who decides and how? (How flexible can we be about the type of asset to construct, to allow communities to give their own suggestions?) 2. Do we have any mechanisms in place to make sure that the groups responsible for managing and maintaining FFA projects are practicing good governance (to make sure that the projects are “community assets,” not only supporting a few elite households). 3. Are FFA projects undertaken in-line with District Development Plans (as specified in proposal)? 4. Although it is not clear how widespread this problem might be, there are examples of communities that do not have clear sustainability plans around the assets constructed through FFA.
Communication on food-related issues (including pipeline breaks)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although CORAD partners may have explained the situation to some community members, the majority of VGF beneficiaries and unpaid FFA beneficiaries did not have much knowledge of why they had not received food. (In some cases, community members were suspicious that committee members might have taken food meant for them.)
Safety net strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although decreasing ration was designed to be supplemented with food provided by the Village Welfare Committees, this is not yet happening, even when beneficiaries are entering Phase II. 2. Safety net action plans seem centered around community farms, with little integration of other possible strategies for providing for vulnerable people. Crops selected sometimes take a long time to mature, which is a key factor in why VWCs are not supplementing CORAD rations (as noted in point 1).
Food for Work and dependency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What steps are CORAD partners taking to try to reduce the possibility that willingness to work on community projects would be linked to receiving FFW? (Some communities seem willing to undertake additional work on own, while others insist that they need FFW.)
Governance	
Process by which by-laws and action plans are being developed is often not transparent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although CORAD is successfully encouraging community groups to develop by laws and action plans, the process is often not participatory or based on open dialogue, meaning that community members are not aware of the contents of by-laws/plans. 2. CORAD relies upon community groups and local leaders to communicate key actions or decisions to the community-at-large. What mechanisms are in place to make sure that this happens, and what actions are taken when it does not?
Role of the government in LEAD remains weak in some areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are LEAD strategies encouraging communities to by-pass the government and instead rely on NGOs for their needs? How visible is support received from government authorities to community members?
Relevance and effectiveness of governance activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved governance practice in communities a high need. Some good examples of groups or communities practicing good governance (like Waiyor in Kono), but overall situation will take time to change. Governance must be process focused (how steps to improve governance are taken) not output focused (neglecting process, but making sure key documents are in place).

¹¹ Also applies to governance.

3.1 Relevance

The case studies demonstrated that the LEAD interventions as a whole were still extremely relevant in the communities served. Note that the key sectors of health and agriculture remain major needs. For example, women with whom the case study teams spoke noted a range of issues related to maternal and child health where LEAD had successfully provided them with information that they could use (such as proper child nutrition and home care for children with common diseases). Communities also continue to note issues in these areas that have not yet been addressed, for example, noting that although they have had some success with enhancing their agricultural productivity, as yet they do not have ready access to agro-processing equipment.

In some areas, the relevance of activities targeting youth was linked to their involvement in mining activities. In Bumanja, in Kono District, the youth group had united to focus on farming activities, moving away from their prior reliance on income derived from diamond mining. When asked the reasons for this preference, one member stated, “Diamonds do deceive, but agriculture pays directly.” However, in Nerekoro, in Koinadugu District, the case study team noted that the majority of youth are still actively engaged in gold mining activities as they see a faster return for their labor. Youth stated that they are able to use the money they receive from mining to pay their school fees or open businesses. CORAD’s current range of activities for youth would only provide them with a mechanism for supporting them to start small businesses once they had finished with the mines.

3.2 External Constraints

The cases and staff survey noted a number of external constraints. Approximately one in five staff (20.8 percent¹²) completing the survey stated that the largest external constraint was the rising cost of food and fuel, which threatened sustainability of certain key interventions. For example, the PD/Hearth model requires community members to provide food for the sessions; rising food costs has made this more difficult. Yet the case study for Joie in Kailahun District notes that resilient communities may have the capacity to respond to such inflation, with one member of the MED group noting that when the prices began increasing “we were able to buy Maggie, salt, onions, kerosene, soap and batteries to sell to members of the community at affordable prices so people would not have to go too far to get them at the right price.” In addition to being able to protect the community from the impact of the price hikes felt elsewhere, the MED group uses the proceeds to conduct community development projects.

Unfortunately, Joie remains the exception, not the rule. A number of cases included comments by community members noted that there were far more households with one or more members meeting the criteria for vulnerable than there were spaces in the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) activity. Indeed, food recipients in Waiyor noted that they will sometimes share food with other households that they feel are not also very vulnerable that are not receiving food. It is also worth noting that the majority of VGF recipient households were targeted by CORAD before the prices for staple foods began rising, and that although the need may well have increased, CORAD does not have additional food resources to dedicate to VGF. The timing of the price increases in April-May also roughly coincided with Sierra Leone’s traditional Hungry Season from June to September, thus exacerbating a traditionally difficult period.¹³ Further contributing to the food insecurity of vulnerable households involved in VGF activities, CORAD experienced a pipeline break from April until August-September (due to delays in the approval of the FY 08 PREP) that left partners without sufficient food to continue providing rations during this critical period. These disruptions not only created difficulties for the Village Welfare Committee members that liaise with CORAD partner agencies, but also undermined efforts to encourage the VWCs to plan to supplement the rations from CORAD—having been informed that cuts in the rations would be addressed through food

¹² This was the single-most commonly noted external constraint. Other typical percentages were less than ten percent.

¹³ The LEAD Baseline conducted in FY 07 found that the average number of months during which households reported not having adequate food to meet their needs was 4.6 months.

provided by the VWCs, some recipients were disgruntled when the VWCs were unable to provide food during the pipeline break.¹⁴

CORAD has not yet received the agreed contribution from the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), which was earmarked to cover the WatSan component of LEAD (i.e. construction of wells and latrines). As the contribution has not been received, these activities have not yet begun. Communities are very aware of the linkages between access to clean water and improved sanitation facilities and their overall health status, as indicated by the comment made by a woman in Ropapa (Tonkolili District), “With all the good health messages we have received, if there is no provision for clean drinking water then most of the efforts put in that area will go in vain.”

3.3 Sectoral Integration

The integration of the five key sectors (agriculture, health, MED, governance, and the provision of food) of intervention under LEAD was highlighted as a key point for ensuring the effectiveness of the project as a whole. Maximizing agricultural productivity improves access to food, which one critical factor in enhancing nutrition. Agricultural productivity can itself be enhanced by ensuring that community leaders and groups practice good governance and provide fair and equitable access to agricultural resources such as agro-processing equipment or storage facilities. While it may seem basic, the importance of this point cannot be overstated or simply assumed due to the natural synergies between components—it requires intentionality and conscious effort for staff who have responsibilities and expertise in one area to confidently look at how messages and approaches related to their own work might help or hinder the work of another sector.

The landscape in terms of integration within the LEAD program is currently mixed. For example, consortium members noted that food was strongly integrated into agricultural programming, with the Food for Assets (FFA) transfer mechanism designed to support communities to develop their agricultural capacities and the social safety net programming that accompanies VGF looking at community farms as one method for providing community-level resources to support vulnerable people when CORAD stops distributing food. Yet in spite of the obvious linkages between agriculture and production, the only notable programmatic link between the two sectors are the Baby Friendly Farms that provide a way for women to grow certain food resources that are rich in the necessary nutrients to assist women in providing for their children’s nutritional needs.

Interestingly, the community of Joie noted the importance of an integrated approach to development, by citing the way that road construction opened up their community to development projects from other agencies: “Two years ago, there was no road here connecting us to the main road. As a result, we lost several opportunities. We applied for assistance to a GTZ Shelter project, but they could not assist us because there was no road to our community. They were only willing to assist communities that were accessible, where they could easily transport construction materials.” Since the community has successfully rehabilitated the road with the help of CORAD, “Several projects have come to the community. The road has opened up endless opportunities for development.”

Two main factors were identified by partners during the reflection meeting as to why the theoretical integration inherent in the design of LEAD has not materialized to the extent hoped: insufficient opportunities for cross-fertilization and the distinction made between “full” and “partial” LEAD communities by some partners.

In terms of cross-fertilization, according to discussions held during the Review Reflection Meeting, most partners have regular coordination meetings in the field offices, which have resulted in practical and logistical integration. However, the emphasis of these meetings is strongly on such

¹⁴ CORAD’s strategy calls for rations to be reduced three times over the life of the program. In Phases II and III, the food provided by CORAD should be supplemented by locally-grown food provided by the VWCs.

coordination, not on sharing lessons learned or cross-fertilization of ideas between sectors. While there are some strong examples of how integration has contribute to some of the key successes of the consortium (such as the fish ponds in Ropapa, which integrate MED, governance, and health; or Ismaia, in which fish from the fish ponds are used to support the social safety net portion of vulnerable group feeding (VGF).

Some LEAD partner agencies make a distinction between “full” LEAD communities with whom they partner for all of the major LEAD activities in all sectors, and “partial” LEAD communities in which they are only implementing select activities (often VGF or FFA/FFW activities). While this does enable CORAD to achieve greater coverage within its operational areas (thus targeting a greater percentage of the population in these chiefdoms), the effectiveness of the interventions is potentially undermined in that communities are not exposed to key elements such as governance, health, or MED strategies.¹⁵

3.4 Consistency and Coordination

As a follow on to the Developmental Relief Program, at the start of LEAD, partners took time to review what had gone well under the DRP and to re-visit the role and mandate of the Technical Working Groups (TWGs or WGs) to ensure consistency in CORAD’s development approach. The numerous mentions of the WGs in the staff surveys indicate that this was somewhat successful; however, the case studies bring out a number of areas where differences between partners’ ways of working have not yet been fully reconciled.

One area that came out in the MTR was around start-up and capital grants. Some partners only provide grants of either type to groups, while others provide start-up grants to individuals. Some partners require an up front percentage from groups before they will provide the group with a capital grant (the percentage is set aside in a special account to cover maintenance costs). One partner provides capital grants to support mechanized cultivation, while another focuses on manual cultivation. While it is possible that different solutions may be viable depending on the community, participants in the MTR Reflection Meeting felt strongly that a greater degree of cooperation would be advisable in this area.

Another area noted was around the clustering of FFS. Although WV has been extremely successful in clustering FFS into marketing associations (as is evident in the case study from Waiyor), thus far other partners have not followed suit.

3.5 Capacity Building (staff and partners)

CORAD’s main strategy for capacity building is to use Technical Working Groups (TWGs or WGs) to disseminate key information and lessons learned, conduct training and coaching, and assist the Coordination and Compliance Unit (CCU) in enforcing consortium standards on particular activities. Many of these groups also existed under DRP, although at the start of LEAD the chairs were requested to sit with members and develop a Terms of Reference for the group that would clearly specify roles, responsibilities, policies, and procedures. Responses on the staff questionnaire indicate that staff are very aware of these groups, and note some particular areas where the working groups have supported the development of core skill areas across the consortium (such as training on the Village Savings and Loan model, PD/Hearth, or good governance).

Although the WGs have been effective at introducing new models or concepts, partner staff still request additional training or coach in more advanced areas. Areas mentioned in staff surveys or the reflection meetings include viability thresholds for certain types of IGAs, how to determine the

¹⁵ Interestingly, in an internal study conducted by CORAD partner CRS, there is some evidence that there is a correlative relationship between the presence of agriculture as well as health activities and a lower percentage of children who are found to be severely or moderately malnourished in monthly growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) activities.

quality of a business plan for an agro-enterprise, or how to determine the impact of governance activities.

3.6 Participation of Community Members

Many of CORAD's core development interventions under LEAD are not only community centered, but also community led. In the FFS, for example, farmers work with facilitators to identify the site of their demonstration plots, the crops they will grow, and the types of experiments (if any) they will undertake. This action-research oriented approach has been very well received by communities, as noted in the comments made by a community member in Madina, "The FFS is the best thing that has happened in our village. We can now safely go through the hunger season. We can also no longer depend on rice alone. We have enough of cassava and sweet potatoes tubers to eat and sell. On a daily basis, people come from nearby communities and as far as from Kailahun to buy from us. The secret is the FFS." Similarly, PD/Hearth, Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) Support Groups, and VS&L methodologies all focus on working with communities to more effectively use resources that they already have (in particular, food or money). In all three examples, the case studies showed strong community commitment and a high degree of satisfaction. Although activities have not yet been operational in some communities for a full year, it is noteworthy that in FY 08, 63 percent of the children enrolled in PD/Hearth gained at least 600 grams after six weeks' participation in Hearth activities, and 57 percent of farmers had adopted at least five of the experiments employed in their FFS.¹⁶ Case studies from Waiyor and Madina also noted a high percentage of women implementing such positive health practices as EBF or the use of plate racks and clotheslines.

Other activities have not yet achieved such a high sustained level of community participation, particularly Food for Assets. Although community members do select the types of assets that they think will be most useful in their communities, to achieve consistent food norms among partners, they can only select the types of assets they wish to construct from a pre-set list of assets. They presently cannot propose other types of assets.

CORAD is very intentional at working through Community-Based Organizations, committees, or sub-committees on their development activities, including Village Development Committees, Village Welfare sub-Committees, Community Health Committees, Water Management Committees, and others. Yet CORAD partner agencies noted in the Reflection Meeting that among these groups there exist significantly different levels of exposure to or understanding of key decision, new developments, and consortium strategies. This is a critical point given that one of the main responsibilities of these groups is to assist CORAD staff in sharing information (about targeting criteria, about how and when activities will be implemented, about what resources are required or should be mobilized). If committee members do not understand these concepts, how can they fulfill this role?

These committees also play another vital role: ensuring that members of community groups have adequate capacity to sustain activities and advocate with governmental stakeholders for continued service provision. Although initial progress on governance activities was slow, gradually the pace of engagement between community members and governmental officials is increasing, as evidenced by the increase in the number of meetings conducted between these two key stakeholder groups. During FY 08, CORAD partners rolled out activities related to marketing and agribusiness to ensure that farmer groups are adding to their core skill sets in agricultural production.

3.7 Sustainability

Given the funding constraints in FY 08 and the late start of LEAD in FY 07, it is still early in real terms to talk about sustainability. However, the consortium has noted some preliminary findings that give an indication as to what activities are likely to be sustainable. It is not surprising that the

¹⁶ "Standard Annual Performance Questionnaire," CORAD FY 08 Annual Results Report, November 2008.

MTR findings around sustainability were similar to those noted in terms of community participation, with some of the highest preliminary findings come from VS&L groups and health activities. In terms of health activities, the case studies note sustainability in that communities are acquiring skills that can continue to benefit them after the LEAD project has finished, as noted in Madina: “Due to the skills I have acquired, I can identify minor causes of illness and where necessary facilitate the required referrals to the PHU at Baima Mandu.” As VS&L groups function on their own, there is a high probability of sustainability, and communities are already noting a ripple effect from the VS&L activities. A youth in the VS&L group in Ropapa said, “We are proud of the fact that we have a loan facility, our debts are cleared and our children are growing in a healthier environment and can now go to school.” Similarly, one community member in Ismaia stated, “We used to go to other villages to borrow money just to send our children to school or if we had an emergency. Since the VS&L was introduced it has helped us a great deal.”

Sustainability is still proving challenging around VGF and FFA, the two main activities involving food distribution. Under LEAD, the provision of food through VGF is additionally supported through social safety net planning with communities that seeks to replace food provided by CORAD with community managed food. Although some communities state that they are satisfied with the approach, in some communities, such as Waiyor, households with vulnerable members hope that the community garden will help them, but are not optimistic: “It will not produce enough to help us all,” one woman explained, “and people may steal the cassava for their own house.” Some committee members were also skeptical about the strategy: “Look at this community. We are all vulnerable here, in need of support. Why should vulnerables [sic.] be asked to support other vulnerables [sic.]?” It is worth noting; however, that any uncertainty was most certainly exacerbated by the pipeline break noted in FY 08. Challenges around sustainability of FFA were mainly related to the proper use and maintenance of the assets; although maintenance plans are set in place, communities often cite funding constraints as a reason why assets are not properly maintained.

