

FULL & LFSRP END OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION FINAL REPORT



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The views expressed in the report are those of the evaluators, and do not necessarily represent the view of Irish Aid or Catholic Relief Services or the implementing partners.

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Dovich Development Management Experts: 10th March 2014

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADP	Area Development Programme
AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ARVs	Anti-Retroviral Drugs
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BCF	Behaviour Change Facilitator
CAADP:	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CA:	Conservation Agriculture
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DEMEX:	Dovich Development Management Experts
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEF	Farmer Extension Facilitator
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IA	Irish Aid
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IGA	Income Generating Activity
ISALS	Income Savings and Lending Schemes
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LA	Local authority
LF	Lead Farmer
LVAC	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee
MCHN	Maternal Child Health and Nutrition
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Agreement
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NISSA	National Information System for Social Assistance
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PLWHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PSP	Private Service provider
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
RSDA	Rural Self-help Development Association
RUFIP	Rural Finance Intermediate programme
SILC	Savings and Internal Lending Communities
SWC	Soil and Water Conservation
ToRs:	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
VHW	Village Health Worker
WFP	World Food Programme
WVL	World Vision Lesotho

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Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the major findings of the End of project evaluation of two projects supported by Irish Aid (IA) and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The Families United for Livelihoods in Lesotho (FULL) was a pilot recovery livelihood intervention initiated in 2011 to respond to increased vulnerability to hunger, food insecurity and poor health and nutritional behaviours in Lesotho. The Lesotho Food Security Resilience Project (LFSRP) was an emergency livelihood intervention initiated in 2012 to respond to Government of Lesotho's declaration of a Food Crisis Emergency. The FULL was funded by Irish Aid while the LFSRP was jointly funded by IA and OFDA. The FULL project was implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in partnership with CARITAS in Thaba-Tseka, Mphahle's Hoek and Leribe districts. The LFSRP was implemented by CARE, World Vision and CRS in partnership with CARITAS, RSDA and Serumula in Mokhotlong, Maseru, Leribe, Mafeteng, Mphahle's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek districts. The main objectives of the projects are summarized in Table 1 below;

Table 1: Project objectives	
FULL Project	LFSRP Project
Objective 1: To increase sustainable food production of vulnerable households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children	Objective 4: Very poor households in Lesotho have improved access to food.
Objective 2: To improve the maternal, child health and nutritional (MCHN) behaviours of households with vulnerable children.	Objective 5: Poor and very poor HHs in Lesotho have increased resilience to future food crises.
Objective 3: To enhance access to financial services for vulnerable Households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)	

The two projects had a combination of emergency, recovery and resilience building components. The interventions implemented by the projects included; conservation agriculture, homestead gardening, promoting maternal health and child nutrition (Essential Nutrition Actions, child care practices, dietary diversity, hygiene practices), Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs), voucher for work and natural resource management, trainings and agricultural input support and nutrition education.

The joint evaluation assessed the extent to which the projects achieved the intended objectives; identified strengths and weaknesses in the design of the projects and opportunities for learning and sharing lessons; and drew relevant lessons and recommendations, with the aim of informing the future direction of similar projects in Lesotho. Field work for the evaluation was undertaken in January 2014. The joint evaluation was divided into three components. The micro level focused on the performance of the two projects against five measures which are relevance/appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, contribution towards impact and sustainability. The meso level focused on synergy, complementarity, interaction and duplication at District level. The macro level focused on national issues promoting or hindering similar initiatives.

Box 1: Main Conclusions on the two projects

The FULL project was key in creating a good foundation for starting long term development initiatives especially on the following project components; keyhole gardens and SILC. The major success factors were mainly due to building on existing systems, structures and activities that could be undertaken within the funding cycle. The transition from a pilot to a meaningful full development programme still requires that partners adhere to best practice and ensure consistency of approach and application for each project component. The major project components that failed include CA and essential nutrition actions largely because of the inadequacy of the background research and design, few training sessions and local contexts that are not conducive to apply all the six principles of CA.

The LFSRP project scored major success in two project components namely the key hole gardens and voucher for work. The two projects enabled poor households to access a diverse range of vegetables, food items and non-food items during the peak hunger periods. The other components faced similar generic programming problems to that of the FULL project.

The consortium brought together different organisations with different strengths. In order to strengthen this alliance there is need to promote cross learning and complementarity among consortium members. To promote complementarity and linkage the Consortium should develop clear protocols, referral system and Terms of References (TORs) at micro and meso level.

Overarching findings:

OVERALL RATING: Orange plus: Both projects made some progress but require improvement or adjustment on active community engagement beyond rapid needs assessments, matching funding cycle and project timeframe, complementarity and linkage among consortium members at meso level based on comparative advantage, promoting technologies taking into consideration the local context and development of a shared transition strategy and plan from project inception: 50% -75% targets achieved.

Both the FULL and LFSRP projects complemented government efforts to address the food crisis in the short term. The two projects provided a good foundation for linking recovery to self-sustaining development as a pilot and response to food crisis in the short term respectively. Successes were noted in interventions such as the home gardens especially keyhole and trench gardens, conditional voucher for work and some SILC groups for the FULL project. The three interventions had immediate benefits that made households to access a diverse range of vegetables, cereals, non-food items, agricultural inputs (seed) and income through own home production, redeeming of vouchers and savings from the SILC loans.

The two projects however, lacked a comprehensive response model or strategy to food insecurity that links emergency, recovery and long term development initiatives at meso and micro levels and faced a number of generic programming pitfalls. The pitfalls include;

- ✓ Failing to go beyond rapid needs assessment to active community action planning that informs relevant interventions and improves ownership of projects.
- ✓ Prioritising interventions whose implementation timeframe did not match the funding cycle. Examples included CA, SILC and maternal health and child nutrition behavioural practices. While the FULL project considered a possible support after the pilot phase, the Cooperating Partners were not sure whether the second phase had adequate funding to ensure the interventions are supported to at least three years- the minimum time required to support these interventions.
- ✓ Weak transition strategy and plan from the onset of the projects for most of the interventions. Without further external support it was evident that most interventions are not likely to continue.
- ✓ Agricultural input packages of 1kg seed of major cereals (maize and wheat) and poor siting of CA plots were the major factors that limited HH from fully practising CA.

Major findings on progress and achievements of the projects:

The level of progress and achievement of results for the two projects were assessed using a 'traffic system' which was applied to five DAC criteria assessment categories viz; relevance/appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, contribution towards impact and sustainability. The major institutional and environmental factors that contributed or hindered the success of the two projects and future interventions of similar nature were also assessed at macro, meso and Consortium levels.

Macro Level issues

1. Macro level responses to food insecurity in Lesotho

Government and development actors have conducted assessments that are key in informing responses to food insecurity. While each assessment has been key in informing the different responses to food insecurity there was no clear integrated context analysis that gave the 'big picture' to inform an appropriate response or a combination of responses in an integrated manner. This is because planning at national level is still sectoral and fragmented. Several assessments are conducted by individual sectors and organisations.

2. Coordination mechanisms at national level

The FULL and LFSRP project partners' involvement in the Food Security Forum and CAADP processes afforded them the opportunity to actively participate in related food security initiatives and interact with the Government and UN agencies. These were useful platforms for further integration, nurturing relations with government and coordination. During consultations and discussions with different agencies competition for territorial space by state and non-state actors at macro level consistently emerged as the main hindrance to effective coordination. Coordination at national level therefore missed an opportunity for collective decision making (coordinated action objectives) and allocation of resources and active engagement and support from partners to achieve shared objectives. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) still to be signed between MAFS and Civil Society Organisations working on

agriculture and food security has potential to nurture partnership, collaboration and complementarity with government in development.

3. *Government commitment to resourcing initiatives in the agriculture, food security and nutrition sectors*

The government through MAFS currently prioritises resourcing programmes that have a subsidy component e.g. Block farming. While this looks noble the reach is only to a few farmers who are into commercial agriculture. This leaves the majority of poor household farmers with limited support to Agriculture. The MAFS highlighted two issues as challenges to directly committing and supporting with resources to NGO funded programmes. Firstly, the NGOs rarely engage government at the time of project design and are only informed to collaborate during implementation. The NGOs have not aligned and brought resources directly to support the Actions in the NSDP. Secondly, the government has prioritised long term development projects that focus on employment creation at the expense of the Agriculture and Nutrition sector. The current 'perception' is that Lesotho can still rely and cannot compete with South Africa on Agriculture. No major resources have been channelled towards strengthening the extension services, which was said to be the engine room to support agricultural production and productivity.

4. *Reflection and learning beyond the life span of development projects*

The repeated generic programming pitfalls in designing emergency/early recovery projects were evidence of limited learning by agencies. The two projects failed to build on previous experience of others let alone own experience especially on CA interventions and SILC.

Meso Level issues

Improving food security by increasing production and changing the household level nutrition behaviour is a priority for the Ministry of Agriculture. Field level feedback confirms that the project interventions were positively contributing to the efforts of Government. The efforts to increase and strengthen extension services at meso and micro level are a priority to every District. Both projects made efforts to engage District level structures and relevant departments during implementation, however, District stakeholders suggested if they could actively be involved even during project design.

