

Spotlight

2nd edition of 2023



Bugesera Food Security
(Serrah Galos/Help a Child)

Food security challenges, and how EU-CORD members are responding to lessen the impact

As summer draws near, I extend my greetings and welcome you to the second edition of Spotlight!

Spring was a busy period for us in the Secretariat. From 25-26 April, we hosted our General Assembly (GA) in Brussels, which was attended by a record 51 participants from almost all our members. It was a wonderful time of reflection, renewal and recommitment to the values we hold dear. The following week, LM International hosted our Advocacy Forum from 3-4 May in Stockholm. This was very well attended, and participants learnt and shared how we can continue to sound the clarion call for an equitable, just and safe world.

We have also been busy engaging in the other networks EU-CORD is a part of through the IDDC GA held in Copenhagen from 9-10 May, the CONCORD GA held from 6-7 June, and we will be attending the VOICE network GA scheduled for

22 June in Brussels. As we interact with external organisations in these various fora, our aim at the Secretariat is to strengthen our ties with like-minded CSOs while constantly seeking opportunities to showcase our member's contributions and identify potential collaborations.

In the words of Mother Theresa:

None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.

Our desire to do great things together is also evident in the recently published climate mapping piece 'Climate Crisis: evaluating organisational impacts'. This serves as a starting point for examining the necessary measures that need to be taken. We have also published several articles on

our website in the last few months that reveal the breadth and depth of members' programmes and commitments to our four cross-cutting themes.

On membership, I warmly welcome our newest network member, IAS Denmark! IAS Denmark seeks to transform people's lives beyond emergency aid and humanitarian development, and they are a great addition to our network.

Finally, it goes without saying that several regions are experiencing the worse case of food insecurity in decades. This Spotlight is focused on how our members are meeting the challenge to, amongst others, abate malnutrition, provide climate-resilient agricultural techniques and support sustainable food systems for all.

Warm regards,
Tabeth Masengu

IAS Denmark: Increasing food security in climate resilience projects in Kenya

Through a grant from the Centre for Church-Based Development in Denmark (CKU), IAS Denmark is implementing a project with our partner, IAS Kenya, in Tharaka Nithi County on Sustained Resilience against Climatic Shocks and Stresses among Vulnerable Communities in Tharaka Nithi North and South Sub-counties in Kenya.

The project builds on a previous phase that ran from 2020 – 2022 with the same geographical and thematic focus.

The effects of climate change on the Horn of Africa are increasingly evident, including an escalation in extreme

weather events such as droughts or floods. Extreme weather can lead to a decrease in agricultural production, poor or loss of harvest due to drought, and subsequently to a rise in food insecurity. This project is designed to help the communities in Tharaka

Nithi County become more resilient to the effects of climate change in their communities. The project's focus areas include improved agricultural and livestock practices to increase the resilience of these livelihoods and support more sustainable water resource management. The multi-pronged approach to activities that support an increase in food security contributes to the overall resilience of the local community as it decreases risk.

The project also implements information sharing and advocacy activities, including community awareness meetings on issues of climate change, improved farming methods, drought and early warning systems, natural resource management, environmental conservation and more.



Additionally, there is a focus on developing capacity and establishing farmer and Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) groups. Developing capacity through strengthened networks in the local communities also contributes to the community's overall resilience when facing climatic shocks and food insecurity.

Recently, our partner IAS Kenya, shared the following encouraging story sent from one of the community groups established in the project's first phase, the Manduru Networking group, which has 24 members. The group shares,

We as a group have benefited very much from this project... a few of us were called for training on developing small businesses for the group. From the training, they ... informed us that we are

supposed to develop a proposal showing the project we would like to do and give it to IAS K. We thought since goats do very well here, we can start the goat rearing business where we can keep them and sell after one year. So, we discussed and wrote the proposal and were given 50,000 shillings as support. From this, we spend approximately 43,000 to purchase 15 goats. We also topped up our group account and added 2 more goats. We kept these and later sold them in January 2023 at 63,200 shillings. From this, therefore, you can see we have made a profit of around 25,000. We have since used the money now to buy 24 goats that we are currently keeping to sell around December. We hope to continue building on the two businesses. Thank you, IAS K and the donor, for helping us this greatly.