3.8 Linkages with GoSL

CORAD partners view having strong linkages with the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) as an integral part of ensuring sustainability. The greatest emphasis is placed on working jointly with the government in the health activities, in which the CORAD partners facilitate the service delivery of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS). While this partnership works well in most cases, the ongoing practice of charging for the under five cards that are key to GMP sessions makes it difficult for CORAD to target the most needy households, who cannot afford even the small sums charged by some Peripheral Health Units (PHUs).

Although CORAD has been successful in the area of health for partnering with the MOHS on service delivery, as the example from Bumanja illustrates, CORAD has not always been successful in facilitating the linkages between communities and government-run facilities: “We do not have a TBA Hut in this community,” says Kadiatu Konoboy, a TBA. “There are times when a woman is in labor, we ask all the men out of the house to enable us to conduct the delivery,” she further stated. “We do not even have TBA kits!” Such issues could indeed be addressed by the construction of a TBA hut, but might be more sustainably addressed (and with additional benefits) through a referral system in which TBAs refer cases that they lack the expertise and facilities to handle to Maternal and Child Health Posts or PHUs.

In other sectors, partnerships with governmental line ministries and District-level officials are of varying levels of functionality and effectiveness. For example, although CORAD partners have universally cordial relationships with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security teams in the operational districts, the real collaboration with them varies significantly from one partner to the next. To date under LEAD, there has been very little interaction with the representative of the

Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports,¹⁷ mainly due to the lack of success of the MEYS to decentralize youth-related activities.

4 Recommendations

This section highlights in bullet points the recommendations that were made by the Technical Working Groups in their meetings on the findings of the LEAD MTR, and the recommendations that were made at the Progress Review Meeting in September for the consortium level. The full table of findings and recommendations can be found in Annex Five.

4.1 Youth and Micro-Enterprise Development

- Put in place a system for regular meeting involving all WGs.
- All the sectors have to work through the same structures like the VDCs, CHCs, the ward committees etc. Staffs who are point persons in different sectors to complement the effort of each other in the field in mobilization and sensitization of communities. Information sharing among staff will also be an important aspect to consider.
- Involve every staff in all project activities that is taken place so as to make them multi-disciplinary and work in a holistic way.
- Hold workshop on capital grant involving all the agencies and come up with common strategies for sustainability.
- Hold workshop to discuss advantages and disadvantages of providing loan focusing on individual or on groups and taking into consideration lessons learnt from former project like LINKS on the above issue.
- Technical /Oversight committees to be set up to run the affairs of any agro-processing equipment. Community members such as Youths to be trained within communities to repair such equipment for this will also create job opportunity particularly for the youths.
- Staff of CORAD Agencies should be fully equipped to assess the viability of businesses and need adequate training in areas of business plan and how to assess businesses (MED training).
- Develop/ Promote strategy towards Youth in rural and urban areas.

4.2 Health

- Push for agriculture to integrate health issues and its importance in the communities lives through agriculture, food, MED, youth, and governance technical activities and targets. For instance, some activities under health are directly integrated with the agriculture, food, and youth areas with the example of Baby-Friendly Farms (BFF). Communities are consistently reminded of the need of nutritious food and good crop plantations in order to improve the health status of malnourished children. Similar kind of activities can be done with other technical areas.
- Each organization's technical focus person to participate in at least two of the other technical working groups within a fiscal year (eg. Within the next fiscal year, health focus person to participate in food and youth technical groups).
- Encourage, and set-up organizational systems that will enable, discussions between senior staff and field staff.
- Creating a behavior change impact in health-related issues are not a tangible outcome, such as assets like drying floors, storage facilities, etc. and therefore the changing impact, or visible change, is more difficult to be seen and takes longer. Thus the reason why some certain health topics need to come back on NGOs agendas, which does not mean that impact is not been made and positive changes are been adopted.

¹⁷ Formerly the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

- Increasing and emphasizing our activities with community members with for instance ownership of color-coded beads for growth monitoring and promotion activities, integrating PHU staff in discussion with VDHCs and other community members, discussions with local councils to be actively involved in all health decisions and emphasizing the importance of by-laws, etc.
- As an example, Koinadugu District has decided to ban home deliveries and place a fine on women who deliver at home. The DMO is encouraging women to deliver in PHUs, and is encouraging the development of birth waiting homes. CORAD aligns itself with the government's strategy on emphasizing the importance of delivery in health facilities with trained medical personnel, and explains to communities (including TBAs) the risks for complications that the TBA will probably not be able to handle resulting in possible maternal and child death.

4.3 Agriculture and the Environment

- Continue with CORAD Coordination meetings at district/base office levels.
- Project managers/Project Coordinators meet regularly with Field Staff on intersectoral issues where they can exchange ideas and plan together.
- Choice of activities must be need-driven and stories must focus on changes observed.
- Processes of delivery of capital grant equipments standardized such as providing business training for the recipient groups, groups developing bi-laws, business plans, having bank accounts, providing matching fund (40 percent of the cost of the equipment in two tranches: 20 percent up front and the remaining 20 percent after 1 year)
- Encourage individual potential recipients to form small business groups of not more than 6 members, provide business management training, encourage the groups to have bi-laws and where possible open bank accounts.
- Continue to provide business management for all groups receiving capital grants while emphasizing on the development of business plans. Additionally, CORAD agencies should require business plans for all capital grant recipients.
- Though smallholder farmers have individual farms, CORAD should encourage farmers to pull resources for the establishment of group commercial farms. Also CORAD should continue to encourage cross-visits among farmers/farmer groups.
- Training in Post Harvest loss management, increase in improved storage facilities, incorporate marketing skills in business management training, continue to support the rehabilitation of/ construction of roads for farmers to have easier access to markets.

4.4 Governance

- A 2-day training/refresher training on the principles and practices of good governance, for all field staff, to be organized at district level. It will also serve as a forum for experience sharing on lessons learnt and best practices. The participation of all field staff in the proposed training will help reinforce the integration of the various LEAD activities, with governance issues in particular, given due attention in the implementation of all LEAD activities.
- Staff (particularly field staff at district level) need to be organizing monthly or even fortnightly meetings, where they will share their experiences and discuss ways and means of improving on the true integration of the various LEAD activities. This will strengthen the team work that is so vital for the successful implementation of the LEAD programme.
- In addition to being concerned with achieving targets, supervisors equally need to look out for actions (by their staff) that indicate teamwork and integration of activities from other sectors. This will encourage staff to see themselves as responsible **not only** for activities in their sectoral area, but in other LEAD sectors as well.
- Strengthening/creating linkages between CBOs and local authorities (District Councils, Ward Committees, Line Ministries, Chiefdom Councils) is a step in the right direction.

- In addition to implementing some activities that focus on communities achieving for themselves, strengthening/creating linkages between CBOs and local authorities (District Councils, Ward Committees, Line Ministries, Chiefdom Councils) is a step in the right direction
- A 2-days training/refresher training on the principles and practices of good governance, for all field staff, to be organized at district level. It will also serve as a forum for experience sharing on lessons learnt and best practices. The participation of all field staff in the proposed training will help reinforce the integration of the various LEAD activities, with governance issues in particular, given due attention in the implementation of all LEAD activities.

4.5 Food

- The issue of targets vs. impact needs to be regularly reiterated and M and E systems need to be in place to collect information around the impact of an intervention and not just its completion
- Agencies need to remember to reduce attention on targets sometimes and step back to make sure that the FFA activity is adding value which is specific to communities. This can be helped by good time planning and spending more time in the community to listen to the suggestions of communities about what assets they feel they need.
- Each agency has a different mechanism to ensure participatory selection of a FFA including working with district councils, village development agencies, CBOs, and PLA which all help to identify assets that are community specific.
- Flexibility: The list of agreed FFA needs to be discussed and if necessary amended more regularly by the FWG/CORAD to include any suggestions of community. This will help to increase flexibility but will also ensure that the list of FFA tasks is still within the CORAD structure and are therefore agreed to by all agencies.
- The criteria for FFA tasks is that they increase agricultural production and therefore there are still some restrictions on what the task can be.
- Suggestions include – keeping local leadership and project management group separate so if there are problems there is someone to arbitrate.
- Making sure that at the start of the project communities understand that this is a community asset- this can be strongly worded in the MOU or agreement that this is a community asset and will be supported through good training by agency staff.
- Using project development committees to take care of assets after the completion of asset and ensuring that during the handover of an asset to the community it is clearly stated that this is for the whole community.
- If asset is needed then a community will feel responsible for it and are more likely to maintain it. This goes back to the issue of emphasis on successful, community led targeting of assets.
- Agencies should work with or link communities to government ministries so they can provide long term support after project completion e.g. communities with fish ponds can receive support from the Ministry of Fisheries who can assist technically and with post project completion monitoring,
- Encouraging community contributions towards FFA assets could increase a sense of ownership and therefore ensure long term, sustainable maintenance of assets. For example when constructing warehouses community have to contribute local materials.
- More activities like VSAL which promotes community ownership, a diversification of activities or more trainings would help work towards promoting self initiative and ownership.

4.6 Consortium-Level Recommendations

Integration by definition must happen across the Wags, and so a number of practice recommendations were raised as to how integration could be improved:

- Conduct regular coordination meetings with partner sector representatives at the Base/Area level. Standing agenda items for such meetings could be sharing work plans and coordinating joint field activities.
- The CCU can provide information on best practices that can facilitate exchange visits between agencies to focus on staff learning

Given the importance of the support from key governmental stakeholders, advocacy was also identified as a key issue:

- Each WG should come up with key advocacy issues to be discussed by the Steering Committee
- The CCU should request agenda items from agencies for steering committee meeting

Governance was a third key issue that was seen to transcend the additional focus placed on it at the working groups:

- The WG should work with governance staff to ensure that activities around the creation of by-laws and meetings are not results-oriented, but process-oriented to ensure that community members learn about the process and can replicate it to ensure sustainability.
- Partners should facilitate transportation of GoSL staff to visit activities.

5 Conclusions

Determining what type of evaluation or review exercise might have the greatest impact on a particular project is a bit like asking the proverbial question about the length of a piece of string—different projects have different needs. In the case of LEAD, the lack of funding to conduct a formal evaluation focused attention on other, less traditional, reflection methods. In its focused approach and emphasis on engaging stakeholders at all levels in listening to communities' understanding of and views on project activities and methods of working, the LEAD MTR enabled project stakeholders at all levels to actively engage with the process of identifying positives and negatives and proposing concrete actions to address them. At this stage in the LEAD project (and given its relatively short duration), this has proven effective¹⁸ in making changes that project stakeholders think will contribute positively to the project's overall impact.

What changes will the LEAD project team make in the long run, and what effect will this have on the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of LEAD in communities served? Clearly, this question cannot now be answered. But the level of engagement by decision-makers and field teams in the self-critique and change processes that were necessary for the success of the MTR bodes well for the future—not only for CORAD, but also for the communities the consortium serves.

¹⁸ An observation by the author is that in the months after the MTR Reflection Meeting, the emphasis of the project has changed dramatically; discussions of impact and integration are now more frequent than discussions of targets and activities accomplished.

6 Annex 1: Case Study Field Work Guidelines

All members of the MTR Case Study teams have at least some prior experience in doing qualitative research (focus groups or interviews), but it's important to remember that this field work will be a little different.

1. **Live as they live.** You are expected to spend at least one day and one night in the community, living as people there live, as a guest in their village. This means adhering to the accepted standards for dress and behavior (check with the implementing partner to see what this means in practical terms). Try to minimize the extent to which you set yourself apart from other people, although you will need to take basic precautions to ensure your safety and health (such as using a mosquito net). This is NOT like going in to do a focus group and then leaving. Don't rush things. Let yourself be guided by the community's own time frame and schedule.
2. **What are we supposed to DO?!** You can intersperse more formal discussions with less formal interactions in the evenings, over meals, and while working alongside people. The idea is that you should not just be using formal extractive techniques. Learn from being by talking with them, little by little. Avoid when possible taking people away from their work—instead, join them! For example, you might have a more formal meeting with community members, and then less formally spend time talking with farmers. A woman might more formally talk to women in a meeting, but then might talk with them while walking with them to fetch water.
3. **Yes, but what are we trying to find out??** Your basic guiding questions are:
 - a. What is it like to live in this community, particularly for key LEAD stakeholder groups (see point 4 below)? How are things now better or worse than they were two years ago for the various stakeholders?
 - b. What aspects of LEAD are community stakeholders satisfied with? Which ones are they not satisfied with?
 - c. What do community members feel are the best things that LEAD has done so far? What do they like the least?
 - d. What recommendations do they have for improving LEAD, and capitalizing on the good things that have happened so far?
 - e. How satisfied is the community with the way in which the CORAD partner is working with them?
 - f. What does the community find challenging about working with the CORAD partner? What suggestions do they have for improvement?
 - g. Of any infrastructure-related projects that have been conducted, are they being well maintained? If not, why not? For any ongoing projects, how is the quality of work, and are there maintenance plans?
4. **Meet with as many groups as possible.** Try to meet/spend time with the following key stakeholder groups (if applicable, and unless you cannot out of courtesy to local social mores)
 - a. Farmers (especially FFS members)
 - b. Women (especially pregnant women and mothers with young children)
 - c. Traditional Birth Attendants
 - d. Community Health Committee members/Village Development Health Sub-Committee members
 - e. VS&L members
 - f. Youth
 - g. Local officials,
 - h. VGF beneficiaries
 - i. FFW beneficiaries
 - j. CBO members (especially those receiving governance training)
 - k. Village Welfare Sub-Committee members
 - l. Start-up grant recipients

5. **Language, language.** Yes, we will have some language issues. First of all, inquire with the agencies what the local language is. At least one member of every team speaks Krio, and so agree with the agency the best way to get a translation from the local language to Krio (probably a community translator, although the case study team might also want assistance from a staff member—it is your choice).
6. **Hail to the chiefs, and the speakers, and their wives.** Remember to follow protocols by meeting with the chief and his advisors. It may be that you are staying in their homes, in which case you would be spending quite a lot of time together. But also try to have activities in which they are NOT present, to get a broader perspective.
7. **Take notes in a non-distracting way.** Agree with your partner who will take notes, and how, but make sure that it will not distract community members (sometimes tape recorders have this effect).
8. **Be willing to laugh at yourself.** If you are really and truly trying to live and work alongside people, you will often end up looking quite silly as you show that you are not skilled at the same tasks that people do every day! Be relaxed and willing to look silly—it is more fun, and will bring you closer to community members. This might mean caring for children, tending crops (try not to damage them!), hauling water, etc.

CASE STUDY GUIDELINES

Now that you have finished the field work, it is time to write up the case study. There is not a set format for the case studies, but here are a few guidelines, to help you with this process:

1. The case study should be 3-5 pages when finished. Remember the guiding questions from above, and construct a case study based on your findings.
2. Write as if you are writing a story, not like you are writing a report! As much as possible, try to share with your readers what it was actually like to be in that situation: what are you feeling, smelling, tasting, touching, seeing, and hearing?
3. Use quotations from community members whenever possible.
4. You do not need to explain your data collection process or challenges faced—there will be time for this during the Reflection Meeting. (If you really run into challenges and would like to document them, write this in a separate document or email to the M&E Manager (meg_audettel@wvi.org).
5. As much as possible, avoid talking about yourself—you should be focusing on the community and THEIR experience (good or bad).
6. Do not try to minimize or explain away things that the community is not satisfied with. Present their opinions, feelings, and situations as accurately as possible.
7. Take pictures, but remember to ask permission from anyone you would like to photograph first.