Consortium Level

The CRS-CARITAS consortium under the FULL project was based on experience of working together in activities of similar nature since 2002. CRS built the capacity of CARITAS on CA, homestead gardens and Essential Nutrition Actions. Gaps remained on adapting CA to local context and consortium wide adherence to best practice in delivering SILC and adequately testing the PSP model. The relationship has been described as a donor-recipient one with CARITAS engaged mainly in implementing activities and CRS involved in final donor reporting. By the time of writing this report, CARITAS claim they had 'not received any donor report sent to IA'. The consortium under LFSRP has however, performed well as a platform for partners to meet and to mobilize support of other stakeholders (FAO and WFP) in response to the emergency situation. Membership within the CA Task Force afforded partners an opportunity to enhance strategic engagement and support as well as leveraging of capacities across organizations. Lack of cross learning and sharing at operational and strategic levels was noted among partners. Project management information system within the consortium was weak as evidenced by lack of consensus and ownership of project beneficiary target numbers. There was no evidence of deliberate integration of food or livelihood initiatives among Consortium members with each operating in isolation at meso and micro levels and only converging at national level.

Project performance

Relevance:

Orange plus: Both projects made some progress but adjustment is required on coordination efforts, response models and project packages: 50% -75% targets achieved and relevant.

The projects are aligned to national strategies as they are addressing emergency food security needs of people in Lesotho. The use of vouchers for work and promoting income generating activities contributed to meeting short term food needs and early recovery for the most vulnerable in tandem with policy statements of Government of Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and Ministry of Agriculture National Action Plan for Food Security. However, coordination efforts by government need to be strengthened to ensure alignment, resourcing and integration of responses.

The projects were responding to stressed livelihoods and declining food production in Lesotho. The complexity of the context required robust design to be effective and the interventions in their individual standing were innovative. However, the introduction of recovery within emergency renders the intervention over-ambitious and thus inappropriate. For instance LFSRP though meant for emergency and addressing the immediate situation, had long term development components which require more time for implementation.

Effectiveness – Overall rating - Orange plus: Recognising efforts made to promote food, nutrition and income security initiatives using existing programming experience, community based structures and systems and adapted farming technologies, the two projects had limited time to share best-practices and lessons learned from previous interventions and among partners. Although more than 60% of the targets were achieved some project objectives were not achieved.

An extensive study of 1810 household interviews, key informant's interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries shows that the FULL project partially achieved two objectives (Objective 2 and 3) and failed on one (Objective 1). The LFSRP fully achieved one objective (objective 4) and partially achieved on one (Objective 5). Table 2 below summarises the main reasons that contributed to the achievement and non-achievement of the objectives.

Table 2: Achievement of project objectives	
Objective	Rating and comments
Objective 1: To increase sustainable food production of vulnerable households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children	<p>Orange Minus towards Red: Implementation strategy effective only on Homestead gardens but weak on CA which was supposed to be the major contributor to sustained food self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>50% of participating households' food needs met by own production</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Target not yet achieved with only 8.4% able to produce enough to last 12 months. Production levels recorded not significant to impact on sustained food availability with 76.9% of CA farmers harvesting cereals that last less than 5 months – Some commendable progress made on key-hole gardens which exceeded the target beneficiaries by 16% households and HH growing and consuming a diverse range of vegetables. Overgrown vegetables observed in most areas in key-hole gardens are evidence of lack of markets and limited knowledge on preservation techniques. – Performance of CA not impressive with abandoned plots, violation of CA principles due to a number of generic and local context issues that were not addressed, unclear post project sustainability strategies and ineffective support to thinly spread farmers – Distribution of inputs not done on time and training was done once at most of the sites. There was no agriculture input supply chain developed to increase access to inputs after receiving free hand-outs. <p><i>50% of the households with OVC consume at least 3 meals per day of recommended diversity/food type</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Target achieved in survey sample with 55% consuming 3 and more meals per day though nutritional quality remains a challenge with more bias on starches.
Objective 2: To improve the maternal, child health and nutritional (MCHN) behaviours of households with vulnerable children.	<p>Orange plus: Above 75% of quantitative targets achieved but qualitative assessments showed that exclusive breastfeeding, knowledge and practices in sanitation are still very low. Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>80% of families demonstrating at least three new positive nutrition, food storage or food preparation and hygiene behaviours.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 64.9% exclusively breastfeeding for the recommended 6 months and more, – 66.6% fed the under-5s of the recommended 4 and more meals per day, – 97.5% of those owning the toilet wash hands after using latrine and before feeding children – 43.2% own a toilet or use <p><i>80% of families who contact a Community Health Worker or clinic for specified child illnesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 61% of sampled HHs used health centre for child diarrhoea treatment. – 85.4% of households made more than 14 antenatal care visits.

Objective 3: To enhance access to financial services for vulnerable Households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)	Orange plus: 59.5% of the SILC members accessed loans and share-outs. Use of SILC for agricultural inputs still low (1.8%), potentially compromised by free input distributions. Assessment of indicators: <i>70% of participating families have saved at least \$50 over the life of the project</i> – In the surveyed HHs 59.5% had received M500 and more on last share-out <i>60% of participating households have purchased fertilizer or seed through the Community Fundraising Mechanism</i> – 1.8% of the surveyed HHs used SILC loans to buy agri-inputs and 1.6% used share-outs for the same and 1.6% used for farm implements. No recorded input procurement through CMF. CMF not visible at community level at time of evaluation.
Objective 4: Very poor households in Lesotho have improved access to food.	Green: On track over 90% of the targets achieved. There was immediate and direct access to food by 99% of the target households. There was unintended introduction of new product lines by local retail outlets. Assessment of indicators: – conditional transfers through voucher system were provided to 99% of the households (1580 households) that worked to create or restore assets – 99% of the target households had access to food and non- food items during the lean and peak hunger months through vouchers that were redeemed at local retail shops – Overall in the LFSRP project more than 70% of HHs could easily pay for household food needs and non-food needs. – Vendors were trained on pricing although some were accused of increasing prices.
Objective 5: Poor and very poor HHs in Lesotho have increased resilience to future food crises.	Orange plus towards orange minus: Some progress of 50-75% achieved on some targets but some were not achieved as 61.9% that were engaged in CA harvested cereals that lasted for less than 5 months Assessment of indicators: <i>Very poor HHs have access to appropriate seeds</i> – 100% of the target beneficiaries received appropriate seeds through direct distribution and seed fairs however more than 50% of households received the inputs very late and small quantities (1-3kg of maize/wheat) which had no significant impact on production. – Only less than 10% fully practised CA, while 52.2% partially practised all aspects of CA, 32% practiced some aspects, 2.7% were knowledgeable but not engaged and 3.1% were not engaged at all or had no knowledge. <i>Expand the provision of savings-led microfinance services in project areas</i> – Before the project 3.4% HHs had access to financial services but now 54.6% have access to services after the project. – 1.8% of sample HHs used SILC loans to but agricultural inputs and 1% used share-outs for the same and 1% for farm implements. – Inadequate monitoring and support work for SILC, variations in SILC delivery approaches, weak and incorrect MIS with only 14 groups accounted for and lack of input supply strategy post project were the major gaps – Without motivation and post training support these groups may collapse

Efficiency – Orange plus towards orange minus: Adequate funding levels and human resources but budget underspends for critical direct costs like purchase of inputs and adherence to implementation plan were affected by delays in contract negotiation and technical inefficiencies.

CRS and project partners developed clear project implementation structures that supported operations. Both projects had a number of technical inefficiencies listed below;

- Delays in contract negotiation that led to late disbursement of funds and commencement of field activities subsequently resulting in two cropping seasons (winter 2013 and summer 2013/14) being missed. The implementation of LFSRP was also delayed to March 2013 instead of October 2012 missing the winter cropping season. The Detailed implementation Plan and the budgets for most partners showed an under expenditure as low as 40% due to missed crop production cycles.
- Except where an implementing partner pre-financed the projects most farmers got their inputs in late November and December. Those in the Mountain zones did not plant the seed.

- The quantities (1 kg) agricultural inputs distributed especially maize and wheat were a disincentive as they were small, lower than the government and FAO initiative which were 10kg seed and 2X 50kg bags of fertiliser.
- Poor siting of CA plots resulted in most farmers abandoning or neglecting the plots. CA plots were located in unprotected zones where open grazing is common. This led farmers to lose the mulch and the basins demanding them to dig new basins annually which increased the demand for labour.
- Budget under spend was a challenge particularly for *Contractual and Sub-awards* and *Other Direct Costs* line items that had burn-rates of between 14% and 48% for both projects. Contracting related issues and absorption capacity variously affected budget absorption.

CARE, WV and CRS had clearly defined M&E Frameworks and internal processes which could have strengthened best practices in both projects but this remained in individual consortium members. There was limited time for cross learning and sharing. An M&E group at national level which was formed as part of the evaluation process should have been set up at project inception to share best practices at meso and micro level. Monitoring and support of some initiatives was therefore weak; especially SILC and CA.

Contribution towards impact: **Orange plus towards orange minus:** Small scale interventions like homestead gardens and SILC initiatives were a good foundation for starting self-sustaining initiatives in the short term however own production levels and productivity remain low.

Food availability and accessibility: Key-hole gardens and SILC have improved food availability and accessibility through direct production and use of loans for food purchases. 36.6% of sampled households used SILC loans to buy food. SILC loans and share-outs have been used to address household production and social needs. The SILC social fund has assisted members with grants to address household emergencies to avoid risky coping mechanisms.

Dietary diversity: Positive changes have been made on dietary intake. More than 60% of the households consume more than four food groups per day. The household food consumption score of the sample shows that 70.9% had acceptable diet. The majority (66.81%) of the sample households had under-5 children consuming four and above meals per day. Complementary feeding remains a challenge as some recommended feeds were not readily available and unaffordable.