This woman's gratitude shows how skills taught through the community groups have led to improved livelihoods around livestock and, thus, increased economic security that can lead to more food security for group members. This is one example from the many activities the project is implementing to benefit the target group of approximately 7500 people in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

IAS Denmark sees continuing to support locally-led multi-approached projects like this one as key to addressing challenges related to rising food insecurity and climate shocks to help communities develop longer-term strategies for increasing their resilience during global crises.

LM International: Women and small-scale farming – a pathway towards food security in rural Chad

Global hunger is on the rise. Chad is one of the world's most vulnerable countries facing extremely concerning hunger levels fueled by climate change and economic turmoil.

LM International has been operating in Chad since 2009, mainly focusing on implementing projects within Water and Sanitation (WASH) and food security

across the humanitarian and development spectrum.

LM International successfully implemented a pioneering irrigation and food security pilot in 2021. The Dourbali department in Baguirmi region

suffers from prolonged droughts, which have exacerbated water scarcity and food insecurity. We believe that small-scale farming is the long-term solution to ensuring food security for the most vulnerable and affected



communities. Through our project, communities adopted a holistic approach that considers the nexus of environment, water, food, and livelihood opportunities.

To combat food insecurity, we have invested in drinking water supply together with drip irrigation initiatives adopting the IWRM approach. Drip irrigation systems have proven to be environmentally friendly, sustainable, and efficient, with water savings of up to 50% to 70% or more compared to gravity irrigation and 30% to sprinkler systems. Additionally, drip irrigation allows for fertigation (the simultaneous application of water and fertilisers), leading to increased yields of 20% to 40% and improved product quality for local farmers.

The drip irrigation technique has enabled right holders to implement more resilient agroecological production while increasing their crop variety and production. Women and local ownership are at the center of this project to ensure resilience and long-term food security. Women are responsible for the technical supervision of the irrigation system and have now started cultivating a diversity of nutritious fruits and crops such as mangoes, okra, eggplants, tomatoes, corn, and more.

It is impossible to grow anything here without this water system. You could only grow during the rainy season, and before the



project, I had to buy everything. It was expensive, and we mainly ate dried food. Now we can enjoy fresh and green food, and it has made a huge difference, says a 30-year-old female farmer and beneficiary.

The project not only ensures households with nutritious food but also provides women with a livelihood opportunity. Surplus harvest is sold at local markets, and the income is used to purchase other foods

like oil or fresh fish. The focus on local sales is also beneficial in a broader sense since it contributes to the local food system in the community. Furthermore, to promote sustainable food security, LM International maintains continuous engagement with the local community and regional authorities to encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly agricultural techniques, such as resilient drip irrigation systems.

ERIKS: Highlighting the Livelihood Resilience Support Project for Child Nutritional Health (PARMESAN)



Screening in Kompanti (ERIKS)

Context of the PARMESAN project

The Parmesan Project targets the Alibori region in Benin because it is vulnerable due to climate change which significantly impacts food security and children's nutrition. This region is economically fragile, located at the gateway to the Sahel; the Alibori region suffers the worst from the effects of floods, drought and windstorms. These climate change effects exacerbate poverty, negatively impacting communities' livelihoods, creating food insecurity and low household purchasing power. Furthermore, since 2021, the region is also a target for terrorist groups causing numerous deaths and the destruction of infrastructure. The result is violations of children's rights, particularly the right to food security and nutritional health, which

DEDRAS, a Beninese partner of Eriks, addresses in this project.

The aim is to improve the nutritional health of children aged 0 to 5 in Alibori by strengthening household livelihoods and educating communities on adequate nutrition. It has three main targets:

- Improvement of household income
- Strengthening the availability and variability of food products in households
- Improvement of household nutrition practices and habits.

The project covers five municipalities with 12 villages per municipality (60 villages). Specific actions for coordination and systems building also include an additional

municipality to cover all six municipalities of the region.