7 Annex 2: Case Studies

7.1 Nerekoro, Diang Chiefdom, Koinadugu District

Nerekoro is a predominately Muslim village with farming and mining as their main activities. The community has benefited very little from the post war development of Sierra Leone. Located in the Sokrala Section of Diang chiefdom in the Koinadugu District, the village of nineteen households is difficult to access due to the disrepair of the road network. According to the villagers, 3 of its members were killed during the war, but none of their homes were razed. The number of homes remain the same (one fell down after the war and another was built), and they are made from local materials with some having thatched roofs and some having zinc roofs.

Although only 24 miles from Kabala town, it took us 2 hours to reach the village--our vehicle fell through a bridge made from poles, and we were required to use a winch and a jack to free the vehicle. DRP rehabilitated the road and bridges making vehicle access possible, albeit still difficult. Nerekoro does not have a health centre. The nearest one is in Fouriah, approximately 15 miles distance. The nurse from that health center occasionally visits Nerekoro. In terms of basic sanitation, people obtain their water from streams. One hears the melodious songs of women and children early in the morning and again in evening as they go to the stream to fetch water. Most households lack latrines.



entrance in to secondary school.

There is a community school, shared by Nerekoro and a neighboring village. It is managed by one of the young men of the community who had gone up to the third grade of the junior secondary school and, not being able to further his studies, has decided to go back to the community to help his younger ones. He receives a cup of rice and Le 2,000 per pupil for classes three and four and Le 1,500 for classes one and two. There are less than 50 students who attend. After fifth grade, the children move to Badala, a bigger village with a registered primary school where they can take the national primary school examination for

Gold mining, both artesian and formal, is one of the main economic activities, in addition to agriculture. When we arrived in the village in the early afternoon, there were no youth present. About 5 pm they began to return home after a day's work at the mines in Segbeya, a one hour walk through rice fields and forest. The next morning, we joined the young miners as they left the village at 7 am in time to walk 4 miles and start work by 8 am. The formal mining activities have attracted the attention of energetic youth who now seek cash wages of 10,000 Le per day (60,000 Le per week) as a favorable option for improving their livelihoods. Upon arrival at the mines, it took some time for us to negotiate with the authorities so we could visit the mining site and speak to people. After assuring them that our interest was not to criticize but rather to learn more about the youth working in the mines, we were given free access. There are two formal mines, side by side. The mining rights for one are held by 2 Belgian citizens and a Sierra Leonean. The other mine appears to have a Pakistani interest as there were 2 Pakistani citizens on the site. There is a daily roll call before work starts and the youth queue to answer the call and pick up their shovels and head pans. If you are not there, your name comes off the list and someone replaces you. Interestingly, a young

man from the village told us that he missed 2 days to do some work on his farm. When he went back, he had been replaced. For the past 2 weeks, he had walked to the mine every morning and again in the afternoon (total distance 16 miles) trying to gain reemployment with the mine. Work hours are Monday through Saturday, 8 to 4. There is a 30 minute lunch break and food is provided. Local latrines and showers are also on site.

Discussions held by the LEAD evaluation team with the youth revealed that they were happy to have an opportunity to earn income of 10,000 Le per day and a meal. Those employed did not complain of failure or delayed payment. Some of the reasons for which these youth use the money they are paid at the mines included payment of school/college fee, to start up a business or a farm and to take care of their families at home.

I have just sat to my senior secondary school examination waiting for result, that is why I am here to find money so that by the time results are out I will be able to pay my college fee

The majority of women in Nerekoro are engaged in gardening and small-scale farming mostly for home consumption. Women who do have extra sell, such as rice, beans and vegetables, sell it at the Badala market, which is 4 miles from Nerekoro using a bush route. In turn, they purchase items at the market such as Maggie and other condiments and onions and use it for consumption and/or sell some of it in the community. CRS previously rehabilitated the Badala market. Although we were not aware of any women from Nerekoro working in the gold mines, there are a number of secondary services—mostly food and sales of small goods such as soap, tonics, etc—around the mine run by women. We were told that some women also work in washing and transporting gravel at the mines, earning 10,000 Le/ day but we did not observe any on the day we visited.



Together with the children, the women help the males with planting, weeding, bird scaring and harvesting. During week days a few of the children attend the community school.

CRS has been implementing activities in this community for approximately 3 years as it was also a DRP community. Activities include vulnerable group feeding, health talks, Food for Assets (farm to market roads and fish pond construction/rehabilitation) and agriculture (Farmer Field Schools). According to the community members the farmer field schools have just been established and they are waiting for training. CRS staff report that they have done training and conducted experiments. We did observe that some farmers are planting NERICA rice which has a harvest period of 3 months. The introduction of this by the programme is appreciated, but people noted that it was hard to get enough seed. Likewise, ground nuts are another agricultural activity that was mentioned. It seems that people are using the seeds from the first harvest to plant more, as they believe that there is a good market for ground nuts.

We use to walk eight miles to and from Badala to have our children weighed and vaccinated but now CRS has helped us a lot by bringing the facility at our door step

The chairman of the development committee is in charge of feeding the fish and cleaning the three ponds. Compared to the ponds that we had observed in other locations, they did not seem sufficiently deep. He stated that the termites used to feed the fish are difficult to find, and so they we been substituting it with bulgur supplied by CRS. Now that the bulgur is finished and the cassava season is here they will begin to use cassava.

The health activities seem to be ongoing and have so far been helpful to pregnant women and lactating mothers who receive useful health information and vaccines for their children as well as having them weighed on a monthly basis. A member of the community health club noted that the most common illnesses are diarrhea and *turn head* (dizziness). We were unable to determine the cause for *turn head*. The sensitization through the health talks about hygiene practices appears to have helped raise awareness about the vectors of diarrhea-based illnesses. Nonetheless, with few latrines and no wells, most likely this problem will persist. There was widespread appreciation for food provided to vulnerable members of the community.

We are very happy that CRS is helping us with feeding our vulnerable people in this community, this help to ease our burden during hunger period. We greatly appreciate this programme

One of the most successful activities in the community is the road construction. The road is routinely brushed and the bridges maintained. This has made it possible for motor bikes and vehicles to ply the route to Nerekoro. Members noted that they are in the process of constructing another road that will be shorter. However, they mentioned that they need additional tools to complete the last 2 miles. They have been receiving food for the road construction.

While there is evidence of existing village development committee, health committee and farmer field school groups, given the small size of the community and the traditional culture of rural Sierra Leone, it seemed that most of the committees are filled with the traditional leaders and we did not see much evidence of one of the more dynamic groups—the youth. When the youth came back from the mines in the late afternoon, bathed and ate, they then organized a football match. Even though the work at the mines is physically demanding, they still had energy to play hard at football—and it was obvious they were enjoying themselves. We noticed that two young men came back to the village rather late—about 6 pm. Thinking that they had stayed longer at the mines (the majority returned before 5), they told us that they came back at the regular time but had been sent out to repair the bridge where our vehicle had fallen through.

Both evaluators found it difficult to move around the community without being followed by the traditional leaders. They are clearly very much in charge and very much dominate the committees. Over the more than 24 hours we were in the village, we observed that most of the traditional leaders seemed to spend their time sitting. For instance, the youth who do bridge and road maintenance are mostly not members. We asked ourselves how much effort LEAD was dedicated to working with people outside of those structures, realizing at the same time that in a small community a different approach may be required.

7.2 Ropapa, Gbonkolenken Chiefdom, Tonkolili District

On the above named dates a visit was made by Myles Harrison and Cecilia Abdul- Shereef to a village called Ropapa in the Mayawa section of the Gbonkolenken chiefdom, Tonkolili district. The purpose of this visit was to assess the progress to date of the LEAD program and to undertake a qualitative review based on a case study of the community. Very informal discussions were held with members on their farms, backyard, down the road to stream, the veranda, the community meeting place and over the evening meal.

Ropapa is a small community of 16 houses inhabited by people who are very hard working and have their wits about them.

The situation found in Ropapa was one that exhibited great simplicity and willingness of the community members to know, understand and appreciate what is best for them and oneness to work towards it as far as the LEAD program is concerned. We had a strong sense of feeling that all they were taught and encouraged to do was highly appreciated as for their own good and they have it imbued in their minds as if to say “if we don’t take it in good part we will lose”. This again may be as a result of the good interaction between the community members and the CORAD partner working with them.

Key stakeholder groups met with – FFS members, Women’s groups, Traditional birth attendants, VS&L members, Youth, local officials, VGF beneficiaries, FFW beneficiaries, Start-up grants recipients.

On arrival at Ropapa we were told that almost all the stakeholder groups and local officials have gone to their farms and we proceeded to meet them there – at least to those that were not very far off.

It felt so good to work with rake and hoe for bush clearing once again and this went on as the discussions were held with the vice headman and secretary and other community members on their farms.

Even though the groups were met with separately it was clear that the agency spent much time imparting the knowledge they needed on all the activities and how they should be done and they too learnt their lessons well as could be seen in the uniform answers given to the questions asked.

In describing what it is like to live in this community one could see their faces lit with glee and satisfaction as they explained and narrated the joys and benefits in their acquisition of new knowledge and skills for farm work, health care and disease prevention, concern for one another and good relationship, the ability to make more income and do savings, having their road better constructed and the opportunity given them to construct maintain and benefit from two fish ponds – a thing they had never dreamt of.

When asked to tell how things are better or worse than were two years ago the members had so much to say on the better off side. A youth in the VS&L group said, “We are proud of the fact that we have a loan facility, our debts are cleared and our children are growing in a healthier environment and can now go to school.” The community members were given enough time to narrate how their situation is now better off:

- Clean surrounding
- Community under good control and supervision
- Having a community meeting place
- Use of mosquito net
- Having to go with strict by-laws for their own good

- No more laundered clothes on the ground but on clothes line
- Education in key health messages, resulting in less occurrences of diseases that has been their lot for long
- Knowledge in HIV/AIDS – mode of transmission and prevention
- Knowledge in making and maintaining fish pond
- Care for the disabled
- Can now boast of having at least 100 bushels of rice in store
- Growth monitoring
- Group savings
- Elections for positions, by-laws, fines for defaulters etc.
- Making compost fence

As far as they were concerned there was nothing that made their situation worse off as compared to two years ago.

They also narrated those aspects of LEAD that they are satisfied with and the best things that LEAD has done so far. These include

- a) The road - This is the best as far as they are concerned and they all reiterated in one voice to say without which nothing good would have reached them
- b) The health aspect is another of great importance and as one young lady said “We can now hold our heads high when it comes to ‘well body business.’ Our children can now hardly die of diseases like diarrhea and malaria which has been a common thing in the past. We are glad for the health lessons taught us and we know that as long as we go by them we will hardly fall ill.”
- c) The Farmer Field Schools – they have been taught how to plant and tend crops to give better yields. For example in the past corn was planted as 3 seeds per hole. Now they have understood why it should be a single seed and well spaced out.
- d) Care for the vulnerable – “I cannot imagine what life would have been like for me without this aspect of LEAD program,” said Pa Abu Fornah, one of the blind beneficiaries. When asked why, Pa Abu simply smiled, “Just the bulgur, oil and beans make me feel happy not to talk of the food they cook for me from the farm proceeds.” The village chairlady makes sure work on the farm for the vulnerable goes on well without fail. She said all 60 members (25 women and 35 men) who take care of that farm have their own individual farms but they make sure work is done on the community farm first before they visit their own farms. Another member said it was difficult for them in the past to take care of the vulnerable ones as they had to take from their depleted resources since they did not know what to do as a community. “Indeed this intervention is very good and we will make sure it continues” said a group member

It was found out that the aspect of LEAD that residents are not satisfied with is that although they have been helped to produce more and have better yields, no provision has been made for storage. As a result of this, a good amount of stuff is being destroyed by rats and other pests, and this will damage the good work done towards bumper harvest and acquiring more income.

There is also the need for a water well they said. Commented an old lady, “With all the good health messages we have received, if there is no provision for clean drinking water then most of the efforts put in that area will go in vain.”

With the bumper harvest in cassava, they also recommended for a gari-making machine so that the cassava production activity will be extended thus enabling them to make more sales and increase their profit margin.

An elderly lady who is a Traditional Birth Attendant also recommended for a well-equipped delivery room, which they have not had since they were trained. One of the TBAs smiled and remarked,

“Having to do my job in an unhealthy environment disturbs my conscience. I think the program has to consider this.”

In terms of what they like the least according to them, there is nothing. They are also satisfied with the way the CORAD partner is working with them.

One thing they found challenging is having to work hard to meet deadlines and to make sure everything they are taught is properly filtered down in every household and adhered to. They confessed that conducting frequent meetings as they should and also to keep records of those meetings is a big challenge in order to meet their expectations.

Ropapa community has two fish ponds that are very well maintained and the quality of work is very good. The Village Development Committee is in charge for the upkeep and maintenance of the ponds and they assign each household on rotational basis to clean the ponds and feed the fishes. The feeding is done daily. Each household after feeding the fishes for the day hangs a string on the wall of the house whose turn is next. Nobody moves the string until the feeding is done. Defaulters are fined accordingly. The water is changed at regular intervals, and to maintain the fish (especially in the dry season when the water level is low), a big net is provided to cover the pond and keep the fishes from big birds that come to prey on them.

All the farms visited were clean and not choked with grass, and the farmers plan to join with other villages to form a Farmer Group Club or Association. There is a great sense of oneness in the entire village, which is kept clean; members were seen to be practicing what they have learnt regarding their welfare during the visit.

7.3 Bumanja, Sandor Chiefdom, Kono District

Bumanja village is located in Sumungifeh Section, Sandor chiefdom in Kono district. It is about 82 kilometers from Koidu, the main town of the district. The village is strategically situated on top of a hill and surrounded by running streams. It has 75 houses, built with mud bricks and sticks, some of the houses are roofed with zinc sheet and others with thatches. The Kono language is predominantly spoken in this community although some people understand and speak Krio.

Bumanja is mainly a farming community. It is interesting to note that mining activities do not take place in Bumanja, despite the fact that the key economic activity in Kono District is diamond mining. Crops grown are coffee and cacao for economic purposes. Rice, cassava, potato, yam, groundnut and other vegetables are grown for local consumption. Occasionally, people buy husk rice at Wordu, which is the nearest marketplace. A bag of husk rice is sold for Le 35,000 and when processed it gives about 80 to 90 cups, which is double the price compared to last year.

People in this community mainly have only one meal a day, comprising of rice with a preferred sauce, usually in the evenings. Cassava, potato, yam and other food stuff, could be eaten at some point during the day, but are not considered as main meals. They are regarded as breakfast or snacks. The source of animal protein is mainly from powdered fish, obtained from Freetown referred to as "Bulu Bulu". This is measured in very small quantities and sold in packets for Le 500 each. Occasionally, the inhabitants of Bumanja do eat chicken and goats. The people do not have access to bush meat, because they do not carry guns anymore.

The community has a school but no health facility. The nearest Peripheral Health Unit is in Wordu town, about 12 kilometers away. Cars seldom come to Bumanja village as it has a very rough terrain. There is a Farm-to-Market road, which was constructed by FFW through the assistance of World Vision last year, but is not properly maintained by the community and they have no plan to do that.

Marriage ceremonies are big traditional events, where dowries are paid by the bride to the bride's parents. There is no stipulated amount for this.

Bumanja is the base for the "Sumui" Society, which is a traditional men's secret society in Sandor chiefdom and is the biggest in Kono district. The shrine for this society is located in the forests of Bumanja. The society dignifies initiates for manhood and is also a key factor of determinant for all positions in the chiefdom. Taking photographs during all ceremonies related to this society are strongly prohibited. The society recruits children of 6- 8 years old and they stay in the bush for 7 years to learn about the society and become full members. World Vision is negotiating for a reduction in the number of years to 5. This means that many children, who are now teenagers lose a large part of their education.

PROBLEMS

The main problems of the village are health related.