Feeding practices: Care seeking behaviour by mothers is positive despite the time demands to access services. Awareness on breastfeeding practices has been created but there are still challenges related to beliefs and attitudes of lactating mothers and elderly caregivers.

Hygiene practices: Proxy indicators point to positive hygiene practices. 97.5% of the respondents washed hands after using the latrine and before feeding children.

Conditions for sustainability: **Orange plus towards orange minus:** Conditions for sustainability created towards the end of project implementation without a strong back up support and no shared understanding by those who were part of the sustainability mechanism.

Various components of the projects had community based structures set up such as Lead Farmers, Farmer Extension facilitators, Village Agents and Private Service Providers, matsema groups and Nutrition Clubs, to which some of the project functions were to be phased over at project closure. Only a few among extension workers, village agents, FEFs and lead farmers were aware that they were part of the sustainability mechanism of the projects. A good practice is to create awareness on sustainability mechanisms among key stakeholders from inception and consistently during the life of a project. Except for CARE which had a clear strategy of absorbing some project components in the upcoming MICA II project in Quthing, the rest of the organisations had a list of existing and on-going projects in the Districts but no clear mechanisms of phasing over. Examples of potential projects for phasing over or linkage included; WV's ADPs, Government's Rural Finance Intermediate Programme (RUFIP) and MICA II in which CRS is a Consortium member.

Main recommendations

Macro level

- 1 To develop a comprehensive response model to food insecurity, the DMA and other stakeholders should conduct harmonised country context assessments that provide clear linkage and integration of emergency, early recovery and long development programming. This is key in informing appropriate responses by different agencies.

- 2 Recognising the mistrust between government and NGOs in Lesotho, it may be advisable that the Consortium together with UN agencies take effort to nurture the relations with government. This is likely to take time but through engagement of government at the time of project design should be a prerequisite. Knowledge sharing platforms such as the Interest Group, CAADP processes and the Food Sector Coordination Forum should continue to be used to advocate for a shift from fragmented and/or sectoral to joint planning if coordination is to be improved.
- 3 In order to complete early recovery livelihood interventions at the end of the funding cycle, CRS and others should advocate for donor funding that is predictable, flexible, untied and appropriate in duration. The intervention should match the funding cycle or be phased in such a manner that the incomplete activities will be completed by the following funding cycles.
- 4 To avoid generic programming pitfalls and promote continuous spread of knowledge for successful interventions in Lesotho, a collective effort is required to produce and disseminate easy to read or illustrative reference materials already developed e.g. CA, SILC, Keyhole garden Guides.

Meso level

1. To effectively respond to the food insecurity crisis, it may be advisable that each district develops an Early Recovery Strategy framework using meso level planning and coordination tools such as Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP). This will help the Districts to develop multiple-year and multi-sectoral plans that indicate what needs to be done in a bad year (emergency), typical year (Early recovery) and good year (development or investment year). The Local Government as the responsible authority should take the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of these plans.
2. There is need for harmonisation of agricultural input support packages to ensure communities fully benefit from the technologies being promoted.

Consortium Level

1. While recognising the critical role played by the Consortium in bringing different actors to respond to the food security crisis in the country, there is need to strengthen;
 - ✓ Sharing and learning of best practices among Consortium members. This includes M&E frameworks and best practices for each of the intervention supported.
 - ✓ Complementarity, synergy and linkage of interventions based on comparative advantage should be the main basis for being a member of consortium. There is still need to shift from operating in isolation at District level to complementing each other's effort.

Micro level

1. For future interventions there is need to go beyond conducting rapid needs assessments to community based visioning in order to inform the relevant and priority interventions of the target beneficiaries.
2. All future interventions should develop a jointly owned transition strategy and plan at project design, inception and throughout the life of a project. While training of community based structures was the key strategy for the two projects, the training duration was short (once or twice and 3 days at most) and without back up support.
3. To complement the government extension services the two projects made efforts to build capacity of lead farmers or FEFs, VAs, PSPs, and Care groups, however there is need for more training and back up support not just a once off training. There is need for non-monetary incentives such as special training, larger input packages, look and learn visits for the lead farmers to continue to function. These can be discussed at project inception.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Rationale for the two projects

Lesotho faced a severe food security crisis following an extremely sharp decline of agricultural production in 2011/2012 that left 725,000 people, or a third of the population, food insecure. The combined production of cereals represented only 32% of the average annual harvest of the last 10 years. This was attributed to a series of factors such as flooding, late rains and early frost in 2011 and 2012. Other underlying factors were acute reduction of arable land, lack of access to inputs and yield-enhancing technology, severe soil erosion as well as increasing impact of climate change-induced shocks. In order to have an informed response to this food insecurity situation, CRS and its partners in consultation with LVAC reviewed various information sources and conducted a rapid needs assessment. The sources of information included;

- **Bureau of Statistics** Crop Forecast (June 2012) which provided Lesotho's national crop forecasting for three major crops: maize, sorghum and wheat for the 2011/2012 season.
- **LVAC** (July 2012) which gave an indication of the food insecurity situation in the country. The assessment concluded that "all livelihood zones are similarly affected"¹
- **USAID/Southern Africa's Office of Food for Peace and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance** (June 2012) provided a snapshot of the 2012 maize crop, the market conditions for access to food and coping mechanisms of vulnerable rural households. This rapid rural assessment was conducted in four districts focusing on the food security situation in two broad ecological zones, the highlands and lowlands.
- **Catholic Relief Services (CRS), CARITAS, CARE, and World Vision Consortium Rapid Assessment Report** (June 2012). Conducted a Rapid Food Security Assessment across five agro-ecological zones of Lesotho to analyse the emerging food insecurity situation and the coping mechanisms of rural farmers. The national issues that required attention included;
 1. Low agricultural production and decline in productivity.
 2. Large food insecure population which is dependent on subsistence agriculture.
 3. The health and nutritional status of children and mothers was poor with 39% chronically malnourished, 4% wasted and 13% underweight.
 4. Increase in the number of food insecure people both rural and urban.
 5. Low budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector.
 6. Increase in food prices.

1.2 The Projects

The Families Unite for Livelihoods in Lesotho (FULL) project was initially an 18 months pilot initiative but was extended to 24 months. The project commenced in October 2011 and was supposed to end in March 2013. However, after a peer review that was held in February 2013 a no cost extension of up to October 2013 was granted in March 2013. A further no cost extension was granted for up to March 2014 for wrap and evaluation. The project was aimed at improving the food security of the most vulnerable Basotho families and children by increasing sustainable agricultural production at homestead and field levels while building the capacity of rural families to better manage local natural resources. The project was supported by Irish Aid (IA) and implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in partnership with Lesotho Catholic Bishops Conference through CARITAS in three districts namely Thaba-Tseka, Moleleke's Hoek and Leribe. The project supported 5,959 households (a total of 29,795 direct beneficiaries) of which 76% were supposed to be women-headed.

¹ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) Annual Monitoring Summary Report – July 2012.

The LFSRP was 12-month emergency livelihood intervention initiated in 2012 to respond to Government of Lesotho's declaration of a Food Crisis Emergency. The project was jointly funded by IA and OFDA. The project commenced in October 2012 and was supposed to end in December 2013 but was extended to March 2014 for the IA funded components only. The LFSRP was implemented by CARE, World Vision and CRS in partnership with RSDA and Serumula in Mokhotlong, Maseru, Leribe, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek districts. The project interventions included conditional voucher for work activities (*voucher for work to create community assets*), trainings, conservation agriculture, homestead gardening, natural resource management, MNCH, and input support to restore agricultural production, and trainings to improve the nutritional status of groups most vulnerable to food insecurity. The project also supported SILC to improve household economic coping strategies in responding to future food price fluctuations, environmental shocks and household illnesses. The project supported 5,668 households (a total of 28,340 indirect beneficiaries) in the target districts. Figure 1 below shows the location of the two projects. LVAC reports "the 'very poor' wealth group in the Mountains registered the highest need in terms of survival protection" followed by the Senqu River Valley.² In the Mountain zone, very poor households face a gap of 55% of their survival needs.

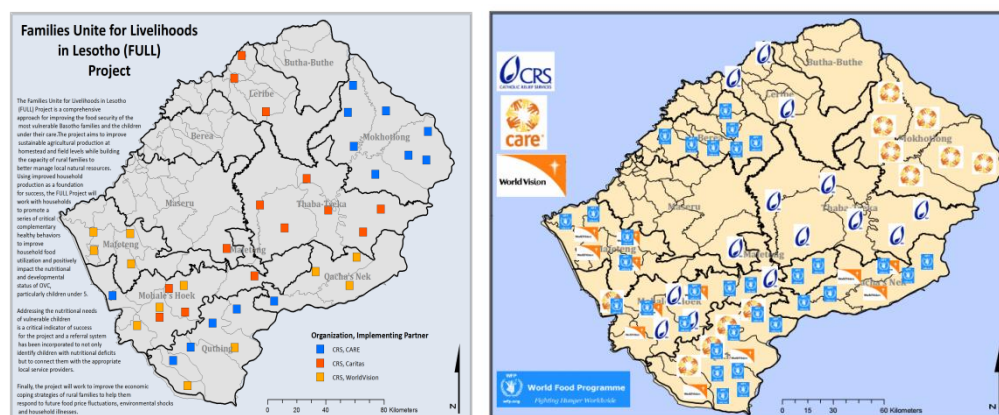


Figure 1: FULL & LFSRP Project Area Locations

1.3 The Evaluation

1.3.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The joint evaluation (Irish Aid/Government of Lesotho/NGO Consortium/UN Partners) was aimed at achieving three aspects;

- i. Providing information on the level of achievement of programme outcomes and goals by assessing the effectiveness and success in meeting the proposed objectives.
- ii. Identifying challenges and opportunities within the broader environment that influenced the project outcomes.
- iii. Recommend the way forward for future interventions.