The main activities implemented include, amongst others:

- Sensitising 12,000 people, including children and other vulnerable people, climate change, its causes, consequences and preventive and management strategies.
- Revitalising six communal risk management platforms and early warning systems through periodic retraining of volunteers and other activities.
- Training 800 vulnerable households on resilient agricultural techniques.
- Supporting 800 vulnerable households to undertake family livestock production.
- Training 800 households on storing and conserving

crops, market gardening products and fruits and supporting 20 local initiatives to process and market fortified and seasonal food products.

- Training of trainers to support training on climate-resilient agricultural techniques, market gardeners' support, and family livestock farming development.
- Sensitising 600 households on appropriate feeding behaviours and 800 households on personal hygiene, food hygiene, and living environment.

In addition, DEDRAS's analysis has revealed that households' low purchasing power, food availability, and variability, coupled with poor dietary habits, are obstacles to achieving children's rights to healthy growth in the Alibori region. DEDRAS' approach demonstrates that it is necessary to work simultaneously on strengthening household livelihoods and education to share new knowledge and confront certain social norms and agricultural practices that constitute barriers to food security and good dietary practices. The analysis further postulates that working on improving the availability and variability of food products in households and nutritional health will help households to save money, and good nutritional health

will enable children to develop their full capacities (physical and intellectual), which will affect the achievement of their right to quality education.

Already noticeable effects

Some of the perceptible effects resulting from the implementation of the project include:

- The support of 433 poor households through the diversification of economic activities, which in turn strengthened food security and led to the reinvestment of part of the income in children's education.
- A reduction in the vulnerability of households to climatic shocks because 500 households were trained in practising agriculture and livestock techniques that are resilient to climate change. At the end of 2022, 77.53% of the households trained could ensure adequate food even during climatic shocks.
- The setting up of 62 Village Savings and Loans (VSAL) Associations to improve self-finance economic initiatives at the community level. The VASLs have also ensured children's education and good nutritional health and catalysed community resilience, strengthening the social safety net and social cohesion.
- The training of 4,389 people, including 3,183 women, in nutritional education and adopting good household food and hygiene practices, thus ensuring the good nutritional health of children, pregnant women, and the household.
- The identification of 513 children, including 269 severely acute malnourished girls in the 60 villages of the project intervention area, and the establishment of 59 children's clubs in the schools of the project intervention villages.



(ERIKS)

See You, ZOA and Leprosy Mission partner on the We are Able! (WaA!) Programme to Provide Inclusive Food Security for People with Disability

The We are Able! (WaA!) Programme, as part of the Power of Voices Partnerships for Strengthening Civil Society, aims to promote inclusive food security for persons with disabilities by enhancing access to land, water and other natural resources.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds it. The programme combines capacity strengthening for a network of change agents while enhancing social accountability and inclusive governance.

The following barriers are characteristic of food security and lack of access to basic resources:

- Stigmatisation and lack of awareness of rights, laws and opportunities drive the exclusion of persons with disabilities. In addition, the lack of reliable data undermines efforts to promote inclusive practices, interventions and policies on food security. This prevents Organisations for

Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) from participating in food systems discussions.

- Lack of advocacy capacity, notably in creating meaningful access to decision-making. The latter is prevalent among local implementing partners, particularly OPDs. Therefore, creating civic space and enhancing access is a priority.
- Unknown, unenforced and incomplete legislation. Thanks to ongoing efforts by civil society in most African countries, many good laws exist, including through UN conventions or AU regulatory frameworks. However, implementation is lacking in all WaA! countries (Ethiopia, Burundi, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda). Therefore, advocacy actions explaining existing legislation and its potential benefits to the community and OPDs, are prioritised, and so is the lobbying of duty bearers.

Therefore it is essential in food security programmes to:

- Work on strengthening the position of persons with disability from a rights-based and social approach. Prevent ableism. Supporting persons with disabilities out of spite is heavily linked to the stigmatisation that persons with disabilities encounter often.
- Raise awareness on relevant legal provisions and disability rights as this is critical in enhancing practitioners' and decision makers' understanding of their mandates and responsibilities regarding inclusive food security/food systems.
- Lobby interventions with a rights-based perspective mainly targeting traditional, religious and governmental leaders for meaningful participation and collaboration with organisations of People with Disability.