Bumanja has 3 Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA), who conducts deliveries in the community. Periodic refresher trainings were conducted for the TBAs by World Vision. A mother having a baby in Bumanja will have the child delivered on an un-cemented floor in a mud house, with no appropriate instruments used to conduct the delivery. "We do not have a TBA Hut in this community," says Kadiatu Konoboy, a TBA. "There are times when a woman is in labor, we ask all the men out of the house to enable us to conduct the delivery," she further stated. "We do not even have TBA kits!"

With regards to immunization, newborn babies are taken to Wordu by the TBAs for their vaccines. Those whose parents fail to pay the required charges are not taken to the Health Centre. They remain in the community until they pay the fees, or go without.

Outreach sessions at Community Clinic Points are seldom held--about once every 3-6 months. "I lost my grandson 2 days ago and the other is lying at home ill, with no nurse or doctor to attend to him," cried Pa Tamba Yarka, an aggrieved old man. Diseases that commonly affect children in the community are malaria, diarrhea, cough and cold. Pregnant women have to walk to Wordu for Antenatal care and counseling services. Most pregnant women in Bumanja, do not receive the doses of Tetanus Toxoid, iron supplements, Intermittent Presumptive Treatment (IPT), or deworming pills.

One community facilitator is identified, trained and supplied with a Salter scale for weighing under-five children in Bumanja. The facilitator weighs and records readings in a book he keeps, but not on the Under-Five Cards. The children do not get weighed when he is out of the community as he is the only trained person who can perform this task. He also keeps the Salter Scale when he goes out of the community. Under-five children in Bumanja sometimes go for 2 or 3 months without being weighed.

There is no Baby Friendly Farm (BFF) in the community and VDC/VHC members have no idea of it.

Village Development Health Committee (VDHC)/Community Health Club (CHC) members do not hold meetings and have not received trainings on the 3 health topics (malaria, diarrhea and ARI).

The main source of drinking water is a nearby stream, which dries up during the dry season. "Over the years, the population of the village is growing steadily, leading to its expansion towards the drinking water source, which leads to high pollution," reported Musa Momorie, the Town Chief of Bumanja. The entire village has only one latrine. "We get worried whenever we receive message of strangers coming to visit our community," says Mariama Lansana, a TBA.

The two expressed needs for this community are a good source of drinking water (1-2 Wells) and a TBA Hut.

ACHIEVEMENTS/SUCCESSSES

Through Farmer Field School (FFS) initiative, the community learnt better agriculture practices/techniques and are applying it successfully so far. One FFS has already been graduated and another one is running. The biggest achievement come out of FFS, according to the farmers, is the unity. Both of the FFSs work together and their cassava production has been increased significantly compared to last year. They also expected a better production of rice this year.

All the members of FFS contribute Le 1,000 per month, out of which Le 500 goes to the Cluster Association of Sandor Chiefdom, and balance of which (Le. 500) stays as local fund to increase the farming activities. The FFSs of Bumanja are represented well in the Cluster Association of Sandor chiefdom. The president of the association Khanaie Momore is from the Bumanja FFS.

The decision-making in FFS is usually done by consensus. If all members are not present in a meeting, then the majority vote will make the decision. There are 4 women members in the nine-member FFS Committee. The women members are holding some important posts like Co-Chairperson, Auditor, and Public Relations Officer. The committee discusses funding situation in every meeting and the Treasurer has to provide a report on the status of the fund.

Yormatha (meaning future) is the savings and literacy group established in December 2007 and still functioning well. The members proudly said that they now can read the alphabets. They have

already raised a capital of Le 324,000 in their savings fund. Loans amounting Le 20,000 each have been taken by most of the members to support their agriculture and petty trading.

The neighboring villagers are coming to learn how they have established Yormatha and express their interest to do the same and sought their help.

Susudondwe is the youth group united to do more farming. While asking for their preference of farming over diamond mining, they youth leader, Kiakhanaie told 'Diamond do deceive But agriculture pays directly'. They do some savings as well, and members can take loan for house repair, medical purposes etc. The club also has social outreach activities, like support for treatment of the members.

The Farm to market road, constructed last year has opened up the access of motorized traffic for the village and although it was hardly maintained, this is the only road to reach the village by a vehicle.

CHALLENGES FACED & POTENTIAL IN AGRICULTURE

The Bumanja village, a predominantly farming community, though have some successes/achievements is recent days, are facing with some challenges. These are related to agriculture production and marketing.

This year, they will have bumper production of cassava and rice. They will be able to sell a good amount of rice and cassava after meeting their own consumption. But they are facing multiple problems around that. They don't have any store to keep the extra production. Again, they don't have any means to transport their product to nearest market.

They would also like to increase their acreage for these cash crops and they have land for that. But then they need mechanized cultivation and that is beyond their reach at this moment. The FFS believes that if they have a power tiller, then they will be able to triple or quadruple the production of rice and cassava compared to their current production. They are trying to get one from Koidu town on rental basis.

Bumanja has also produces coffee and cacao. But last year, the production declined because of black pod disease. They need some training on pest control for both tree crops and field crops.

Bumanja village has the potential to become a food basket for the entire Sandor Chiefdom.

7.4 Madina, Mandu Chiefdom, Kailahun District

Al Madina, the preferred name of this community by its inhabitants, is situated at a distance of about four kilometers east of the chiefdom headquarter town of Mandu in Kailahun district, eastern Sierra Leone.

Traveling from the military garrison town of Daru on a thirty-five kilometer distance of laterite road that takes you to Madina, large stretches of tropical lowland rainforests interspersed by farm bush, swamps and rolling hills characterize the general terrain.

As the name implies, Madina is a predominantly Muslim community held together in cohesiveness by its extended family ties. This relatively small community consists of fifteen dwelling units with a total number of forty seven households. Livelihoods revolve around small scale agricultural production of rice, tuber crops, maize, and vegetables and to a lesser extent on cash crops. Forming a semi-circle around the village are tree crop plantations of coffee, cocoa, oil palm and plantain.

Madina had a pre-war population of approximately five hundred inhabitants living in over fifty housing units. The village was completely razed to the ground coupled with a considerable loss of life and property during the war. The village has no school, community barri or a recreation area like a football pitch. Children from primary to junior secondary school have to travel anywhere between one to three kilometers to attend school. Community meetings are mostly held in the village chief's verandah.

Asked about how they have been rebuilding their lives and community, chief Mohamed Musa looks blankly into the morning air and laments, "I was the first to come back to the village and it was heart rendering to see how the efforts of our parents and grandparents has been laid to waste. But from 1997 to present, I thank god that other family members have joined the great trek in bringing back our community to a semblance of its former self. Limited by resources, nearly a third of the previous inhabitants are still resident in the neighboring village of Levuma, 1 kilometer away. They come on regular basis to tend their individual farming plots and also join us on those days slated for community work. If we can raise sufficient funds from our community efforts and with outside support, we can embark on shelter assistance so that we are all together again as a unit."

Asked about any assistance the community had received since resettling, it was unanimously stated that besides CORD-SL who helped them with a hand-pump well some ten years ago, only Africare has worked with the community this closely. The Youth leader, Foday Amadu explained that, "We do not know what the acronym LEAD means, but working with Africare our farmers have graduated from FFS and have established community farms. Also we have had a community member trained as a health volunteer and the community has been blessed with a grain store and drying floor. We can also properly organize our selves since we have a very functional and committed VDC with specific responsibilities assigned to community members." However, following a review of its composition, the visiting team came to the realization that the community health volunteer was the only female representation in the structure.

Madina Village has got only three poorly maintained; mud and wattle pit latrines which cannot adequately serve the community. These structures were constructed through community effort. This community has access to only one protected hand pump well constructed in 1998 by CORD – SL with funding from UNICEF. Talking to the Africare trained community health volunteer, Jenneh Fomba, she disclosed that three cases of diarrhea were reported for children under five years during the last month. These cases, she said were referred to Baima Village three kilometers away on bush path, being the closest community with a PHU. She commented that this incident may not be unconnected with the bad taste of the water as the pipes in the well have gone rusty. Talking to VDC secretary Mohamed Koroma, about their plans to replace the rusty metal pipes with PVC

pipes, he stated that they have contacted Africare for support while at the same time they have plans to mobilize resources for the replacement of the pipes.

During the initial meeting with community members, the community health volunteer, Jenneh Fomba commented on her roles in serving the community. Following her training by Africare, she conducts weighing for about thirty children under five years on a monthly basis and also keeps records of the nutritional status of these children.” Due to the skills I have acquired, I can identify minor causes of illness and where necessary facilitate the required referrals to the PHU at Baima Mandu” Jenneh said. She continues to explain that she also provides support to pregnant and lactating women. Together with the TBA, they have been closely monitoring one lactating mother exclusively breast feeding her under six months old baby. The only pregnant woman in Madina also came out to say she has volunteered to exclusively breast feed on delivery. “I have believed that when you exclusively breast feed, the child hardly gets sick and also seldom cries This I have closely observed from what my sister is practicing with her two months old baby boy” Baindu, the pregnant woman said.

The team was very impressed with the work of the CHV. The community generally understands basic hygiene practices and behavior as demonstrated by the clean and well kept community environment coupled with the widespread use of cloth lines and plate racks. In focus group discussions with CHC members, it was revealed that minor ailments like diarrhea, skin rashes and malaria were on the decrease.

The community works officer, Aliou Kanneh stated that,” during the community work days of Monday and Tuesday, we ensure that the village is swept clean before moving on to the community farms. Again once every month, the entire community embarks on the brushing of the 100 meter stretch of road that connects our village to the trunk route leading to Kailahun.”

Madina community benefited from a FFS training, and on graduation, the farmers have embarked on the creation of community farms involved in the production, processing and preservation of mainly tuber crops like cassava and sweet potatoes. According to the contact farmer, Mohamed Koroma, "we have saved up to six hundred thousand leones as proceeds from the sale of these commodities. Our desire is for Africare to help us open a bank account.” Following further discussion with the visiting team, it was realized that the community did not have a plan in place on how to further invest this money besides opening a bank account.

“The FFS is the best thing that has happened in our village. We can now safely go through the hunger season. We can also no longer depend on rice alone. We have enough of cassava and sweet potatoes tubers to eat and sell. On a daily basis, people come from nearby communities and as far as from Kailahun to buy from us. The secrete is the FFS” reported one FFS member. Members of the FFS in Madina have acquired a lot of knowledge in tuber processing and preservation. They are able to articulate preservation practices for cassava and sweet potato. Also, cassava is processed into flour which can quickly be prepared into pap and foofoo meals. This, they said are being used as a hunger breaker. Thus the potato and cassava tubers can now be preserved over long periods of time. Similarly, the visiting team was impressed with the knowledge gained so far by the FFS participants especially in terms of pest management practices. The community explained that they now know which insects are beneficial to their crops and which ones are harmful and how to control them. Also multiplication of banana/plantain suckers was another idea learnt from the FFS. One FFS member said that from one stock of plantain, they can now multiply up to forty suckers in one month.

During the team’s visit to the safety-net community IVS, it was observed that traditional methods like random planting were still being used. When asked about this practice as opposed to the modern method of row planting, community members were of the opinion that the latter was more labor intensive and time consuming. The community said that spacing and row planting methods in

the IVS will be practiced during next planting cycle to compare yields from different methods for adoption.

Madina has also benefited from FFA support to construct a community grain store and drying floor. Local artisans were hired in the construction of these assets. The community was proud to show the visiting team how well the store is being used. Sweet potato and processed cassava bags were observed in the grain store. The community only lamented over the quality of work done on the drying floor. Some quantity of cement was bought from the community fund to mend the cracks already visible on the paved floor. Again, the food payments recently made have contributed immensely to the food availability in the community. Meals prepared by women in almost all households visited consisted mainly of bulgur wheat and cassava..

7.5 Waiyor, Gbane Chiefdom, Kono District

It takes about one hour walking on the main road (about 2.5 km) to go to the village of Waiyor from Gandor, the Chiefdom Headquarter town. Because Gandor is home to the closest schools and clinics to the village, Waiyor residents travel at least a few times per month, to have a child weighed or purchase things not available in their village. Children in Class Three and above walk this road to and from school every day—there is no formal school in Waiyor, and the community-run school can only accommodate children in Classes One and Two.

This tiny community of 29 houses (13 of which have zinc roofs, although some are old and rusted) has been connected to World Vision in various ways over the years. The Development Relief Program (DRP, 2004-2007) worked in Gbane, and Waiyor was home to a Farmer Field School (FFS), and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) from Waiyor participated in trainings. Since 2006, World Vision has been implementing a chiefdom-wide Area Development Program (ADP) in Gbane. The LEAD program began in 2007, but Waiyor is not a “full” community, meaning that only certain activities will be implemented there, rather than the full LEAD package. So far, Food for Work (FFW) and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) activities have taken place in the village, and representatives of different groups have participated in trainings conducted by LEAD. Other agencies have also done work in Waiyor: there are 5 latrine blocks of 2 latrines each, and a well is under construction (funded by the Red Cross).

Households in Waiyor depend upon subsistence farming activities. Rice, cassava, and ground nuts are most common, and cacao and palm nuts are both cultivated and gathered from former plantations. A good number of households grow other crops as well, such as maize, sorghum, and vegetables. In spite of the fact that rice (both upland and IVS) is widely grown, none of the households grow enough rice to feed their family year round. There is a drying floor located in the center of the community, and a number of women and men mention that after the harvest it is used to dry rice and cacao. Households rarely sell any of the produce as there is not usually enough surplus to get a good price, but sometimes they will barter with their neighbors or take palm oil to Gandor to sell or trade for Magi cubes, salt, or medicines. “It is better to trade,” one woman said, “When I exchange my palm oil for something, I know when I am getting a fair price. Sometimes when I sell I will sell for the same price as before, but now the costs have gone up.” Although most families say they grow rice and process at least some palm oil, there are no machines in the village. All is processed by hand or, in the case of palm oil, by foot. None of the households mentioned processing gari, although cassava is widely grown.

Nearly all households in the community participated in the FFW project last year to create a tree nursery for cacao seedlings, but the amount of food that each household received was small. People were pleased with the project: there had been plantations before, and so the farmers have experience with cacao, and they can use tree cropping to fill in the gaps in the old plantations since a good number of cocoa trees died during the war. The community provided the seedlings, and WV provided polythene bags and FFW. Farmers in the community were unified by working together to do something for their community and beneficiary said “I would be in place to provide medication and education for my children in the coming three years.”

Only six or seven households received cacao seedlings from the nursery because it was too small for all to receive. About 50 seedlings remain, and so a few more households will benefit, but most households are expecting to receive if they have not already done so. Many people who worked on the nursery are not clear on how it was decided who should receive the plants, but note that some people who received seedlings for their own farmers were organizers or very active people in the project. Even the organizers have no plans to continue the plantation if they do not receive additional polythene bags from World Vision—people would be willing to work, they say, but they cannot afford the bags on their own. When one organizer was asked if they had thought to charge

people a small amount for each seedling to cover the cost of buying more bags, he said that they had not.

Reflecting on this project, the visitors saw this as a strong example of “community work”: everyone in the community was aware of the project, and people were grateful to have received additional food to help them through the lean months of last year. But the cacao nursery is not really a community asset as most households have not benefited and do not feel any involvement in the decision-making or exhibit any ownership. The most common opinion among Waiyoi residents was expressed by one man, “We are requesting that WV help us [to continue the nursery] with more food and bags. I would like for my household to benefit, but without food, I do not know if I will work because I did not benefit the last time.”