1.3.2 The main objectives of the End of Project Evaluation

Four components of this evaluation were assessed. Firstly, it was the effectiveness of the programme by examining the achievement of progress indicators, implementation strategy and project sustainability at micro level. Secondly, was to review issues of the projects' interaction with the district level environment e.g. with Local Government authorities, Extension Services; other

² Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) Annual Monitoring Summary Report – July 2012.

NGOs, UN System, the existence of other similar projects and what they achieved, complementarity, duplication with special attention on operational efficiency and challenges affecting the programme and projects. Third, was to focus on the national level issues such as government financing for the food and nutrition security sector, wide institutional factors that may have affected or been affected by other relevant issues. Fourth, was to establish the impact and sustainability measures, draw lessons, recommendations and identify critical success factors for future projects. The evaluation was conducted as part of a learning process for Irish Aid and its partners to guide in redesigning the programme in a sustainable manner.

1.4 Methodology and Approaches used in the Evaluation

1.4.1 The Main Approach

This was a joint evaluation that used a participatory approach by consulting the community and key-implementing partners or stakeholders that were involved in the project implementation. The evaluation team in consultation with the Reference Group developed the detailed methodology and tools for the evaluation. The team assessed the impact of the programme using the indicators in the M&E Results framework, Baseline report and consolidated progress reports.

The Evaluation Team upheld the respect of local structures and protocols by working closely with partner staff and others during the assignment. Partner staff was key in informing the logistical arrangements necessary for a successful field work. In all the tasks the team upheld the following values;

- ✓ Gender consideration
- ✓ Proportion representation
- ✓ Logistical feasibility

1.4.2 Survey Tools

The tools included a detailed review matrix of programme documents, household questionnaire, observation checklist, focus group discussions and key informant interviews at micro, meso and macro levels. Four (4) types of survey instruments which provided qualitative and quantitative data were used;

Household Questionnaire administered to 1810 households participating in the initiatives. This enumerator led tool collected basic household profile, views and perceptions on the project against intended outcomes, unintended outcomes, before and after project scenarios. This provided the core information for quantitative analysis.

Focus Group Discussions were conducted in 42 sessions at 15 meeting points. The FGDs were facilitated with CA, SILC, Care groups, Homestead gardening groups, PLHWA support groups, Matsema, Grazing Associations, Caregivers of Children under 5, Nutrition Club and NRM committees. The questions focused on local conditions, packages offered, sustainability issues, needs and priorities before and after project scenarios and linkages with other projects. This helped broaden the voice in the analysis at community level and triangulate findings from other tools.

Key informants interviews were conducted at District and community level. At Community level informants included 30 Community leaders (Chiefs and Councillors), 15 lead farmers/ Farmer Extension facilitators, SILC Chairpersons (9) and Vendors 3. At District level interviews were conducted with partner staff (7), District Officials from MAFS (6), DMA (3), Health (5), FNCO (3) and Social Welfare (3). The tool allowed for a broader section of the community to participate in discussion on the project.

Macro level Stakeholder consultation: These included one-on-one discussions, breakfast meetings and all stakeholder consultation workshops in Maseru.

Members of the evaluation team took pictures of the current situation and recorded the observation. All tools are attached to this report as Annex 5.

1.4.3 Sampling strategy within Councils

The sample population for the evaluation was 14,533 households in 8 districts, covering 36 councils. Table 3 below shows the disaggregation of the maximum number of households reached per District for each project. Four major primary study units were selected, that is, the districts, the councils, villages, and the households. A three stage cluster sampling technique was adopted. A purposive sampling technique was used in drawing Districts for the evaluation. This was done in order to deliberately cover all the eight districts covered by the two projects. The sampling for quantitative data for individual households was informed by the need to make the sample as representative as possible and give an indicative picture of the program participants and the activities they were engaged in.

Of the 36 councils covered by the projects, 20 Councils (56%) were sampled. The sample covered 1,810 households drawn from different villages, representing 12% of the targeted 14,533 households. (See Table 3 below)

District	Project	Total councils	No of HH reached	No of sampled councils	No of meeting points	Target sample size	Achieved sample size	% achieved
Thaba-Tseka	FULL	2	3359	1	3	336	245	73
	LFSRP	4	2993	2	8	300	462	154
Leribe	FULL	1	739	1	1	74	195	264
	LFSRP	3	1410	2	2	141	124	88
Mohale's-Hoek	FULL	1	1161	1	3	116	118	102
	LFSRP	5	609	4	3	61	132	216
Quthing	LFSRP	6	2065	3	4	207	263	127
Maseru	LFSRP	1	236	1	2	24	20	83
Mafeteng	LFSRP	4	625	2	4	63	71	113
Mokhotlong	LFSRP	7	898	3	5	90	149	166
Qacha's Nek	LFSRP	3	438	2	2	44	31	70
TOTAL		36	14533	20	42	1456	1810	124

1.5 Challenges and limitations during the survey

1. Inconsistence in data sets especially beneficiary numbers/lists, project targets and commencement dates forced the Evaluation team to continuously revisit the sampling strategy thus delaying the development of the Field plan.
2. The team conducted the survey during the rainy season and faced the following problems;
 - Late start due to poor community mobilisation and farmers being busy with field activities. The evaluation teams had to wait and interviewed respondents at their convenience.
 - Inclusion of areas that were not project sites resulted in losing time and increasing travel time. This was experienced in World Vision sites in Qacha's Nek.
 - Confusion among respondents regarding the differences between FULL and LFSRP interventions and those of other projects. There may be slight chances that some credit or unfair judgement was done to the two projects. The team made efforts to caution Enumerators on those possibilities before going to the target sites.

- In some areas there were more interviews than the intended sample size due to a high turnout and respondents demanding to be interviewed after having travelled long distances to the meeting points.

1.6 Profile of the survey group

This section assessed the status of the household head which usually gives an indication of household vulnerability. Households headed by elderly, female and children tend to be more vulnerable and exposed to risk compared to active headed households. The former are usually more vulnerable to shocks such as drought and food insecurity.

Results from Table 4 shows that 76% of the households in the eight Districts are able bodied of which 57.4% are males while 18.6% are females. About 24% constitutes socio-economic groups such as the chronically ill, the elderly and child headed who are vulnerable to shocks and are labour constrained.

Total	HH gender (%)		Characteristics of household head (%)					
	Male	Female	Able bodied male headed household	Able bodied female headed household	Household headed by chronically ill	Elderly headed household	Household headed by a person with a disability	Child headed household
Thaba Tseka	72.4	27.6	65.6	14.3	11.7	6.1	2.3	0.0
Mokhotlong	62.4	37.6	57.0	24.8	9.4	6.7	2.0	0.0
Qacha's Nek	64.5	35.5	58.1	19.4	16.1	3.2	3.2	0.0
Quthing	65.4	34.6	52.5	19.8	16.3	9.9	1.1	0.4
Mohale's Hoek	64.8	35.2	51.6	22.4	12.4	12.8	0.4	0.4
Mafeteng	64.8	35.2	54.9	16.9	14.1	12.7	1.4	0.0
Maseru	65.0	35.0	55.0	5.0	5.0	35.0	0.0	0.0
Leribe	59.2	40.8	48.4	22.6	11.0	16.7	1.3	0.0
Total	66.7	33.3	57.4	18.6	12.3	10.0	1.6	0.1

2. MAJOR FINDINGS

2.1 Macro Level issues

2.1.1 Response mechanisms to food insecurity in Lesotho

Different stakeholders have responded to food insecurity using various information sources such as Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC), USAID Rapid Assessment, Disaster Management Agency Assessments, Bureau of Statistics and own agency internal processes. While each assessment has been key in informing the different responses to food insecurity there was no clear integrated context analysis that gave the 'big picture' to inform an appropriate response or a combination of responses in an integrated manner. Different stakeholders were not able to justify or clearly link the emergency or relief, recovery and long term development. This is because planning at national level is still sectoral and fragmented. Several assessments are conducted by individual sectors. Stakeholders suggested the need to better understand the different types of emergencies (e.g. rapid or slow-on-set) and how responses mechanisms can be different but connected to each other.

2.1.2 Planning, coordination and engagement mechanisms at national level

The FULL and LFSRP project partners' involvement in the Food Security Forum and CAADP processes afforded them the opportunity to actively participate in related food security initiatives and interact with the Government and UN agencies. These were useful platforms for further integration, nurturing relations with government and coordination. During consultations and discussions with different agencies competition for territorial space between state and non-state actors at macro level consistently emerged as the main hindrance to effective coordination. DMA has the mandate to coordinate and lead in disaster situations; however resource constraints have limited its capacity to undertake comprehensive analysis of the data sets as well as the generation of regular bulletins that provide a summary of the food insecurity situation in Lesotho. Instead, its current role is limited to communication and co-existence objectives which include general meetings, information sharing and informal relations without elaborate binding commitments.