(We Are Able!)



An inclusive action plan for food security in Burundi using an inclusive Plan Intégré du Paysan (PIP) approach

In many communities in Burundi, persons with a disability are often called 'ikimuga', which means 'a thing that is broken'. This is not the case in Athanasie's family. Her two youngest children with a disability attend school and are considered valued family members.

In her humble home, four large drawings — a detailed plan of the household's activities, income and expenditures — hang on the wall. Athanasie and her family drew them as part of the PIP training they took through the We are Able! Programme. The PIP aims to build a solid foundation for sustainable change in agriculture through the farmers and their families.

The first drawing is the actual image of our household," she explained. "We drew our resources: banana trees, crops and chickens. The other drawing is our action plan with activities. Then, we go through this action plan step by step to reach the drawing that pictures our vision.

Burundi is densely populated, and nearly 90 per cent of Burundi's population depends entirely on agriculture for their livelihoods. As a result, many can't make ends meet with only a small piece of farmland. Hence Athanasie's family took the opportunity to improve their agricultural production by implementing the inclusive PIP approach, which challenges households by visualising their ideas for the coming years. We are Able! adapted the PIP approach to include people with disabilities, so they can actively realise a joint vision for their livelihood.

Just like us

The change the family sees in their household is tremendous. "Before the PIP training, we did not fully consider the children with disabilities in our household," recalled Athanasie. "We never considered that a child with a disability could go to school, but after the training, we observed that children with a disability are just like us. Our children can study or cultivate the land." The family is now an inclusive household making plans together, which was not the case before the PIP training.

Athanasie has reached more than ten households with persons with disabilities since the training. The community is being changed step by step to value members living with disabilities and not call them 'ikimunga'.

Tearfund Netherlands: Improving sustainable production of and access to food in vulnerable local communities

Tearfund Netherland's work on micro-level food security and livelihoods focus on improved sustainable production of and access to food and strengthened socio-economic resilience for vulnerable local communities.

At a macro level, it centres around climate change, global depletion and increasing socio-economic inequality, all of which disproportionately impact the communities where we work.

Climate change affects people's access to food and water, leading to greater health risks. Over-intensive use of natural resources leads to declining soil fertility and loss of biodiversity, in addition to increasing soil erosion and the pollution of land, water and air. Socio-economic inequalities are partly exacerbated by climate change, but geographical and technological developments are also contributing factors. In most countries where Tearfund works, people face the negative impacts of all these issues. To strengthen the

resilience of the most vulnerable groups, Tearfund enables more sustainable forms of food production and livelihoods.

Tearfund focuses on strengthening economic opportunities and increasing stability while raising awareness and caring for the natural environment. We do this through community transformation, disaster prevention, strengthening local entrepreneurship through micro business training, access to savings and loans, and capital investments such as small-scale irrigation schemes and storage facilities. Our programme in Zimbabwe is an excellent example of this.

Zimbabwe

Many people in Zimbabwe rely on growing and selling their crops to feed themselves and earn a living. However, climate change has led to long periods of drought and flooding, resulting in widespread food insecurity. Tearfund is working through our partner FACT to improve Eastern Zimbabwe's food security and income security. Self-help groups play an essential part in this project. Through saving small amounts of capital, members of the self-help groups can make short-term loans available to each other, which can be used for investment in activities aimed at income generation. Participants also receive training on drought-resistant crops and starting profitable projects.

Alongside the self-help groups, investment in solar panel irrigation systems is instrumental in allowing crops to grow during the dry winter season. The installation of irrigation systems has enabled farmers to harvest crops two or three times a year, ensuring their food security and significantly increasing their income from the sale of agricultural products. Tearfund works closely with the local church in Zimbabwe. In this project, the local church is integral in coordinating the training, mobilising the local community and offering premises for community meeting gatherings.

Nepal

In the Rukum East district in Western Nepal, the effects of climate change are strongly felt.