“But you must come to see the other plantation,” the Youth Chairperson said to the visitors. When asked what plantation, he explained that last year, he had attended a good governance training conducted by World Vision. He met with people from many other groups from Gbane. They learned there how to form and manage a group with a common interest, and together realized that many of the groups were from communities nearby to one another that were all struggling against poverty. “We wanted to develop one-ness,” he explained, “to be united.” Together, the representatives of 12 groups (each of which has 30 members, for a total of 360 people) decided to come together to form a larger group. They decided that the main priority was to focus on women and farmers “because most people are farmers here, and women have not had the same advantages as men here in Gbane.” The group, Push Women Before (PWB) developed its constitution and by-laws, and elected its executive committee (all of whom are women). They decided to make a large rice plantation, and identified a suitable area of about 15 acres. “We did not receive any donor support, nothing. We were disappointed that World Vision did not help us with seed rice, but we managed.” Each member of the group was asked to pay 10,000 leones, which was used to buy 12 bushels of rice. The PWB members agreed to work every Saturday, “and everyone must come and work—we will only excuse people for sickness or emergency. Men and women both come, because this is for everyone.” In this way, PWB prepared the land and planted the rice. With the proceeds from the rice, they plan to support women’s activities to help to push women forward, and to create a seed bank to loan seed rice to farmers. In the end, the PWB group wants to create a formal development CBO.

Standing in the middle of the large expanse of shocking green that is the young rice plants, one member of PWB says, “we will not be able to achieve this without support.” When the visitors point out that they have already done so much on their own, the man gestures to an uncultivated piece of land of about 2 acres. “But you see? We ran out of seed, and now we cannot finish. We are asking for 2 bushels of rice and tools, so that we can finish planting what we have cleared.” The group also hopes to be the beneficiary of a capital grant in the form of a rice huller machine, and to have access to a storage facility where they can store the rice they harvest until they will receive a high price for the crop. Members of the group speak with pride about their accomplishments, conveying through tone, stance, and gesture their passion for the project. It is a bit discouraging to the visitors that in spite of all they have done on their own, they still articulate success as a possibility only with the support of NGOs, in spite of the fact that the early momentum of the cacao nursery project in which WV was more involved seems to be faltering. Part of this attitude may stem from their lack of experience with organizational/business development: although the inputs they are seeking from NGOs would clearly help to jump-start their work, slower growth and expansion with less/limited support may enable them to put stronger structures in place around key governance areas such as financial management/fiscal planning, marketing, and ensuring the sustainability of work elements (such as how to keep the plantation solvent and how to ensure that a side-enterprise in rice hulling is capably managed and able to be maintained without external support). Thus, although the group has shown incredible initiative to leverage funds, introduce good governance structures and principles, and develop and implement its own initiatives, more reflection is needed on what further steps could be taken to ensure that additional inputs from WV do not

overwhelm the PWB group or discourage group leaders from developing the sustainability mindset that the cacao plantation is presently lacking.

Most women in the community are aware of these projects, and several have participated in the work on the PWB plantation. But for women, the most pressing issue is the health of themselves and their children. In a discussion with 11 pregnant and lactating mothers, all but four had lost one or more children. All of the women described the rehabilitation of the TBA house as a key priority for them as it is so broken down that it cannot now even be used due to the insects and rain. The TBAs themselves are requesting additional training: their original training was around five years ago, and recently they have only been invited to participate in one meeting, a one-day meeting on TBA houses held in Gandor.

In spite of these pressing health needs, women in Waiyor explain that they go regularly to either Gandor or Kaneko for weighings and check ups for children—nearly every woman mentioned “the Friday clinic” without prompting. TBAs and mothers said mothers deliver in Waiyor, but that the next day, the children are taken to the clinic to be checked and weighed for the first time—a fact that was confirmed in at least some cases by under-five cards. Although there is no health group or exclusive breast-feeding group in Waiyor, women describe the things they have learned at health talks at the clinics on Fridays: how to care for children sick with diarrhea, exclusive breast-feeding, and proper hygiene practices. Drying posts and lines are widely in use (no clothes or dishes were observed drying on the ground, and almost every house had posts or lines), and most of the babies seen in meetings and household visits showed no visible signs of malnourishment (no weighings were conducted—visible checks were done based on ages given by mothers and rudimentary MUAC tests). Only one visibly moderately malnourished child was observed; however, some mothers may have incorrectly stated their children’s ages to make them appear better fed for their age. Toddlers and young children did not appear well-fed: on a number of children it was possible to count all of their ribs, and several children seemed to have under-developed muscle tone for their ages. According to children and mothers, nearly all children were either sick or had been sick in the past month with colds, diarrhea, or stomach complaints (in one house, two children and the mother had gone to the clinic and been diagnosed with worms for what was described as “stomach ache and hunger”). Although many women do go to clinics, they widely complain about the costs of medicines, including vaccinations for children and antibiotics. A few women were able to confirm that their children had been vaccinated by showing their under-five cards, but in many cases women either admitted that they had never taken their children for vaccinations or were unable to produce the cards.

In the hot, cramped dark of a house in the middle of an afternoon, an elderly woman dozes. She is shaken awake by her grandson, who pulls her into a sitting position and tells her that she has to answer questions about the food that she received earlier this year. The woman is blind and says she does not know the answers to several questions, although her grandson shouts at her. In another home, another elderly and blind woman tries to answer, but her grandson laughs at her answers and she finally lays down facing the wall, away from the visitors to her home.

There are six beneficiaries of the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) in Waiyor, all of whom were selected because they are sick and elderly. Of the four the visitors met, the three women were treated roughly and with derision; the man was treated with more respect, but still described by his family in his presence as “a burden.” This is sad, but not surprising; when age or illness makes a household member vulnerable, it affects the ability of other members to work on the farm or in the forest. “I was glad to have food to help me in caring for my grandmother,” one man said, “Someone has to stay with her to care for her, which makes the farming difficult.” A member of the Village Welfare Committee (VWC) in Waiyor (formed last year) explained, “We now understand that caring for the vulnerables is a community responsibility, not an individual one.” Material care may be improving, but there is no evidence that the issue of mental welfare has ever been raised.

When the VGF activities started last year, the six beneficiaries were selected after sensitization meetings conducted by WV to explain the criteria. The selection process was challenging because there are many vulnerable people in Waiyor that met the criteria, but since they were only allowed to select six people, they selected the six most vulnerable, all of whom were sick and elderly. “I am not a [VGF] beneficiary,” one woman said, “but people know that I am sick and not able to work much, and so sometimes they will give me a portion of their food.” When discussing VGF, some committee members explained that they were planning to stop giving food to these six people after several months and to select six new people to benefit, to be fair. Before this could be done; however, the food suddenly stopped after April of this year.

The vulnerable people who received food and their households were very satisfied with the initial rations they received. Many people had been refugees or IDPs, and women had learned to cook bulgur in camps. The households receiving food were given two months’ of food at a time, which was picked up by the VWC in Gandor and brought to Waiyor for distribution. Although none of the recipients in Waiyor were asked to sign for the food they had been given, all had received the correct amounts. After some time; however, the amount of food that they had received dropped. Although the committee explained at time that this was WV’s strategy, some households were suspicious, thinking that perhaps committee members had kept back some of their food. One household reported that after the reduced ration was cooked, there was not enough food to feed everyone, which led to conflicts between family members. No one in Waiyor, including VWC members and beneficiary households, knew why the food had stopped after April, and only recently learned that they would be receiving food again (but not when). All are hoping that they will not only receive their bi-monthly rations, but also the rations that they did not receive for June and July. Beneficiary households are grateful for the support, but still asking, in the words of one woman, “After two years, what shall we do then?”

The committee members know that they should assist the vulnerables: WV helped them to develop a Safety Net Action Plan, and based on this plan they have created a 2 acre community garden with rice (which is not doing well) and cassava. The cassava will take approximately two years to mature; the committee is not planning to start giving food to vulnerable people until the food from WV stops altogether. Households with vulnerable members hope that the community garden will help them, but are not optimistic: “It will not produce enough to help us all,” one woman explained, “and people may steal the cassava for their own house.” Some committee members were also skeptical about the strategy: “Look at this community. We are all vulnerable here, in need of support. Why should vulnerables be asked to support other vulnerables?” Currently, most households are eating two meals a day: one meal of boiled cassava, and one meal of rice (if they have) or cassava and sauce. Households with vulnerable members currently eat one meal a day (boiled cassava) and possibly one small meal/snack of bush yams, plantain, or fruit (plantain or banana) if they can find something in the forest.

7.6 Joie, Pegeh Bongre Chiefdom, Kailahun District

Joie, in Pegeh Bongre Chiefdom, Kailahun District, was one of the worst affected communities by the ten years civil conflict in Sierra Leone. It was completely razed to the ground, and even after eight years since the end of the conflict, the community is still a long way from recovering. Out of a total of about fifty houses in the community, only six are permanent structures. The rest are still just mud and thatch huts hastily put together by returnees. The people; however, are very friendly and hospitable. They laugh easily and are willing to spend as much time as they can afford talking to strangers about challenges they are facing in their community. Above all they are willing to share what little food they have with other people.

Joie may appear to be a laid back slumbering village, but as a hundred percent farming community and predominantly Muslim, life starts here quite early. First there is the call to prayer by 4.00 am, prayers again at 6.00 am, the women preparing breakfast at about 6.30 am and going off to their farms at about 7.30 am. The men laze around a bit, but are also soon off to their farms after breakfast, by about 8.30 am. Breakfast consists of boiled cassava or sweet potatoes with palm oil and baked fish or meat spiced with hot pepper and washed down with fresh palm wine (from-God-to-man).

Over the past two years quite a number of things have changed here in Joie. According to Prince Roberts, "Two years ago, there was no road here connecting us to the main road. As a result, we lost several opportunities. We applied for assistance to a GTZ Shelter project, but they could not assist us because there was no road to our community. They were only willing to assist communities that were accessible, where they could easily transport construction materials. This angered us so much, that we mobilized ourselves and with CRS providing us with tools and Food for Work, we constructed the present 6 km feeder road from the main road to the community." "Since then," joined in Lansana Lahai, "Several projects have come to the community. The road has opened up endless opportunities for development." Another thing that has significantly changed since CRS came to this community as a development partner is the way vulnerable members of the community are cared for. In the past, individual households were responsible for the feeding and general welfare of the vulnerable members of their households; now however, according to Watter Luseni, "The welfare of the vulnerable members of our community is the responsibility of the whole community. CRS introduced and facilitated the formation of a community welfare committee, which would identify and spearhead the implementation of community safety net projects (with CRS support), proceeds from which are used to feed and look after the general welfare of the vulnerable members of our community." According to Mariama Boackarie, "Our aged now are well fed and happy. They can now sit up late in the night telling us ancient stories and traditions of our community."

Prince Roberts and several of his youth friends were very satisfied with quite a number of things CRS has introduced through the LEAD project into the community. Significant among them include: the Farmer Field School. Through the FFS, farmers have learnt new techniques of crop production which have led to appreciable yield increases with substantial surpluses. Working together throughout the growing season, the Farmer Field school has galvanized its members into a trusted and noteworthy social organization. For example, proceeds from surpluses from the crops harvested from the school farms are now being used to construct homes for members in turn, through an open raffle. This is a major development milestone in the rebuilding of trust and social capital, in a community where these were completely destroyed by the war and where everybody was suspicious of the other. Another important program brought to the community by CRS is that of micro-enterprises. This program has benefited the community as a whole. "When commodity prices started going up, said Satta Lavai, a member of the micro-enterprise group, "we were able to buy Maggie, salt, onions, kerosene, soap and batteries to sell to members of the community at affordable prices so people would not have to go too far to get them at the right price." Proceeds from the

micro-enterprises are also used to implement community development projects from which everybody benefits.

CRS has brought several projects which the community have embraced whole heartedly and made their own. “We like working with CRS, it gives us great satisfaction to work together with them, because all the projects we work on are in our interest and some of them have benefited us immensely” said Lamin Lahai. “However, CRS must also realize that the community has its own priority projects, which require even more immediate attention since they are based on felt needs within the community. On several occasions, the community has brought to the attention of CRS the need for the following projects: grain store, drying floor, water system, VIP latrines, TBA House. Up till now, these projects have not been approved, even though the need is felt in the community.”

“Please bring it up with CRS, and also plead on our behalf that we need these services badly and urgently,” said the Town Chief in addition. Another aspect of implementation of the project which the community is not satisfied with is the slow implementation rate of projects. “CRS asked us to form a 30 man committee,” said Hawa Alieu, “to plant groundnuts this season as a safety-net project for the welfare of the chronically vulnerable in our community. They promised to give us seeds and Food for Work. We have prepared the land but we have not received the seeds and food for work up till now and the season is far gone.” “They also asked us to construct a shed for raising small ruminants. We have constructed the shed, but the animals are not yet here. This slow rate of implementation puts a lot of strain on our other individual activities.”

In Joie, all the households are farming households, engaged in subsistent highly labor intensive agricultural activities. The labor demands for their own activities are so high that sometimes they have to hire labor from neighboring communities to finish their activities on time. It is therefore understandable when the Town Chief said that one aspect of LEAD which the community stakeholders find worrisome is the high labor requirement of the projects introduced by CRS. Said the chief, “The community members are finding it increasingly difficult to share the available labor between their own normal farming activities and the projects introduced by CRS under LEAD.” This, the chief said needs some discussion and modification. There is also the issue of initial consultations before the commencement of project implementation. Joie is a highly deprived community; therefore, most development projects can find relevance here. However, to maximize the impact of these projects, and make them more relevant, Morie Lamin, one of the village elders said there must be initial consultations prior to project implementation between CRS and the community.

“To capitalize on the good things CORAD has initiated through LEAD in the community,” said the women’s leader Satta Vandi, “the projects must be community-driven. They must be formulated around top priority needs identified by the community.” The community, still recovering from the devastation caused by the war has several needs but among these several needs are those that are top priority. And if these fall within the mandate of CORAD, the community is suggesting that these be addressed first. A strategy to use to ensure that this happens is to undertake a community planning process including the identification and prioritization of needs and developing community action plans around the main priority needs. They also suggested that for sustainability, it will be necessary in future to design projects that complement and support the community’s efforts. These projects will build on what the community is already doing, by increasing the input level and providing technical expertise. This way they said LEAD resources will be more meaningful and sustainable in the community.

Walking around Joie, and visiting the project sites, the main infrastructure project implemented in the community is the feeder/farm to market road. The road is well constructed and maintained. CRS facilitated the establishment of a roads committee in the community which mobilizes resources for the maintenance of the road. Most other projects are agro-based projects; and with the community mainly agrarian, with a wealth of indigenous skills, these projects are of high quality and well implemented.

Living in Joie and eking out a livelihood there can be very challenging. A couple of days before our arrival there, Lamin Alieu, a young man in his early twenties had been bitten by a viper while harvesting palm fruits to extract palm oil and had had his hand amputated at the wrist. Now, according to the community, his household has been identified for Vulnerable Group Feeding support. "I prefer to feed myself and my household," he lamented, "but now I cannot do anything with my hands and it is now getting too late in the season. I am therefore very grateful to CRS for agreeing to provide food for my household." This is one aspect of the LEAD project the Town Chief said the community liked very much. Having the opportunity to identify the vulnerable members of their community and recommending them to CRS for Vulnerable Group Feeding. This is very fair.

Sitting together around a two and half gallon palm wine jug after visiting the field projects on the second day of our visit, Prince Roberts and his friends asked us for our telephone contacts which we gladly gave to them. They did not have telephones yet because no telephone company has signal in their community; but they will keep the numbers and get in touch as soon as they have signal. After the round of palm wine they accompanied us to our vehicle, said goodbye almost tearfully and departed.

7.7 Ismaia, Sengbeh Chiefdom, Koinadugu District

Introduction

Living in Ismaia village can be hard, but things have changed a great deal since CARE started working here. “We used to go to other villages to borrow money just to send our children to school or if we had an emergency. Since the VS&L was introduced it has helped us a great deal.”

Ismaia sits atop a hill surrounded by other rolling hills in the Bendugu section of Sengbeh chiefdom, Koinadugu district. A community of 79 houses, 36 have tin roofs and the rest thatch. Of the 36, eight are of shiny new sheets indicating that things have definitely started looking up in the community. The village school roof had recently blown off and the pupils’ desks and chairs presently kept in the village store. The case study below is part of the mid term review exercise for the CORAD/LEAD program undertaken by CARE in the Koinadugu district.