However, FAO, though not directly engaged in generation of new information, has been instrumental in coordinating the food security forum tasked with strengthening existing information and response strategies, bringing together the government and NGOs as well as harmonizing and aligning different approaches. There is a need for different organizations to consider their comparative advantages, technical and resource competence as well as limitations in view of required responses and scope of geographical coverage. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) still to be signed between MAFS and Civil Society Organisations working on agriculture and food security is another tool which can nurture partnership, collaboration and complementarity with government in development.

2.1.3 The Consortium performance

The CRS-CARITAS consortium under the FULL project was based on experience of working together in activities of similar nature since 2002. CRS built the capacity of CARITAS on CA, homestead gardens and Essential Nutrition Actions. Gaps remained on adapting CA to local context and consortium wide adherence to best practice in delivering SILC and adequately testing the PSP model. In this project the relationship has been described as a donor-recipient one with CARITAS engaged mainly in implementing activities and CRS involved in final donor reporting. By the time of writing this report, CRS claim they had 'not received any donor report sent to IA'. The consortium under LFSRP has however, performed well as a platform for partners to meet and to mobilize support of other stakeholders (FAO and WFP) in response to the emergency situation.

Membership within the CA Task Force afforded partners an opportunity to enhance strategic engagement and support as well as leveraging of capacities across organizations. Lack of cross learning and sharing at operational and strategic levels was noted among partners. Project management information system within the consortium was weak as evidenced by lack of consensus and ownership of project beneficiary target numbers. There was no evidence of deliberate integration of food or livelihood initiatives among Consortium members with each operating in isolation at meso and micro levels and only converging at national level.

The consortium has performed well as a platform for partners to meet and to reduce the administrative burden by using one channel to fund multiple partners. However, the value addition of the consortium to the performance of the projects remains unclear. Currently there is clearly lack of cross learning and sharing at operational and strategic levels across the bigger partners, CARE, CRS and WVL evidenced by feedback from key informant staff, varied performance of the project as well as differences in the delivery of SILC training and capacity building of community based farmer support systems. SILC training and monitoring challenges that were evident with WVL could be addressed by a mechanism (e.g. VA or PSP) used by CRS and CARE. Similarly other partners could have benefitted from early recovery interventions in WVL Area Development Programme (ADP) sites.

There was no evidence of integration or linkage of food livelihood initiatives among the Consortium members. Members operated in isolation to others at meso and micro level and convergence was at national level only. This limits cross learning and complementarity.

2.1.4 Reflection and learning beyond the life span of development projects

Indications are that there was limited learning by agencies in designing emergency/early recovery projects. This is evidenced by repeating the generic programming pitfalls which included;

- ✓ Lack of active community engagement in designing the desired outcomes of the projects.
- ✓ Weak appreciation of built in exit strategies to ensure sustainability of the project activities beyond the external support.
- ✓ The failure to build on previous experience of others let alone own experience. For example the partners went on to implement the CA initiative without addressing the local context issues which have continuously made farmers not to fully practise the principles.
- ✓ The recruitment of qualified Field staff without relevant early recovery project experience combined with delays in the commencement of the project resulted in implementation delays as more time was required for capacity building.

2.1.5 Advocacy and lobbying on policy issues

Recognising the active participation in the CA Task Force, the Consortium has not been able to advocate and influence specific policy issues that affect programming in agriculture and food security as the MOU with government has not been signed. As government is following the due process of signing this MOU, the CSOs got frustrated and created some mistrust between the two parties.

2.1.6 Government Resource commitment to the Agriculture sector

The government through MAFS currently prioritises resourcing programmes that have a subsidy component e.g. Block farming. While this looks noble the reach is only to a few farmers who are into commercial agriculture. This leaves the majority of poor household farmers with limited support to Agriculture. The MAFS highlighted two issues as challenges to directly committing and supporting with resources to NGO funded programmes. Firstly, the NGOs rarely engage government at the time of project design and are only informed to collaborate during implementation. The NGOs have not aligned and brought resources directly to support the Actions in the NSDP. Secondly, the government has prioritised long term development projects that focus on employment creation at the expense of the Agriculture and Nutrition sector. The current 'perception' is that Lesotho can still rely and cannot compete with South Africa on Agriculture.

No major resources have been channelled towards strengthening the extension services, which was said to be the engine room to support agricultural production and productivity. At micro level MAFS' extension department has limited staff, high extension staff to farmer ratio (more than 1: 350), lack of equipment for service delivery and coverage to needy areas. An effort to engage Lead farmers or Farmer Extension Facilitators or Care groups was a noble approach but has not been complemented or supported by trained and appropriately equipped extension staff.

2.2 The relevance of the intervention

Relevance has been measured in several ways for the two projects. Namely in terms of whether interventions are in line with Government national or regional plans/strategies, local needs and priorities, targeting and selection of project recipients, delivery modalities of project inputs and lastly in terms of the timing of the programme with beneficiary preference being the main focus.

Overall rating: Orange plus: Both projects made some progress but adjustment is required on coordination efforts, response models and project packages: 50% -75% targets achieved and relevant

2.2.1 Strategic fit and relevance of the interventions

Alignment to national strategies and regional strategies

The projects are aligned to national strategies as they are addressing emergency food security needs of people in Lesotho. They are in tandem with policy statements of the Government of Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and Ministry of Agriculture National Action Plan for Food Security that underscores the need to tackle poverty by enhancing food security. The other policies and strategies to address the food and nutrition security situation in the country include but are not limited to the Agricultural Sector Strategy (2003), the Lesotho Food Security Policy (2005) and the National Action Plan for Food Security (2007-2017). Both projects were a response to a call for external assistance to emergency situations (LFSRP) and chronic food crisis (FULL) in the country.

The dual approach of using vouchers for work and promoting income generating activities provided for short-term food security and livelihood support while directly enabling early recovery for the most vulnerable groups. This is in line with government policy that promotes productive safety nets for vulnerable households. However, coordination efforts by government need to be strengthened to ensure alignment, resourcing and integration of responses. The two projects fit very well within Irish Aid Country Strategy Paper (CSP) Mid Term Review recommendations of 2010 and the global policy which focuses on addressing hunger in developing countries. Active engagement of government in the design of the projects could have encouraged Government resource commitment.

Alignment to Meso level strategies

Improving food security by increasing production and changing the household level nutrition behaviour is a priority for the Ministry of Agriculture. Field level feedback confirms that the project interventions are positively contributing to the efforts of Government. The efforts to increase and strengthen extension services at meso and micro level are a priority to every District. Both projects made efforts to engage District level structures and relevant departments during implementation, however, District stakeholders suggested if they could actively be involved even during project design.

Beneficiaries' Needs and Priorities

The two projects were designed with strong consideration of results from various assessments; 2007 Crop and Food Supply Assessment, LVAC 2012, ECCD Rapid Assessment and DHS 2009 among others. These are very critical but on their own are not sufficient to inform the planning and design of projects that are relevant to the local context. While rapid needs assessments were conducted, community action planning was not done to inform the appropriate interventions. The communities had no basket of options on interventions rather they implemented the suggested interventions from the agencies. Public gatherings were conducted at project inception by field staff to raise awareness on the project related interventions that households could participate in.

2.2.2 Target beneficiaries

The selection of target beneficiaries for the projects relied on DMA data set that was combined with a community based targeting criteria that used wealth group categories and verification process with local leaders. This was after realising that the lists were often outdated. Some households on the lists from DMA did not meet the project criteria and this created tension when they had to be dropped off. There were however, variations in the selection criteria of target households in other the study areas. For instance in Ha Tumahole Mothae both men and women indicated that all interested were invited to join the voucher program. In 8 out of 20 councils, the selection of CA beneficiaries was viewed as lacking transparency as nomination and selection was done by leaders and other communities while in the 12 other Councils selection included an aspect

of self-targeting. Based on FGDs the selection of care group members in most areas was participatory. Transparent targeting practices were also noted for homestead gardens in the majority of councils. The participation of local leaders and extension staff in verification of operational areas and beneficiaries helped to give some credibility to the selection process. Local leaders across all sites expressed acceptance and relevance of the areas targeted by the project. They had need and recurrent and worsening insecurity of livelihoods and passionate and proactive communities that sought ways to positively change their circumstances. The target beneficiaries reached by the two projects was relatively high. The FULL project had targeted 5,900 but reached 8,265 households while LFRSP targeted 7,900 HH but managed to reach 5,668 HH. Of these direct beneficiaries, 76% were supposed to women headed households. From the survey, males (66.7%) were more of the heads of the households than females who were 33.3% across the Districts with an exception of Leribe where 40.8% were female headed households.

2.2.3 Appropriate response model (Emergency, recovery and building resilience)

The projects were responding to stressed livelihoods and declining food production in Lesotho. The complexity of the context required robust design to be effective and the interventions in their individual standing were innovative. However, the introduction of recovery within emergency renders the intervention over-ambitious and thus inappropriate. For instance LFRSP though meant for emergency, addressing the immediate situation it had long term development components which require more time for implementation. The early recovery livelihood interventions under FULL were highly relevant as they had the potential to provide the first step towards the re-building of the livelihoods of the vulnerable populations. There was however no evidence that these were part of a deliberate Early Recovery Strategy framework that is linked to a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach or to a potential FULL Phase 2 to assist vulnerable communities to identify the assets that people needed to achieve their livelihood goals.