The rainy season has become shorter and unpredictable, creating several challenges. Increased rainfall in shorter periods increases the risk of landslides resulting in the loss of crops. A shorter rainy season also leads to more extended periods of drought and frequent wildfires making vulnerable communities increasingly exposed to climate stress and disasters.

Tearfund works with our local partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN), promoting environmentally sound and sustainable practices with a focus on increasing production. This approach results in a balance in natural resource management and equitable, sustainable economic growth. As a part of the project, community groups are formed.

They are made aware and trained in nature conservation, climatological and non-climatic risks, sanitation and hygiene, sustainable agricultural techniques, entrepreneurship and advocacy in local government. These community groups take action to address the problems they have identified themselves in their communities and influence local governments to act in a responsible and environmentally friendly way for sustainable economic growth. Creating a platform for the communities and local government to come together enhances ownership and encourages the local government and communities to work together for sustainable change.

(Rabi Rokka / Tearfund UK)



Help a Child: Increasing self-reliance of communities we operate in



As Help a Child, a significant part of our total expenditure is food security and livelihoods, around 16% in 2022. As with all of our programmes, the focus is on increasing the self-reliance of the communities where we work. Therefore, our approach usually involves training and capacity building, sometimes combined with investment in agricultural inputs such as seeds or livestock.

In the humanitarian settings where we work (South Sudan, DRC and Somalia), we focus on alleviating the direst food insecurity. In these contexts, children receive treatment for malnutrition and are given health screenings. We also aim to work towards more sustainable food aid in humanitarian settings by allowing the communities to grow their own food, where possible.

Climate change

In addition to previously existing issues with food security, 2022 was the year of battling climate change. Climate changes include erratic rain patterns. For some project areas, such as Burundi and Uganda, rains came too late, and water was scarce. In other regions, such as Pibor (South Sudan), heavy rains caused floods or washed away precious crops and topsoil. We have carried out an inventory of climate problems and localised solutions. In the coming years, we plan to realise more climate-adaptive programming together with the communities that we serve. In this way, we hope there will be a more secure food system in areas prone to climate-related shocks.

The role of youth

In 2022, we saw how young people engage in green

business and value chain production. Thanks to irrigation, innovation, and access to local markets and finance, several farmer groups achieved year-round agri-production. Creative methods, such as drying and grinding fish, were used in other areas to extend food security during drought. Working with youth is always a crucial part of our food security-related programmes. They often make up a large part of the community and are also responsible for developing a more stable food system in the future.

Integrated farm planning

One approach we proudly work with within a few different countries (Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and India) is 'Integrated Farm Planning' (PIP). PIP has been developed in cooperation with the University of Wageningen

and turned out to be an effective and promising method to transform the agricultural practices of model farmers and surrounding farmers through training trainers. The vision of PIP is to engage households and communities in sustainable farm development and improved child well-being. All

family members are invited to develop a shared vision, to establish a sustainable agricultural livelihood, resulting in sufficient, nutritious, and responsibly produced food for all family members, including children. Moreover, within a few years, these households are ready to participate in sustainable

value chains, enabling economic development that benefits children and youth and reduces inequalities. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has adopted the PIP approach as a best practice in a recently drafted strategy for the Great Lakes region.



May we pray for the estimated 49 million people in 46 countries experiencing a severe food crisis. In particular, people in Ethiopia, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, and Afghanistan who were already facing famine.

In addition, it has been two months since violence broke out in Sudan between the country's army and a paramilitary group called the Rapid Support Forces. Be encouraged to continue praying for peace, reconciliation, and the safety of humanitarian workers and our member's local partners.

EU-CORD is a network comprised of 25 NGOs that work in relief and development alongside their national civil society counterparts in 87 countries. We are a not-for-profit organisation registered under Belgian law and in the EU Transparency Register.

For more information on our organisation, see www.eu-cord.org or contact Tabeth Masengu, Advocacy Coordinator, at tabeth.masengu@eu-cord.org.

This Spotlight was edited by Dr Tabeth Masengu and Ms Arianna Antonioni.