Fereh Musu Janneh and Fereh Musu Mansaray’s cases help us illustrate the various needs of the community, particularly for providing start up grants directly to the women to help them farm for themselves.

Ferej Musu Janneh (35) is married with 6 children ranging in ages from 6 months to 23 years. Manti the youngest is 6 months and the only girl and Abdulai the eldest works as an apprentice driver in Bo. Her other children Demba 3, Karfa 6, Mohamed 13 and Lahai 15, all stay with her in Ismaia and help work on her husband’s one and a half acre IVS groundnut farm. Her husband Musa Sesay (54 and the children’s father) has another wife who also helps work on the farm. His mother, grandmother and grandaunt tag along to see what help they could render. It was harvesting time.



Fereh Musu Janneh third from right with Demba (3yrs) in the foreground doing laundry at the stream.

I first met Fereh Musu at the village stream where the women do their laundry and bathe 15 meters downstream of the men. She was doing the family laundry before going to their farm which was 30 minutes away at a normal walking rate. Manti, Demba and Karfa were with her, he keeping an eye on the younger ones. When she was done they walked to the farm with Fereh Musu setting a brisk pace.

Fereh Musu has exclusively breastfed Manti who looked healthy but had some eye infection (crust on eyelashes). Demba; however, was listless and looked pale. “He has been having fever for the past two days and I do not yet have the money to take him to Kabala (3 miles away) for treatment. There is a nurse at the next village about one and a half miles away, but she is never there, so what do we do. I don’t know what has happened because I do use a bed net for the younger children. However, when we harvest the groundnut maybe I’ll be able to sell some and get money to take him. If I had money and/or seeds to start a farm for myself, then I would not have to wait till everything has been shared. Presently my husband’s mother, grandparents and other wife all depend on this one farm so not much would be left over. Thank God however for the VS&L, which has been a great help to us

here in the village. I have been able to borrow money at a reasonable rate which is the same for all. Every other person does borrow, so it is not shameful or a secret and we are not charged very high interest rates as used to be the case. Before CARE introduced this manner of saving and borrowing, we had to borrow money from another village and we were not even able to fully pay our loans. The VS&L has been a great help to us. I use the money borrowed, to buy rice from Kabala and retail in the village. After paying the capital and interest I have a little left over which is used to take care of my family needs. It is not yet time for me to borrow so I have to wait. If I had money to start a business it would help and I could use it for my children's education and health needs."

During this time freshly harvested cassava was cooking for the midday meal. Water collected from the swamp was used for cooking and for us to drink after our meal. When asked about the well in the village Fereh Musu explains. "The well was not built by CARE, but they have helped us put a fence around it and draw up laws about how we are to use it. This has helped prevent a single family monopolizing it. The well was dug in 1986 and is now old. It breaks down often. We can only get water once a day when it is working and only for drinking in the village. That is not enough and those near the well tend to use it more. We have to go to the stream for drinking water most of the time, even for cooking. We do need another well."

It appears that health conditions have not changed with the LEAD program. Basic hygiene practices are lacking evident from clothes being dried on the ground. Some of the babies and young children had boils on their bodies and running noses. Some other under-five children in the community also had fever. Some lactating mothers breastfeed and also gave water to their babies. Villagers felt the health and sanitation aspects could be improved. The 5 VIP latrines that had been constructed before LEAD appeared clean on the outside. However they did not appear to be in use as each house had its own out latrine and community members were not observed using the village VIPs.

When Fereh Musu was asked who took care of her husband's aging grandmothers besides him, she explains. "Their husbands are dead and they are now old, their own son is also dead, and the burden lies with my husband. They were identified for VGF, but we still have to chip in and help." Asked about the presence of a community farm she explained that all the women in the community had been asked to report at the community cassava farm for weeding early the following morning. The men in the community had been responsible for brushing and clearing the area and now it was the women's turn. She wasn't sure how the proceeds would be shared but expected it to be shared to all village members, particularly those with older or VGF members.

In the meeting held with the community on our arrival we were informed of the existence of a Village Welfare Committee called 'Seven Man Committee'. They were responsible for helping and directing the Vulnerable Group Feeding process. They had a safety net action plan which constituted the development of a community farm and fish pond. The community farm was used to produce food which would be shared by the committee among community members, particularly those with old and/or vulnerable folk. Harvested fish from the fish pond would be sold to help with school fees for children in the community, address other financial concerns and the remaining from a particular harvest would be shared for their own consumption. They greatly appreciated the food received during the construction of the fish pond. This they affirmed had helped them work better without worrying about what was happening to their own farms whilst they were busy helping to build something for the whole village. They were now closer as a community and have been made to see the strength in numbers and how much they can achieve by pooling their strength and resources. The training they also received during the fish pond construction was something that would always remain with them and they can even help other villages build theirs. This in itself would be a source of income for members of their community as they would be exporting their know-how to others.

Pa Sheku Janneh, who is 60 and blind, extolled the benefits of having the VGF program in their community. He does not have to beg for his feeding and is no longer permanently hungry. Before the LEAD program, only his direct relatives had the burden to care for him and things were difficult. He knows how much he should receive for bulgur and vegetable oil and proudly shows us his ration card. He does not know how long the feeding would last but believed that now the ‘Seven Man Committee’ had been formed they are assured of food even when the food provided by CARE would stop. “This cassava farm that the ‘Seven Man Committee’ has helped develop is for everyone’s benefit and we are happy,” he says.



Pa Sheku Janneh blind VGF beneficiary

Fereh Musu Mansaray is a 45 year old TBA who has been chosen to go for additional training when the next group of TBAs would be trained. When that would be she does not know. She believes additional training is needed because it would help them greatly as she has helped many women in the community give birth. Formerly the TBAs in the community tried to take care of difficult cases by themselves and there were problems. Now; however, cases that seemed to



Fereh Musu Mansaray TBA and VS&L chairlady at her own vegetable farm

last more than a day were referred that same evening to Kabala town. “Being a TBA does not pay much, and the woman’s husband only gives money for soap. I farm to take care of myself and my family,” Fereh Musu Mansaray says. They do not have a TBA hut and presently use their individual homes for birthing pregnant women. “A TBA hut would be nice,” she comments “as we occasionally have to send mothers home soon after birth.” Fereh Musu Mansaray is also the chairlady for the VS&L, and before now used to borrow money to purchase seed rice or pay the men who were to help her farm.

Presently she can do petty trading with loans received from the VS&L and easily pay back. She stressed how CARE’s intervention in the village through VS&L has helped them greatly so that now even if many pregnant women do not come she can still provide for her needs.

Case Discussion

Fereh Musu Janneh and Fereh Musu Mansaray’s cases highlight the way the VS&L program has helped the community rely on themselves and be open about things. The transparency has helped build confidence in the program as well as between members of the community. From their comments more information on health and hygiene programs are required so that their children would not be sick that often or recurrently. In addition even though there have been improvements they believe CARE should help them secure a basic health unit.

The women believe that they need to be provided with seeds or tools as a start up for their farming needs and an initial step to take care of their own needs. This they feel would empower them. Fereh Jannah felt the male youths did not inform them of everything that was happening and seemed to dominate most activities or choose who they wanted to participate. She felt that they should be more informed and that CARE should ensure the male youths share more information with others. Before CARE started the LEAD program, only village elders or heads were consulted but things seem to be changing for the better. Fereh Mansaray felt that feeder roads would help them as it would at least pass closer to their farms and make taking loads and produce into town easier.

7.8 Senehun, Jawie Chiefdom, Kailahun District

Senehun Community is located in the Borbor section, Jawie chiefdom in the Kailahun District. The total population is 150 inhabitants living in seventeen thatch houses; the frequent leaks have made life very difficult for the people of Senehun especially children and pregnant women, who frequently catch cold. The predominant religions are Islam (95%), Christianity (4%) and indigenous beliefs (1%). Mende is the main language spoken in the community. The community is headed by a Town Chief assisted by the Mammy Queen and Youth Leader. The family system is the extended type wherein, the uncles, aunts and cousins are all part of one family. As a result of this type of system a child is brought up by several people at the same time

Like most communities in Jawie chiefdom, Senehun community lies in a rain forest belt. About 80% of the land area is heavy rain forest, which accounts for the high rate of cash crop production. The soil is mostly clay and loamy soil. This makes the area more suitable for the cultivation of tree crops such as cocoa, coffee and oil palm. Ninety percent of the community population is involved in small scale agricultural practices. Food crops mainly grown are rice, banana, plantain and cassava. Rice is the staple food and is produced both on dry land and wet land.

Before LEAD intervention, the Community had one informal Koranic primary school with three Koranic volunteer teachers. The teachers are neither paid by the government nor the community rather the children work for them in their gardens as a reward for their service. Parents are comfortable sending their children to this school but had no alternative. In a focus group discussion some had this to say, "We have no formal western education in our community, and for our children to access such education they had to walk three miles to the nearest community which we consider risky especially for the little kinds and girl children for the fear of rape." It is evident that Bo Pujehun Development Association (BPDA) provided the community with two three-seater latrines. These latrines have helped greatly to reduce the use of nearby bushes as toilets. There is still no health centre, pure drinking water, or a formal and western type education, even though the community has good roads to access their village.

Africare is the first post-war Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to have started implementing development activities in Senehun, though the work is in the embryonic stage. The implementation has started six months ago. It would therefore be very difficult to determine the impact that has occurred since most of the activities are ongoing. However, the community members during focus group discussions were able to list out activities that have brought some semblance of change in their lives.

A vegetable garden was undertaken within the community sponsored by Africare. This has benefited the community greatly. Some of the proceeds from the garden were eaten, while others were sold and the money saved. The money is given out as loan to community members, which has helped to save lives. This project promoted team spirit, peace and unity amongst youths and women in the community. To further strengthen agriculture, a 25 member Farmer Field School has been established. The land is being provided by the local authorities for experiments and the facilitator is being recruited, but the training is yet to commence.

In September 2007, seventy-three (73) VGFs including their dependants were identified and supplied with food stuffs (bulgur, pulses and oil) by Africare. These food stuffs help reduced the chronic hunger of the VGF households; before, they had one square meal per day. However, the beneficiaries raised concerns over the non supply of food for the past six months. "The food distributed helped us to improve our health status and reduces the rate of our starvation and our dependants; we are now worried over the lapses in the supply of food since last year September 2007," said Pa Bockarie. The Vulnerable Welfare Committee is currently under taking cassava

cultivation as way to contribute to the feeding of the vulnerable in the community, but have no support in terms of Food for Work or tools.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the community and Africare staff to construct a drying floor. The community was to contribute stones, sands and unskilled labors while Africare provided the imported materials and supply food for asset. It was discovered that since the completion of the project three months ago, no food was supplied to the community as stated in agreement. "We have fulfilled our own commitment to construct the drying floor, but yet we have not received our food for asset. My people are accusing me of eating the food; please help us to get the food so that our families will survive this raining season," said the VDC chairman. The drying floor has greatly helped farmers in reducing the wastage of foods during drying process for their consumption as compare to past years. The community is now using the drying floor to dry their agricultural products such as cocoa, coffee, and rice.

The community stakeholders expressed optimism for the well and latrine projects. They showed great concern, cooperation, and commitment to the activities by providing unskilled labor for digging the latrine and well pits and hauling local materials (such as sand, sticks and stones) even in the face of their farming activities. Despite the great efforts of the community, Africare is yet to fulfill their own part of the agreement (i.e. provision of imported materials like cements, iron rods, zinc and food).

There exist among community members some kinds of hope that as soon as the well and latrines are completed and community members trained, most of the water-related diseases will be less prevalent in the community. Women will now spend less time on water collection as water will now be within easy reach. Misconceptions about water-borne and related diseases will now give way to basic understanding and preventive measures. More attention will now be paid to personal and public hygiene. The women's leader had this to say, "If the well is completed and we are trained in hygiene and equipped with the necessary tools, the general township will be clean and we will encourage our youths to undertake monthly cleaning activities."

The community expressed their frustrations over the delay in the procurement of the imported materials and Food for Asset for project activities. In an interview with the WATSAN working group, this is what the chairman had to say, "We are afraid of history not to repeat itself as SALWACO did it to us. We dug the latrine pits and they abandoned the site without completing the project. These holes are now death traps in our community; we hope Africare will not do the same thing to us. As I talk to you, my brother and sister, we have fulfilled our commitment by digging the well and latrine to the required depths, while Africare is yet to fulfill their commitment by providing the imported materials since March 2008," said the youth leader.

There is all indication that Senehun community is eager to develop. Systems and structures are put in place for their own development, such as dynamic youth and women groups and strong leadership. The community is accommodating and cares for development workers and valued their own contributions into development activities.

8 Annex 3: Partial Staff Survey Results

Views	WV	CRS	CARE	Africare	Total (N)	Total (%)
1.1 Please give your opinion of the preliminary impact that the LEAD program has had so far on participating households/individuals.						
Large impact	2	5	6		13	16.0
Medium impact	6	25	20	3	54	66.7
Small impact	3	6	2	3	14	17.3
No impact					0	0.0
No opinion					0	0.0
1.2 Please give your opinion of the preliminary impact that the LEAD program has had so far on participating communities.						
Large impact	1	6	6	1	14	17.3
Medium impact	8	25	16	1	50	61.7
Small impact	2	5	6	4	17	21.0
No impact					0	0.0
No opinion					0	0.0
1.3 I think that the LEAD program will be successful in meeting its goal of reducing food insecurity in targeted areas.						
Strongly agree	3	9	6		18	22.2
Agree	8	26	21	4	59	72.8
Disagree				1	1	1.2
Strongly Disagree				1	1	1.2
No opinion		1	1		2	2.5
2.1 How would you rate the overall implementation process by your agency of the LEAD program?						
Excellent	1	7	5	2	15	18.5
Good	9	25	16	3	53	65.4
Fair/Okay	1	4	7	1	13	16.0
Poor					0	0.0
No opinion					0	0.0

9 Annex 4: Review Reflection Meeting Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

1. To reflect upon the current situation in communities in which the CORAD consortium is operating the LEAD program, and the relevance of program interventions based on the realities on the ground.
2. Based on case studies developed in selected LEAD communities, to reflect upon the effectiveness and sustainability of LEAD strategies and core activities. Where necessary, to make recommendations for further study or changes.
3. To reflect upon both internal (such as gender policies, communication strategies, and beneficiary selection mechanisms) and external (such as pipeline breaks, market conditions, environmental issues) elements that have contributed to the success or lack of success of activities-to-date.

Session	Target Time	Topic	Purpose	Facilitator	Materials needed
I-1	8:30-9:30	Introduction	Welcome address and introductions Review of objectives and agenda	Ekramul Kabir Meg Audette	Flip chart and markers
I-2	9:30-10:15	MTR Overview	To review the purpose of the MTR and the methodology used to collect data for the MTR. Case study team members share their impressions of the process.	Meg Audette	
I-3	10:15-10:45	Staff Survey Results	Presentation of the results of the staff survey	Fred Goba	Power point projector, computer, handouts
<i>Break: 10:45-11:15</i>					
I-4	11:15-12:00	Small Group Reflection #1	Divide into groups to reflect on a selection of case studies and the staff survey results (based on guidelines provided).	All	Staff survey handouts, case studies
I-5	12:00-13:00	Group Presentations and Clarifications	Groups present their work from the first small group reflection session (3-5 minutes' presentation per group)	All	Staff survey handouts, case studies
<i>Lunch: 13:00-14:00</i>					
I-6	14:00-15:00	Small Group Reflection #2	Divide into groups to reflect on a selection of case studies and the staff survey results (based on guidelines provided).	All	Staff survey handouts, case studies
<i>Break: 15:00-15:15</i>					
I-7	15:15-16:15	Group Presentations and Discussions	Groups present their work from the second small group reflection session (3-5 minutes' presentation per group)	All	Staff survey handouts, case studies
I-8	16:15-17:00	Next Steps	To determine the next steps to addressing issues raised through the MTR, including communicating results within CORAD	CCU and M&E Unit	Flip Chart and markers

10 Annex 5: Full Recommendations Matrix

The Key Points and Explanations included in this recommendations matrix come out of the LEAD MTR Reflection Meeting held in July. The recommendations included in black are those recommendations that were developed in August and early September by the Working Groups. The recommendations included in red were additional recommendations that were developed during the September Progress Review Meeting—they are highlighted in red here as at the date of this report, they had not been formally reviewed and adopted by the Working Groups.