Transfer modality preferences

In FGDs, vouchers were viewed as appropriate as they provided for short-term food security and livelihood support while directly enabling early recovery for the most vulnerable groups. However, there were divided perceptions on preference of transfer modalities. Most women groups expressed great satisfaction with the vouchers since it gave them more control over the budget and allowed them to spend income on food items. Other groups preferred a combination of cash and vouchers. They argued that the mix would enable them to satisfy both food and non-food requirements.

Free seed given for CA and homestead gardens, in the emergency context was critical to enhance production and motivate people to participate in various agricultural-related initiatives. This transfer modality was well appreciated by the beneficiaries. However, the fact that some participants expressed the need for seeds beyond project exit while others indicated that CA farmers are likely to revert back to conventional farming once the distribution of free seed stops could be an indication of the dependency. Some KI felt that there was need to provide conditional inputs so that farmers do not get used to free hand outs.

The use of cash boxes was well appreciated by SILC group members. They indicated that locked cash boxes with keys kept by three people ensured transparency. However, concerns were raised by SILC groups regarding inconsistencies on the provision of cashboxes. It was indicated that SILC members in some areas were given the cash boxes for free others on credit while in other councils groups were requested to identify local blacksmiths who would make the boxes and sell them locally. Local production and sale of cash boxes presents a business opportunity and contributes to the communities' financial assets. Lack of consistency in the transfer of boxes demotivated groups.

2.2.4 Appropriateness in terms of timing of the intervention

Key informants raised concerns on the adequacy of the timeframe allocated for implementing the projects in view of the many interventions implemented at the same time. Most felt pressured to deliver several key milestones in a short space with limited conception of the needs, changing context, delivery approaches and capacity. The late start in SILC training had ripple effects on supervision and support of groups. Limited technical understanding of the SILC methodology design standards was an apparent weakness of the projects. The late start to CA initiatives made farmers to miss the appropriate planting dates which resulted in farmers not planting at all and/or getting very low yields (less than 0.4tonnes per hectare).

2.3 The Effectiveness of the programme

Overall rating - Orange plus: Recognising efforts made to promote food, nutrition and income security initiatives using existing programming experience, community based structures and systems and adapted farming technologies, the two projects had limited time to share best-practices and lessons learned from previous interventions and among partners. Although more than 60% of the targets were achieved some project objectives were not achieved.

2.3.1 Progress on key result areas

The following table summarises progress against each of the 5 objectives and related outcomes. A table with a detailed analysis of the on the progress made is attached as Annex 6.

Table 5: Level of progress and achievement of results	
Objective	Rating
Objective 1: To increase sustainable food production of vulnerable households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children	<p>Orange Minus towards Red: Implementation strategy effective only on homestead gardens but weak on other technologies like CA which was supposed to be the major contributor to sustained food self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>50% of participating households' food needs met by own production</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Target not yet achieved with only 8.4% able to produce enough to last 12 months. Production levels recorded not significant to impact on sustained food availability with 76.9% of CA farmers harvesting cereals that last less than 5 months (less than 1 month 26.9%, 1-2: 26.9%, 3-5: 23.1% 6-8: 6.7%, 9-11: 8% 12: 8.4%). <p><i>50% of the households with OVC consume at least 3 meals per day of recommended diversity/food type</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Target achieved in survey sample with 55% consuming 3 and more meals per day though nutritional quality remains a challenge with more bias on starches.
<p>Key outcomes on objective 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 65% (2,287) were targeted to practice CA, survey sample had 53% fully and 42% partially practicing CA principles especially minimum tillage, intercropping and crop rotation. – Sampled households harvest average of 88 kg of cereal crops on CA plots in 2012/13 season. – Area allocated for CA per household reduced from ½ to ¼ acres per household due to neglect and drop out from the CA. – 6,848 households constructed homestead gardens of which 5,093 are keyhole and 704 trench gardens. – An average diversity of 3 vegetable groups produced from keyhole gardens and consumed by households for not less than 10 months. 	<p>Orange Minus: More quantitative progress made on both CA and Keyhole targets and varied achievement of qualitative aspects. Needs major restructuring, more than 50% not achieved. Basis for rating</p> <p>Positives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Willingness to practice CA and allocation of land for the purpose. – Acts by households to mobilise own resources for gardens. – Positive production practice of diverse vegetables. – Unintended replication of key hole gardens outside the target group. – Positive community views on worthiness of keyhole gardens. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 3 associations formed but without grazing plans. – Quantities (1 kg per crop) of inputs perceived too small to motivate participation by farmers. Numbers, 2,170 farmers, trained on CA too large to assure cost

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Observations made of households owning more than one key-hole garden. – Key informants reported households outside the target group replicating keyhole garden structures though expecting support with seeds. – Keyhole gardens attributed to Most Significant Change based on impact on consumption, project and non-project households practicing, and scope for operating without external assistance. – During evaluation no active matsema groups were encountered in the sampled areas. 	<p>effectiveness, especially for a pilot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The agricultural input supply strategy to transition from free inputs not developed to ensure sustainable production in the post project phase. – Lack of visibility of Matsema groups at sampled sites. – Funding cycle (up to 24 months) not adequate implementation timeframe to consult, design, introduce, pilot, learn and adapt delivery of CA for effective results. – Concerns by farmers on high labour demands for CA, a risk to sustained production. – Late delivery of agri-inputs with ripple negative effects on production planning, quality of crops and productivity. The project missed three crop production seasons (summer 2012 and 2013 and winter 2013).
<p>Objective 2: To improve the maternal, child health and nutritional (MCHN) behaviours of households with vulnerable children</p>	<p>Orange plus: Above 75% of quantitative targets achieved but qualitative assessments through KII and FGDs showed that exclusive breastfeeding, knowledge and practices in sanitation risks are still low. Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>80% of families demonstrating at least three new positive nutrition, food storage or food preparation and hygiene behaviours.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 64.9% exclusively breastfeeding for the recommended 6 months and more, 66.6% feeding under-5s recommended 4 and more meals per day, 97.5% wash hands after using latrine and before feeding children. <p><i>80% of families who contact a Community Health Worker or clinic for specified child illnesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 61% of sampled HHs used health centre for child diarrhoea treatment.
<p>Key outcomes for objective 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In the evaluated sample 66.81% of the households feeding their under-5 children with 4 or more meals per day. Only 8.03% fed once or twice a day. – 58% of respondents exclusively breast feeding last child for six months higher than the national figure of 54% for 2007 to 2011 period.³ – Most (27.2%) respondents breastfed their last child for between 19-24 months. – In the sample 11.55% of households accessing health centres in the same village, 53.63% walk one to two hours to the nearest clinic and 4.06% walk four hours and more. – 85.4% of the respondents made antenatal care visits to have safe deliveries despite the long distances. 63.4% respondents indicated that the clinics they visited had a mothers' shelters. 	<p>Orange plus: some progress and adjustment required: 50% -75% achievements of quantitative targets, significant gaps on qualitative aspects. Basis for rating:</p> <p>Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High frequency on meal feeding practices at HH level. – Efforts to practice exclusive breast feeding. – HH health seeking behaviour even with distance factors. – Positive behaviours for seeking antenatal care. – Community awareness of value of care groups. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recommended complimentary food groups for under-fives not fed due to affordability and availability. – Vegetable preservation not practiced consistently, overgrown vegetables characteristic of a number of key-hole gardens at most sampled sites. Evidence of few trainings on vegetable preservation conducted in Leribe and not in other sampled areas. – Training on positive living may have been done but this was not evident at community level.

³ UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/lesotho_statistics.html

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relatively high (35.3%) households recorded incidences of diarrhoea. Of these 61% used health centres for treatment. 39% that did not seek treatment which is a concern given the high (61.3%) prevalence of open defecation and low (24.6%) coverage of improved sanitation facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Project duration too short to accommodate the preparation and execution of behaviour change focused interventions on breastfeeding, hygiene, nutrition and health – Results of household interviews on exclusive breast feeding not consistent with focus groups where most noted that though people had the knowledge they were not practising. Reasons included lactating mothers being hungry or not eating the right combinations of food, influence of mothers-in-law and elderly care givers who did not believe in the practice and HIV/AIDS stigma associated with breastfeeding in Ramapepe council in Ha Mositi – No precise nutrition indicators at baseline which limited scope for assessing effectiveness of feeding practices
<p>Objective 3: To enhance access to financial services for vulnerable Households with Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)</p>	<p>Orange plus: 59.55% of the SILC members accessed loans and share-outs. Use of SILC for agricultural inputs still low (1.8%), potentially compromised by free input distributions. Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>70% of participating families have saved at least \$50 over the life of the project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In the surveyed HHs 59.5% had received M500 and more on last share-out <i>60% of participating households have purchased fertilizer or seed through the Community Fundraising Mechanism</i> – 1.8% of the surveyed HHs used SILC loans to buy agri-inputs and 1.6% used share-outs for the same and 1.6% used for farm implements. No recorded input procurement through CMF. CFM not visible at community level at time of evaluation.
<p>Key outcomes – assessed by evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2,083 members saving and taking loans. Fairly high, 81.4%, usage of savings for lending at September 2013. ✓ 59% of respondents had not accessed loans before SILC but now have access and is high compared to a baseline figure of 1% that had accessed a bank loan. At September MIS 56.5% of members had active loans. ✓ Increasing awareness on SILC. In the sample 32.2% (582) were members of SILC against 79% who had never heard about SILC at baseline ✓ High, 97.1%, retention of members indicating strength of appeal of SILC. ✓ SILC attributable to reduced trend in use of commercial bank accounts by households from 20.3% at baseline, 15% before project and 4.4% at evaluation. ✓ 67% of respondents belonged to groups that shared out while 33% were from groups that had not. ✓ High, 38.4%, returns on savings as at September 2013 increasing accessing to financial resources. 	<p>Orange plus: Significant progress 75%-90% of the targets achieved and relevant. Basis for rating:</p> <p>Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – High usage savings for loans meeting emergency needs. – Positive changes in loan access before and after project. – Increased community awareness of SILC. – High retention of members by SILC groups. – Evidence of SILC as alternative financial service provider. – Sharing out of group funds. – Positive returns realised from savings and loan activities. – Use of SILC loans, share outs and social fund for household productive, consumption and social needs. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Only 62 of the 149 reported active SILC groups can be accounted for and verifiable in the September 2013 SILC MIS report. MIS only being used by CARITAS. Quality of MIS needs significant improvement for effective use; age of groups or cycle not consistent with high returns and for Phamong training 39 groups on same date (12 December 2012) is not realistic. – Limited appreciation of methodology on SILC share-out by project staff and community, a risk to sustainability of groups.