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
Health		
Integration	4. Although activities do have relevance in their own right, the true relevance of LEAD interventions comes from the integrated “basket of activities” that LEAD offers. ²⁰ However, CORAD has had limited success in truly integrating the various LEAD activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get technical areas to plan targets together. - Push for agriculture to integrate health issues and its importance in the communities lives through agriculture, food, MED, youth, and governance technical activities and targets. For instance, some activities under health are directly integrated with the agriculture, food, and youth areas with the example of Baby-Friendly Farms (BFF). Communities are consistently reminded of the need of nutritious food and good crop plantations in order to improve the health status of malnourished children. Similar kind of activities can be done with other technical areas.
	5. There is still a “silo effect” where the majority of staff seem themselves as responsible only for activities in their sectoral area.	Each organization’s technical focus person to participate in at least two of the other technical working groups within a fiscal year (eg. Within the next fiscal year, health focus person to participate in food and youth technical groups).
	6. Although the process varies from agency to agency, CORAD field staff are generally more concerned with achieving targets than achieving impact, and are not always empowered to give supervisors the feedback that achieving targets might lead to low impact (for example, if capital grant recipients are not demonstrating adequate capacity to receive a grant on the schedule of the agency).	Encourage, and set-up organizational systems that will enable, discussions between senior staff and field staff.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage regular stakeholder meetings in communities to throw light to program participants on how the respective LEAD activities contribute to the same goal. • Strengthening VDCs at community level through communication, dialogue and meetings for effective coordination of activities. • Reduce number of and improve on quality (representation & synergy) of meetings in communities.

¹⁹ To be completed by Technical Working Groups.

²⁰ Food supports agriculture, which both support health; youth are a cross-cutting target group; MED activities support agriculture; health supports food and agriculture in return; governance supports all areas.

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage managers and supervisors to attend other TWG meetings. • The participation of field staff in regular TWG meetings for more effective communication flows and discussions on impact.
<p>Strong evidence of adoption of positive health and sanitation behaviors, questions remaining about sustainability</p>	<p>3. Strong examples of women in communities regularly taking children to be weighed, practicing exclusive breastfeeding, using drying posts/lines for clothes, and using plate racks.</p> <p>4. Although it is encouraging that community members are adopting positive behaviors, many of the health topics covered have been on the NGO agendas for some time. Why would this be, and why do we think that CORAD will be successful in supporting sustained behavior change.</p>	<p>Creating a behavior change impact in health-related issues are not a tangible outcome, such as assets like drying floors, storage facilities, etc. and therefore the changing impact, or visible change, is more difficult to be seen and takes longer. Thus the reason why some certain health topics need to come back on NGOs agendas, which does not mean that impact is not been made and positive changes are been adopted.</p> <p>Find ways of increased engagements with PHU for delivery of health education messages and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involve PHU personnel in agency planning meetings. -Ensure DHMT representation in Health TWG meetings.
<p>LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high commitment to development</p>	<p>2. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects.</p> <p>4. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development</p> <p>5. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing.</p> <p>6. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?</p>	<p>Integrate PHU staff in meetings and discussions with VDC/HC, CHC (Governance) and related stakeholders.</p> <p>Continue discussions with local councils on health-related issues (governance)</p> <p>Increasing and emphasizing our activities with community members with for instance ownership of color-coded beads for growth monitoring and promotion activities, integrating PHU staff in discussion with VDHCs and other community members, discussions with local councils to be actively involved in all health decisions and emphasizing the importance of by-laws, etc.</p>
<p>TBA strategy</p>	<p>1. Although TBAs are being trained, LEAD not able to provide facilities for them or modern equipment. These missing pieces undermine the effectiveness of work being done with TBAs.</p>	

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
	<p>2. How do LEAD’s activities align with the government’s strategy with regard to maternal health?</p> <p>3. TBAs are receiving training, but many are active members of women’s secret societies, and there is a likelihood that an unknown percentage of the TBAs with whom LEAD is working are performing female genital cutting.</p> <p>4. Are there studies (in SL or elsewhere) that demonstrate that TBAs attending births is effective in reducing maternal and infant death?</p>	<p>As an example, Koinadugu District has decided to ban home deliveries and place a fine on women who deliver at home. The DMO is encouraging women to deliver in PHUs, and is encouraging the development of birth waiting homes. CORAD aligns itself with the government’s strategy on emphasizing the importance of delivery in health facilities with trained medical personnel, and explains to communities (including TBAs) the risks for complications that the TBA will probably not be able to handle resulting in possible maternal and child death.</p> <p>Document the Koinadugu experience and replicate in other areas through Cross-visits or experience sharing with TWG and CCU</p> <p>TBAs are such an integral part of our communities, that they cannot just be ignored. Especially, with the shortage of medical personnel in Sierra Leone, TBAs have been included in CORAD’s activities, and are encouraged to work under close supervision from trained nurses, thereby encouraging facility-based deliveries.</p> <p>That is today’s international debate in health! Since the 1990s, safe motherhood programs have increasingly focused on the need for skilled attendance and emergency obstetric care, rather than TBAs attending to births. Effectiveness of TBAs is often difficult to generalize, since their training varies from one country to another and even one state/district to another. It is important to note that even skilled personnel (the definition of this does not include TBAs) can only go so far without strong health facilities/systems to back it up.</p>
Service delivery	<p>3. Health programming successfully facilitating DHMT outreach services and creating community committees to oversee health practice (VDHCs or CHCs). Questions remain about to what extent the DMHT will continue providing services after the end of LEAD—is bringing service providers closer to communities a part of the mandate of community committees?</p>	<p>Facilitate a CORAD led workshop on TBA strategy implementation with TBAs and related stakeholders.</p> <p>As part of exit strategy, discuss and develop plans with District Councils on possible ways of establishing linkages with DHMT</p>
	<p>4. GMP successfully raising awareness about children’s nutritional needs among women (especially beads). Most effective when paired with activities like Baby friendly farms and PD/Hearth that focus on improved utilization of locally available food (this is not occurring in all areas or among all partners).</p>	<p>We need to increase cross-visits, for instance World Vision expressed their eagerness to come and visit CRS’ PD/Hearth model, and communities with color-coded beads under GMP activities.</p>
Agriculture and the Environment		

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
Integration	1. Although activities do have relevance in their own right, the true relevance of LEAD interventions comes from the integrated “basket of activities” that LEAD offers. ²¹ However, CORAD has had limited success in truly integrating the various LEAD activities	Continue with CORAD Coordination meetings at district/base office levels.
	2. There is still a “silo effect” where the majority of staff seem themselves as responsible only for activities in their sectoral area.	Project managers/Project Coordinators meet regularly with Field Staff on intersectoral issues where they can exchange ideas and plan together.
	3. Although the process varies from agency to agency, CORAD field staff are generally more concerned with achieving targets than achieving impact, and are not always empowered to give supervisors the feedback that achieving targets might lead to low impact (for example, if capital grant recipients are not demonstrating adequate capacity to receive a grant on the schedule of the agency).	<p>Choice of activities must be need-driven and stories must focus on changes observed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly meetings at base office level with all staff from different sectors. 2. Share monthly work plans between sectors. 3. At each working group invite person from <u>another</u> working group to participate. 4. List of main CORAD staff for each sector per agency: improve integration between agencies ... easier to coordinate point above. 5. COP meet regularly with program Managers (working groups = technical, need program people to move forward) key personnel at each agency to take forward programme issues from work groups.
Although capital grants are relevant, effectiveness and sustainability is low. CORAD lacking uniform strategy on grants, particularly capital grants	5. Some agencies have noted that capital grants can have low sustainability, particular capital grants of agro-processing equipment. For this reason, they require potential grantees to raise a substantial match contribution, which is set aside (in some cases in a bank account) to handle maintenance other expenses.	Processes of delivery of capital grant equipments standardized such as providing business training for the recipient groups, groups developing bi-laws, business plans, having bank accounts, providing matching fund (40% of the cost of the equipment in two tranches) – 20% up front and the remaining 20% after 1yr.
	6. Some partner agencies focus more on providing grants to individuals, while others focus more on groups.	Encourage individual potential recipients to form small business groups of not more than 6 members, provide business management training, encourage the groups to have bi-laws and where possible open bank accounts.
	7. CORAD continues to provide agro-processing equipment to communities on the basis of its clear relevance; however, the difficulty for community groups to procure spare parts decreases the effectiveness and sustainability.	Provide basic maintenance and care training. Should have 20% of the cost of the equipment for purchasing and replacement of spare parts.
	8. Partners do not have a uniform approach to providing agro-processing equipment (some are providing mechanized equipment	Agencies should have standardized approach (mechanized equipments) in providing capital grant equipments especially for gari processing

²¹ Food supports agriculture, which both support health; youth are a cross-cutting target group; MED activities support agriculture; health supports food and agriculture in return; governance supports all areas.

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
	<p>while some are providing manual equipment).</p>	<p>machines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree community contribution (one off) up front but NOT fixed percentage. 2. Agriculture and Environment Working Group to develop CORAD guidelines for capital grants; 3. Consistency on business plan requirements, mech vs. manual, 4. Selection of communities (participatory) 5. Business vs. relief, 6. Train ½ of youth on maintenance (job creation) 7. CORAD wide training for CORAD staff on Business Planning and capital grants (train all agencies together: consistency) ,Already making cents for community but CORAD staff needs more training 8. Use CORAD knowledge/trainer if available or external consultant. 9. Cross visits between agencies e.g. visit WV or local business
<p>Low understanding among CORAD staff of the viability of certain types of enterprises</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Many CORAD staff are not themselves knowledgeable on how to develop a sound business management plan, and so are not able to assess the viability of certain enterprises. For example, in a given area, what is the saturation point for rice hulling businesses? Do our capital grants take this into consideration? 4. Although CORAD is providing business management training, many new entrepreneurs (particularly capital grants) do not understand the concept of net income, and so are not creating business plans that allow them to cover their expenses to stay in business. Some CORAD agencies do not require business plans for capital grants. 	<p>Provide business management training for field staff. Encourage staff to replicate training for the participating groups.</p> <p>Continue to provide business management for all groups receiving capital grants while emphasizing on the development of business plans. Additionally, CORAD agencies should require business plans for all capital grant recipients.</p>
<p>Although proposal captures key elements, CORAD does not have a fully-elaborated agriculture strategy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The LEAD proposal makes clear that agricultural activities are supporting the aim of household food security, and generally outlines the support that the program will give to production (under IR 1.1) and marketing (under IR 2.1); however, partner agencies continue to emphasize different elements, and to support community agriculture without a clear picture of the end result. (For example, smallholder farmers that grow a mix of rice and cassava on 1-2 acre plots would still lack adequate food to meet household needs, but lack the ability/network to collaborate with other farmers to effectively market crops.) Strategy would detail what steps need to be taken, and what milestones should be reached for each step. 4. WV's clustering of the FFS needs to be further studied by partners 	<p>Though small holder farmers have individual farms, CORAD should encourage farmers to pull resources for the establishment of group commercial farms. Also CORAD should continue to encourage cross-visits among farmers/farmer groups.</p> <p>Encourage cross-visits among CORAD partners and FFS members.</p>

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
	as a best practice.	<p>4. Agree strategy of farm to market could be clearer-next MYAP?</p> <p>5. We feel or we believe that CORAD deals with agricultural production toward food security.</p> <p>6. Ag working group look at strategy e.g. value adding / market association / cash crops = CORAD strategy.</p>
FFS highly successful in building capacity of farmers on agricultural skills, concerns about sustainability of increases in production	7. Many farmers noted how their knowledge had increased on new techniques such as planting methods/spacing.	Encourage refresher training for community FFS facilitators and replicate same for participating farmers in FFS
	8. Some field staff expressed feeling that experimentation through the FFS was less valuable than marketing.	Encourage field staff to understand that all aspects (experimentation, production, and marketing are all important for a successful FFS implementation.
	9. Not clear to what extent increases in production will be sustained—production capacity may exist, but lack of storage facilities, lack of marketing skills and poor road network, lack of sustained access to agro-processing facilities (see comments on capital grants), and rising cost of agricultural inputs may undercut production increases	<p>Training in Post Harvest loss management, increase in improved storage facilities, incorporate marketing skills in business management training, continue to support the rehabilitation of/ construction of roads for farmers to have easier access to markets.</p> <p>1. FFS focus on increasing productivity.</p> <p>2. FFS should also look at post-harvest losses, storage and integration food; FFA of grain stores.</p> <p>3. FFA link better to Ag FFS, assets better focused.</p>
LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high commitment to development	4. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects.	Continue community sensitization and mobilization
	5. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development	Same as above
	6. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing.	Continue to work with the safety net welfare committees for them to take ownership of the VGF process
	7. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?	CORAD to continue sensitization of targeted communities to take ownership of the various activities implemented by the program
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage advocacy on external issues that affect production but CORAD cannot change e.g. road network. • All FFS identify constraints (external). • During meetings in local chieftom / district, issues should be raised. • Maybe pass issues to Good Governance Working Group aware limiting external factors that can help provide solution / training / advice 	
Dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More VSL (communities in FFS need VSL: overlap or FFS become VSL) → next --MYAP if no funds now? 	