	<p>– Mechanisms, VAs and PSPs, for sustained promotion of SILC introduced but not sufficiently developed.</p>
<p>Objective 4: Very poor households in Lesotho have improved access to food</p>	<p>Green: On track over 90% of the targets achieved. There was immediate and direct access to food by 99% of the target households. There was unintended introduction of new product lines by local retail outlets.</p> <p>Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>Very poor HHs increase their purchasing power</i></p> <p>– In the surveyed samples results showed that since participation in the project 36% of HHs could easily pay for household needs, 34% could pay for basic needs, 19% had more income and 10% could save some income than before.</p> <p><i>Poor and very poor HHs access agricultural inputs</i></p> <p>– 1.8% of sample HHs used SILC loans to buy agri-inputs and 1% used share-outs for the same and 1% for farm implements.</p>
<p>Key outcomes – assessed by evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 57.2% of sampled households used vouchers on food items and 26.7% on other basic household items. – New product lines (e.g., cooking oil) introduced with vouchers continue to be sold after the project ended. – Natural resource sites regenerate vegetation and springs yield water after recovery of degraded lands. 	<p>Green: On Track: Over 90% of the targets achieved. Key basis for rating:</p> <p>Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use of vouchers for intended purpose and need. – Satisfaction of end users and vendors. – Functionality of market system during and after intervention. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vendors were trained on pricing although some were accused of increasing prices.
<p>Objective 5: Poor and very poor HHs in Lesotho have increased resilience to future food crises</p>	<p>Orange plus towards Orange minus: Some progress of 50-75% achieved on some targets but some were not achieved as 61.9% that were engaged in CA harvested cereals that lasted for less than 5 months (less than 1 month 15.5%, 1-2: 23.3%, 3-5: 23.3% 6-8: 16.6%, 9-11: 2.5% 12: 17.8%). Assessment of indicators:</p> <p><i>Very poor HHs increase their consumption of diverse foods</i></p> <p>– Project sites sampled (Mokhotlong, Quthing, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Qacha's Nek) recorded 10 food groups consumed by HHs. Across the sites the most mentioned being cereals/starches (18-22% range), vegetables (18-20%), oils/fats (15-18%) and sugar/sugar products (11-14%).</p> <p><i>Farming households increasingly adopt CA</i></p> <p>– Only less than 10% fully practised all aspects of CA, 52.2% partially practised the three CA principles they were taught, 32% practiced some aspects of the three CA principles, 2.7% were knowledgeable but not engaged and 3.1% were not engaged at all or had no knowledge.</p> <p><i>Expand the provision of savings-led microfinance services in project areas</i></p> <p>– The surveyed HHs had 3.4% using savings led financial services before project and 54.6% were using these after project.</p>
<p>Key outcomes – assessed by evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 8,419 of targeted 8,770 households constructed key hole gardens 	<p>Orange plus towards Orange minus: Some progress and adjustment required: 50% - 75% achieved. Key basis for rating:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 36.6% of households use SILC loans to buy food. 36.4% of members that shared out used money to buy food. – 57.9% received shares equivalent to US\$50 (M500) and above against a target of US\$50. – Worth of SILC service varied with (-) 5.3% drop-out in Bobete and none in Lesobeng. Low drop-out rate indicates worth of service to members. – Mixed, but generally average, savings utilization by groups with Bobete recording 77.8% and Lesobeng 20.1% at September 2013 MIS. – Mixed retention of members by groups Bobete registering 75.8% and Lesobeng 100% (Sept 2013 MIS). – Varied by still high returns being earned from savings by groups and members with Bobete groups obtaining 52.7% return on savings and Lesobeng 30.7% (Sept 2013 MIS). – Mixed effective participation of members in lending with Bobete having 74.3% members with loans outstanding while Lesobeng has 33.3% (Sept 2013 MIS). 	<p>Positives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Willingness to practice CA and allocate land for the purpose. – Commitment of households to mobilise own resources for gardens. – Positive production of diverse vegetables by HHs. – Replication of keyhole gardens outside the target group. – Positive community views on worthiness of keyhole gardens. – Fairly high usage savings for loans in Bobete. – Changes in loan access before and after project. – Community awareness on SILC. – High retention of SILC members by groups in Lesobeng and average in Bobete. – Evidence of SILC as alternative financial service provider. – Sharing out of group funds. – Positive and high returns realised from savings and loan activities. – Use of SILC loans, share outs and social fund for food and agri-inputs. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SILC MIS not reliable as at September 100% of groups in Bobete were formed between January 2008 and 30 January 2012 and Lesobeng group formed 6 December 2012 before commencement of project. – Groups trained late in 2013 sharing out too early (Dec 2013) not realising much benefit. Without post training support and motivation such groups could drop-out. – CARITAS has started forming SILC groups while the same cannot be shown for RSDA and Seremula. – Practicing of keyhole and CA still heavily driven by expectations and availability of free inputs to guarantee resilience building post project. – September 2013 MIS only has 14 groups (Bobete, 13 and Lesobeng 1) with 750 members participating. – Evidence of SILC groups formed but not adequately supported to complete the recommended cycle. – Low utilization of savings for lending in Lesobeng. – Low retention of members by groups in Bobete.
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2.3. Consortium implementation and delivery strategy

The consortium has been effective in national level interagency meetings and providing an administrative platform for negotiating funding contracts and channelling funding. Delays in negotiating contracts and receipt of funding at some level of the consortium were indicators of ineffectiveness and so is the lack of collective action, cross learning and standardized approaches on same interventions such as SILC.

2.3.4 Technical support provided to implementing partners

CRS built the capacity of field staff from local NGO partners and Ministry of Agriculture in CA, homestead gardens and Essential Nutrition Actions. Partner staff were applying the “three principles of CA”; minimum soil disturbance, mulching and crop rotation. Limited awareness was seen on adaptation to local context, timeliness of activities and management of weeds. The projects enabled field extension staff from MAFS to extend services to previously excluded communities. Resource capacity limitations remain the challenge for MAFS with an average of 1 extension worker to 350 farmers and extremes of 1 to 1,500 farmers in Leribe. Strengthening Government systems is imperative for the effectiveness of capacity building.

The delivery of SILC training varied in the consortium. CARE and CRS either used their own staff, village agents, field agents and Private Services Providers in line with best practice. World Vision trained representatives, mostly leaders, of groups that were expected to train other community members. This approach has not been tested, was not structured, did not have the right support mechanisms and compromised group dynamics. Knowledge gaps were seen in sharing out, calculation of interest and savings systems.

The PSP model for SILC has promise for success but was not given adequate time to be tested and adapted for its effectiveness to Lesotho. PSPs were being certified in areas where either partner staff or VAs had already saturated the market narrowing the operating space.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The projects collaborated with Community Councils, MAFS Extension Officers, MOHSW staff and Community Health Workers to guarantee support and build sustainable mechanisms. Key District, council and village level leaders participated in inception and orientation meetings and supported implementation by guiding community mobilisation. The Community leaders however, lamented that their role should not be relegated to mobilisation but be trained in order to be more resourceful to the projects.

2.3.6 Critical success factors for early recovery livelihood

The following conditions were necessary if sustainability of the assets and impact of the livelihood interventions were to be achieved in the short term to long term;

Building on existing projects: Successful components were building on previous and other on-going practice for which communities had some awareness and confidence.

Interventions that offer immediate benefits to communities: address their most pressing challenges which builds trust; examples include Keyhole gardens, SILC and the vouchers.

Community participation and ownership: Assessments were used to understand the needs of communities but defining the types of interventions to address the needs was led by NGOs. Households and key informants expressed the need for communities to participate in defining and planning interventions. Examples were given on varieties and packaging of inputs received

under CA and key hole gardens that were regarded as inappropriate and affecting effectiveness. Though sampled households received conditional vouchers 49% preferred unconditional vouchers compared to 39% for conditional vouchers. The voucher programme supported community efforts and ownership of the management of natural resources. In all surveyed sites communities decided on the natural resources they rehabilitated which most FGDs and KII felt enhanced ownership of associated processes. In Ha Tumahole and Quthing even after the voucher programme communities continued working on soil and water conservation activities out of their own motivation and organization.

Use of local resources: allows for appeal and easy participation by households, tends to be cheaper, and ensures ready access and long term maintenance and sustainability which have been the case with Keyhole gardens and Soil and Water Conservation initiatives.