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Allows capital availability -Access loans / fund -Helps with governance and organisation • Increasing ownership • -Community contributions – labour / finance. 	
Youth and MED		
Integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although activities do have relevance in their own right, the true relevance of LEAD interventions comes from the integrated “basket of activities” that LEAD offers.²² However, CORAD has had limited success in truly integrating the various LEAD activities 2. There is still a “silo effect” where the majority of staff seem themselves as responsible only for activities in their sectoral area. 3. Although the process varies from agency to agency, CORAD field staff are generally more concerned with achieving targets than achieving impact, and are not always empowered to give supervisors the feedback that achieving targets might lead to low impact (for example, if capital grant recipients are not demonstrating adequate capacity to receive a grant on the schedule of the agency). 	<p>Put in place a system for regular meeting involving the entire working group. All the sectors have to work through the same structures like the VDCs, CHCs, the ward committees etc. Staffs who are point persons in different sectors to complement the effort of each other in the field in mobilization and sensitization of communities. Information sharing among staff will also be an important aspect to consider.</p> <p>Involve every staff in all project activities that is taken place so as to make them multi-disciplinary and work in a holistic way.</p> <p>To agree on the expected impacts from a three year project within new communities. Emphasize more on quality and impact than quantitative targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We suggest that agencies working in the same operational districts meet regularly to ensure programming issues are standardized, share experiences, lessons and encourage exchange visits where success of project has been implemented. Who: Agency Coordinators at field level with recommendation to working group. 2. Within Agencies, all sectors meet regularly to share experiences, lessons learnt, rectify and plan together. Who: Sector Heads.
Although capital grants are relevant, effectiveness and sustainability is low. CORAD lacking uniform strategy on grants, particularly capital grants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some agencies have noted that capital grants can have low sustainability, particular capital grants of agro-processing equipment. For this reason, they require potential grantees to raise a substantial match contribution, which is set aside (in some cases in a bank account) to handle maintenance other expenses. 2. Some partner agencies focus more on providing grants to individuals, while others focus more on groups. 	<p>Hold workshop on capital grant involving all the agencies and come up with common strategies for sustainability.</p> <p>Hold workshop to discuss advantages and disadvantages of providing loan focusing on individual or on groups and taking into consideration lessons learnt from former project like LINKS on the above issue.</p>

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	<p>3. CORAD continues to provide agro-processing equipment to communities on the basis of its clear relevance; however, the difficulty for community groups to procure spare parts decreases the effectiveness and sustainability.</p>	<p>Technical /Oversight committees to be set up to run the affairs of any agro-processing equipment. Community members such as Youths to be trained within communities to repair such equipment for this will also create job opportunity particularly for the youths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardizing the delivery of capital grants (free or part payment) Who: Youth and MED WG with approval from Steering Committee. • What about involving other outside Partners who have had similar experience in working with individual groups. • What about documenting and sharing experiences on working with groups / individuals. Who: Agency sector heads. • What about standardization of the use of part payment and the working capital; what about providing list of contact people/enterprises for spare parts within the districts? Who: Youths and MED WG.
<p>Low understanding among CORAD staff of the viability of certain types of enterprises</p>	<p>1. Many CORAD staff are not themselves knowledgeable on how to develop a sound business management plan, and so are not able to assess the viability of certain enterprises. For example, in a given area, what is the saturation point for rice hulling businesses? Do our capital grants take this into consideration?</p> <p>2. Although CORAD is providing business management training, many new entrepreneurs (particularly capital grants) do not understand the concept of net income, and so are not creating business plans that allow them to cover their expenses to stay in business. Some CORAD agencies do not require business plans for capital grants.</p>	<p>Staff of CORAD Agencies should be fully equipped to assess the viability of businesses and need adequate training in areas of business plan and how to assess businesses (MED training).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about strengthening the collaboration with the agric unit to ensure processing businesses are viable. Who: Agric & MED WG. • What if we improve training by bringing in role models from outside communities - Introducing/intensifying literacy training for capital grants groups - Standardize the use of business plans for all capital grants recipients <p>Who: Facilitated and Monitored by all field staff.</p>
<p>Does CORAD have a clear strategy for working with youth?</p>	<p>2. Although CORAD agencies have had good success with targeting youth for some activities such as the FFS, in some areas, youth are working outside the communities for the majority of the time, and thus are not fully benefiting from LEAD. This begs the question about whether CORAD has a clear and distinct strategy for working with youth, and what are the main elements of this strategy.</p>	<p>Develop/ Promote strategy towards Youth in rural and urban areas.</p> <p>What if a strategy is developed with the help of other youth serving agencies and GoSL to ensure that proper strategy is developed for youths. E.g. developing youth specific projects. Who: Working Group and Partner Organisations.</p>
<p>LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high</p>	<p>5. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects.</p>	<p>Pursue this way.</p>

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
commitment to development	6. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development	Pursue this way.
	7. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing.	To continue in that way and know their responsibilities all the time
	8. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?	Organize Communities to develop and plan their own development, and know more of their responsibilities and that of the stakeholders.
VS&Ls high impact and sustainability	3. VS&L groups having high impact on communities' understanding of and ability to save money	Make VS&L wide spread observing the core principles
	4. Groups self-replicating, have high transparency, and are low cost to CORAD; loans increase amount of money in circulation	Make VS&L wide spread observing the core principles
Food		
Integration	1. Although activities do have relevance in their own right, the true relevance of LEAD interventions comes from the integrated "basket of activities" that LEAD offers. ²³ However, CORAD has had limited success in truly integrating the various LEAD activities	The FWG agrees with this comment but did not have time during the meeting to think of ways to respond to this concern.
	2. There is still a "silo effect" where the majority of staff seem themselves as responsible only for activities in their sectoral area.	This needs to be addressed within each agency through joint planning meetings and planned, deliberate exposure to other sectors, e.g., through one day 'exposure visits' to look at projects/activities in another sector of the LEAD project.
	3. Although the process varies from agency to agency, CORAD field staff are generally more concerned with achieving targets than achieving impact, and are not always empowered to give supervisors the feedback that achieving targets might lead to low impact (for example, if capital grant recipients are not demonstrating adequate capacity to receive a grant on the schedule of the agency).	This is an important issue that needs to be understood and changes made all the way from the top down. The balance between only achieving targets and also being concerned with achieving impact can be helped by good time planning to ensure a higher level of care and attention to detail. Staff spending more time in the communities or having staff based in the communities will help identify times when achieving a target will could actually have a low impact. The issue of targets vs. impact needs to be regularly reiterated and M and E systems need to be in place to collect information around the

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		<p>impact of an intervention and not just its completion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular monthly planning with agencies throughout sectors (Ag, food, health, MED). 2. Selection of communities with all sectors. 3. All CORAD staff to think outside the box → becomes ‘generalists’ (include one day exposure visit). 4. Sector training (ex. MED) to include other sectors (ex. Ag.) in their trainings, presentations etc. 5. Impact vs. targets thinking: do impact assessment – that will empower staff to know the impact, rather than targets only. 6. Having staffs based in communities whenever possible.
<p>Good governance and FFA projects</p>	<p>5. How participatory are the methods used to select what FFA projects should be undertaken (proposal specifies PLA activities, but is this the case in reality)? Who decides and how? (How flexible can we be about the type of asset to construct, to allow communities to give their own suggestions?)</p> <p>6. Do we have any mechanisms in place to make sure that the groups responsible for managing and maintaining FFA projects are practicing good governance (to make sure that the projects are “community assets,” not only supporting a few elite households).</p>	<p>Agencies need to remember to reduce attention on targets sometimes and step back to make sure that the FFA activity is adding value which is specific to communities. This can be helped by good time planning and spending more time in the community to listen to the suggestions of communities about what assets they feel they need.</p> <p>Each agency has a different mechanism to ensure participatory selection of a FFA including working with district councils, village development agencies, CBOs, and PLA which all help to identify assets that are community specific.</p> <p>Flexibility: The list of agreed FFA needs to be discussed and if necessary amended more regularly by the FWG/CORAD to include any suggestions of community. This will help to increase flexibility but will also ensure that the list of FFA tasks is still within the CORAD structure and are therefore agreed to by all agencies.</p> <p>The criteria for FFA tasks is that they increase agricultural production and therefore there are still some restrictions on what the task can be.</p> <p>Suggestions include – keeping local leadership and project management group separate so if there are problems there is someone to arbitrate.</p> <p>Making sure that at the start of the project communities understand that this is a community asset- this can be strongly worded in the MOU or agreement that this is a community asset and will be supported through good training by agency staff.</p>

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
		<p>Using project development committees to take care of assets after the completion of asset and ensuring that during the handover of an asset to the community it is clearly stated that this is for the whole community.</p> <p>The good governance training for communities, including the knowledge of by-laws and selection of committee members should continue to help to address this.</p> <p>Could do monitoring of assets afterwards to ensure that this is a whole community asset</p>
	<p>7. Are FFA projects undertaken in-line with District Development Plans (as specified in proposal)?</p>	<p>Ideally yes.</p>
	<p>8. Although it is not clear how widespread this problem might be, there are examples of communities that do not have clear sustainability plans around the assets constructed through FFA.</p>	<p>If asset is needed then a community will feel responsible for it and are more likely to maintain it. This goes back to the issue of emphasis on successful, community led targeting of assets.</p> <p>Agencies should work with or link communities to government ministries so they can provide long term support after project completion e.g. communities with fish ponds can receive support from the Ministry of Fisheries who can assist technically and with post project completion monitoring,</p> <p>Encouraging community contributions towards FFA assets could increase a sense of ownership and therefore ensure long term, sustainable maintenance of assets. For example when constructing warehouses community have to contribute local materials.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan with local decision-makers (views to be integrated in agency's plans). 2. Share ideas with other NGOs in district coordination meetings. 3. Prioritise needs of communities (to include collective views of community). 4. Proper sensitization on project package (list of FFA). 5. Draft MOU, before start of project, to make sure that the community understands its community asset.

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
		<p>6. Using project development committees to take care of assets after completion of asset (by-laws to enhance sustainability).</p> <p>7. Monitor completed assets on quarterly basis. Sustainability...</p> <p>8. Link our operational community's structures with district councils and line ministries to ensure sustainability.</p> <p>9. Community ownership to ensure sustainability.</p>
Communication on food-related issues (including pipeline breaks)	2. Although CORAD partners may have explained the situation to some community members, the majority of VGF beneficiaries and unpaid FFA beneficiaries did not have much knowledge of why they had not received food. (In some cases, community members were suspicious that committee members might have taken food meant for them.)	This key point was re- explained during the FWG and an explanation developed. Individual agencies are now responsible for conveying this message back to communities to ensure that all VGF and FFA beneficiaries understand why they did not receive food.
Safety net strategy	3. Although decreasing ration was designed to be supplemented with food provided by the Village Welfare Committees, this is not yet happening, even when beneficiaries are entering Phase II.	Postponed until next FWG after VGF beneficiaries have moved from Phase I to Phase II and agencies may have some experience of this.
	4. Safety net action plans seem centered around community farms, with little integration of other possible strategies for providing for vulnerable people. Crops selected sometimes take a long time to mature, which is a key factor in why VWCs are not supplementing CORAD rations (as noted in point 1).	<p>Postponed until next FWG after VGF beneficiaries have moved from Phase I to Phase II and agencies may have some experience of this.</p> <p>1. Village Welfare Committees to be trained on skills and best practices to take a more responsible and pro-active role in dealing with VGF household.</p> <p>2. Involve community decision-makers / stakeholders to move forward</p>
LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high commitment to development	1. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects.	A positive lesson to be learnt and remembered.
	2. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development	A positive lesson to be learnt and remembered.
	3. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing.	A positive lesson to be learnt and remembered.
	4. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?	The FWG felt it was hard to wipe out dependency until sustainable and adequate food production is achieved in communities. The FWG felt that CORAD is moving in the right direction, for example by substituting FFW with changing to FFA, i.e. food is a payment for work not a handout, but that this will take time.

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		<p>More activities like VSAL which promotes community ownership, a diversification of activities or more trainings would help work towards promoting self initiative and ownership.</p> <p>It was felt that CORAD needs to continually reinforce the message with very dependent communities that we are moving from relief to development and explain why they should be working for the good of their communities without our assistance.</p> <p>More VSAL or literacy groups to encourage communities to obtain their own start up capital – may reduce their dependency on CORAD and they can start own initiatives.</p>
Food for Work and dependency	<p>2. What steps are CORAD partners taking to try to reduce the possibility that willingness to work on community projects would be linked to receiving FFW? (Some communities seem willing to undertake additional work on own, while others insist that they need FFW.)</p>	<p>Same as above.</p> <p>Also some agencies have projects that have no food component and it was felt that the reason they are successful is due to the original agreement or sensitization with the community. Therefore the entry point in community is very important.</p> <p>Could look at lessons learnt from projects that do not have food component and apply this to projects that do have a food component to encourage communities to work outside of FFA structure.</p> <p>Need to ensure that communities understand that CORAD FFA tasks are focused on agricultural production but that they themselves are a resource or labor that is valuable and can be utilized on their own projects. Good governance training should help with this.</p> <p>Maybe CORAD should help communities access training for community projects that they identify but that are outside the current FFA structure or list of identified projects.</p> <p>More VSAL or literacy groups to encourage communities to obtain their own start up capital – may reduce their dependency on CORAD and they can start own initiatives.</p> <p>More activities such VS&L to promote community ownership. Increase</p>

Key Points	Explanation of Key Points	Recommendations ¹⁹
Governance		
<p>Process by which by-laws and action plans are being developed is often not transparent</p>	<p>3. Although CORAD is successfully encouraging community groups to develop by laws and action plans, the process is often not participatory or based on open dialogue, meaning that community members are not aware of the contents of by-laws/plans.</p> <p>4. CORAD relies upon community groups and local leaders to communicate key actions or decisions to the community-at-large. What mechanisms are in place to make sure that this happens, and what actions are taken when it does not?</p>	<p>community sensitization especially on specific communities that have a relief mind-set; as well as train CORAD and partner staff.</p> <p>A 2-day training/refresher training on the principles and practices of good governance, for all field staff, to be organized at district level. It will also serve as a forum for experience sharing on lessons learnt and best practices. The participation of all field staff in the proposed training will help reinforce the integration of the various LEAD activities, with governance issues in particular, given due attention in the implementation of all LEAD activities.</p> <p>CORAD LEAD Working Groups to provide facilitators during this training exercise, for inputs from the various sectors.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen field staff facilitation skills – Managers; experience sharing and supporting each other (through monthly meetings). 2. Understanding existing local community communication systems and improving on them (requires good facilitation skills).
<p>Integration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although activities do have relevance in their own right, the true relevance of LEAD interventions comes from the integrated “basket of activities” that LEAD offers.²⁴ However, CORAD has had limited success in truly integrating the various LEAD activities 2. There is still a “silo effect” where the majority of staff see themselves as responsible only for activities in their sectoral area. 	<p>Staff (particularly field staff at district level) need to be organizing monthly or even fortnightly meetings, where they will share their experiences and discuss ways and means of improving on the true integration of the various LEAD activities. This will strengthen the team work that is so vital for the successful implementation of the LEAD programme.</p> <p>In addition to being concerned with achieving targets, supervisors equally need to look out for actions (by their staff) that indicate teamwork and integration of activities from other sectors. This will encourage staff to see themselves as responsible not only for activities in their sectoral area, but in other LEAD sectors as well.</p>

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	<p>3. Although the process varies from agency to agency, CORAD field staff are generally more concerned with achieving targets than achieving impact, and are not always empowered to give supervisors the feedback that achieving targets might lead to low impact (for example, if capital grant recipients are not demonstrating adequate capacity to receive a grant on the schedule of the agency).</p>	
<p>Role of the government in LEAD remains weak in some areas</p>	<p>2. Are LEAD strategies encouraging communities to by-pass the government and instead rely on NGOs for their needs? How visible is support received from government authorities to community members?</p>	<p>Strengthening/creating linkages between CBOs and local authorities (District Councils, Ward Committees, Line Ministries, Chiefdom Councils) is a step in the right direction.</p>
<p>LEAD successfully promoting unity, community responsibility, and high commitment to development</p>	<p>1. Communities showing high commitment in undertaking different projects.</p>	
	<p>2. FFA and FFS particularly successful in promoting unity among community members to work together for development</p>	
	<p>3. It is a new concept for people to look at certain areas (such as care for vulnerable people) as a community responsibility, and people see this as a positive thing.</p>	
	<p>4. LEAD continues to battle with the dependency mentality of communities. Although some activities focus on communities achieving for themselves, others remain close to relief-style handouts. How can CORAD change its approach to be more facilitative, to promote self-initiative and ownership at the community level?</p>	<p>In addition to implementing some activities that focus on communities achieving for themselves, strengthening/creating linkages between CBOs and local authorities (District Councils, Ward Committees, Line Ministries, Chiefdom Councils) is a step in the right direction</p>
<p>Relevance and effectiveness of governance activities</p>	<p>2. Improved governance practice in communities a high need. Some good examples of groups or communities practicing good governance (like Waiyor in Kono), but overall situation will take time to change. Governance must be process focused (how steps to improve governance are taken) not output focused (neglecting process, but making sure key documents are in place).</p>	<p>A 2-days training/refresher training on the principles and practices of good governance, for all field staff, to be organized at district level. It will also serve as a forum for experience sharing on lessons learnt and best practices. The participation of all field staff in the proposed training will help reinforce the integration of the various LEAD activities, with governance issues in particular, given due attention in the implementation of all LEAD activities. CORAD LEAD Working Groups to provide facilitators during this training exercise, for inputs from the various sectors.</p> <p>Staff (particularly field staff) need to be organizing monthly or even fortnightly meetings, where they will share their experiences and discuss ways and means of improving on the true integration of the</p>

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		various LEAD activities for the successful implementation of the LEAD programme