Designing realistic implementation timeframes for livelihood interventions: to complete all necessary activities in the life of the project unless there is certainty on continuity of support through new or on-going projects, other community mechanisms or Government support systems.

Links to government policy: by project interventions creating pathways for Government and Local Authorities taking a lead in training, supervision and extension support. The resource capacity and limitations of Government will need to be factored.

Projects with greater scope of impact in more than one livelihood area drive more long term interest from communities. Soil and water conservation works not only preserved the environment but allowed for regeneration of vegetation and enabled previously dried-up springs to have water flow again.



Figure 2: NRM site Ha Tumahole in Thaba Tseka

Access to reliable appropriate extension and business support services: for smooth operations, adherence to best practice and sustainability. In all sites technical support on homestead gardens was readily available. More than 75% of the WVL and RSDA sites did not have post training support for SILC and groups were not very active.

Buy-in of key stakeholders: Using local leaders and community structures in delivering services allows for confidence building among communities and support during implementation. Communities trust their leaders, FEFs and Lead farmers, village agents, local traders and agro-dealers as they had established relations before the projects.

Although in the project design both projects had identified the critical success factors but the application was weak in terms of timing, consistency, depth and completeness and adherence to best practice. Table 6 below summarises some of the interventions from the two projects that meet the critical success factors discussed above.

Table 6: Assessment of the two projects against each CSF			
Success factor	Example of interventions	Project	
		FULL	LFRSP
Building on existing projects	Key hole	+	+
Interventions that offered immediate benefits to communities	Keyhole gardens	+	+
	Voucher/NRM.	N/A	+
	SILC	+	+
Community participation and ownership	Voucher/NRM	N/A	+
	CA	-	-
Use of local resources	Keyhole gardens	+	+
	Vouchers/NRM	N/A	+
Designing realistic implementation timeframes for livelihood interventions	Voucher/NRM	N/A	+
	Key hole	+	-
	SILC	-	-
Relevant response mechanism	Emergency	N/A	+
	Recovery	+	+
	Resilience	-	N/A
Access to reliable appropriate extension and business support services	Key hole gardens	+	+
	CA	-	-
	SILC	+	-
Buy-in of key stakeholders		+	+

2.4 Efficiency issues in the programme

This section focuses on operational efficiency and budget absorption.

Overall rating: Orange plus towards orange minus: Adequate funding levels and human resources but budget underspends for critical direct costs like purchase of inputs and adherence to implementation plans were affected by delays in contract negotiation and technical inefficiencies.

2.4.1 Human Resources and Technical efficiency

CRS partnered Caritas, Serumula, and RSDA to maximise reach to local communities, avoid duplication and to leverage resources. The partners have reputation in community mobilisation, existing presence in the target districts and experience in most of the livelihood zones. Clear structures were set for key project management positions from national level (coordinator) to district level (project officers one for each district and project sites). Most partners demonstrated justification for their selection though their varied performance on the different components is a concern.

The objective to increase sustainable food production of vulnerable households had a number of technical inefficiencies attributed to;

- Delays in contract negotiation and communication on status of funding that led to delays in disbursement of project funds, and late start to project implementation, inability to implement some components (e.g. SILC and CA) fully and adoption of inefficient training approaches for

SILC. Inputs were distributed late after the planting seasons for winter 2013 and summer 2013/14 for FULL. The LFSRP only started in March 2013 instead of October 2012 also missing a cropping season. Farmers in the Mountain zones did not plant the distributed seeds. Other farmers continued with the conventional farming practices. Only partners that could pre-finance activities and inputs were able to get inputs to farmers on time.

- Comparatively the partners distributed few and insignificant quantities of agricultural inputs especially maize and wheat (1kg) to households. Farmers saw these as not commensurate with the labour efforts they had committed and the other conventional farming methods. Some did not commit their resources to the CA plot leading to inability to manage weeds and poor crops.
- CA plots were poorly sited in unprotected zones where open grazing is common which led farmers to lose the mulch and the basins after harvest. This demanded labour to dig new basins annually prompting most farmers to complain that CA is too labour intensive and some farmers abandoning or neglecting their plots.

These challenges contributed to poor programming efficiency.

2.4.2 Planning for efficient and effective use of project resources

The performance of any project is significantly influenced by planning of implementation. Some project activities were spread too thinly with high risks of compromising efficiency. The WVL approach of training only community representatives from different villages resulted in many groups being formed but spread over extensive areas where the organization did not have the capacity to monitor. By the time of evaluation some groups trained in June and October 2013 in Quthing and Mafeteng had not been monitored which is against best practice.

Operational and cost inefficiencies increase for a partner who implements a pilot initiative that mobilises, supports and monitors 150 CA farmers issued with one kilogram worth of seed and spread over a geographically expansive area with challenging terrain. This is because the intervention requires very close and intense monitoring, testing, learning and adaptation.

2.4.3 Systems of tracking and evaluating the project

All the three Consortia Leaders, (CARE, WV and CRS) had clearly defined M&E Frameworks with detailed quantitative and qualitative indicators. In addition they also had their own internal processes such as, technical guidance from their Headquarters, monthly and quarterly reviews which contributed to regular adaptations of M&E plans and internal learning. However, there was little or no attempt to draw on some of the internal initiatives to influence the best practices in both projects.

The midterm review for the FULL project was conducted to assess project progress and achievement of planned results to date, discuss identified gaps, challenges, and adaptations. Based on the findings of the review, Irish Aid and CRS agreed on an extension of the project from April 2013 to October 2013 to enable completion of some of the key project activities. Setting up of an M&E group as part of the reference group at national level was a strategy to allow learning and improve tracking of project results but this did not cascade down to meso and micro levels.

2.4.3 Budget absorption and expenditure pattern

Disbursements of project funds from donors were done on time during the initial phase of the FULL project as agreed by CRS and IA. However, budget revisions during the second year and contract negotiations for the LFSRP from both IA and OFDA were delayed. CRS and partners requested a no cost extension from October 2013 to February 2014 for FULL. The consolidated

IA and OFDA contribution to the project as outlined in the Financing Agreement and the draw down against this budget is provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Project Budget Expenditure				
Budget Line	Budget as per agreement (USD)	Actual expenditure to date (USD)	% spent to date	Comment on timing (advanced from own resources, on time, late or very late)
FULL				
Personnel	338,562.19	354,997.31	105	late
Fringe Benefits	94,785.74	104,287.21	110	Pre-financed
Travel and Transportation	61,065.38	114,095.66	187	Late
Contractual and Subawards	446,173.62	358,394.52	80	on time
Other Direct Costs	297,412.52	255,999.32	86	Prefinance in Year 1 but Very late in final year
Indirect Costs	99,039.95	69,408.37	70	Late
SUB TOTAL	1,337,039.40	1,257,182.39	94	Late
LFSRP				
Personnel	266,003.00	193,015.36	73	Late
Fringe Benefits	75,405.00	66,714.29	88	Late
Travel and Transportation	58,848.00	63,775.21	108	Late
Contractual and Subawards	717,658.00	453,755.41	63	Late
Operational Expenses	-	0.00	0	Late
Other Direct Costs	787,333.94	645,630.18	82	Late
Indirect Costs	157,755.00	\$64,102.40	41	Late
SUB TOTAL	2,063,002.94	1,486,992.85	72	
OFDA				
Personnel	109,250.00	75,064.12	69	late
Fringe Benefits	34,106.41	30,088.43	88	late
Travel and Transportation	19,595.54	11,272.79	58	late
Contractual and Subawards	732,151.36	381,660.30	52	late
Other Direct Costs	69,533.53	19,478.47	28	very late
Indirect Costs	34,159.16	23,465.41	69	late
SUB TOTAL	998,796.00	541,029.52	54	
GRAND TOTAL OFDA& IA	4,398, 838.00			

FULL: The project's bottom line is underspent by only 6%. Specific line items underspent with significant impact on the budget burn-rate are *Contractual and Sub-awards* and *Other Direct Costs* underspent by 14% and 20% respectively.

LFSRP: The project is the most underspent by 34% on the budget bottom line. The budget line item with the most significant impact on the burn rate is the *Contractual and Sub-awards* where 37% (OFDA/IA) and 48% (OFDA) was not spent.

For both projects the impact of changes in the currency exchange rates on budget burn rates were cited as the main reasons for under spends but there was no substantive evidence of trends in rates during the period. The most significant budget lines underspent directly relate to operations which, considering the delays on some activities and unaccomplished milestones reflects on the inability of the Consortia to absorb the funds available. In the case where delays in signing contracts were experienced the consortia needed to be proactive and transparent on

the technical feasibility for efficient and effective delivery of components within the reduced timeframe at the point of signing.

Among others the reasons for the no cost extension was the need to ensure the evaluation is done while Field staff were in operational areas and for the purposes of using unspent project funds. Despite the no cost extension the partners were not able to exhaust their budgets.

2.4.4 Level of achievement of results within set time frame

When quantitative measures are applied to assess achievement of results the project significantly achieved and over-achieved on several output targets. These include ECCD training, training of CHW, Care group training, homestead garden training and CA training. In some cases such as Leribe and Mokhotlong the project exceeded its output targets and could not service some farmers that had prepared keyhole gardens while they awaited receipt of inputs.

Delay in contract negotiations and subsequent effects on staffing and operations led to the consortium not fully completing implementation of some activities. Below 50% accomplishment of targets is noted for training in SILC (LFSRP and OFDA) and households who prepared for CA (LFSRP) and construction of homestead gardens (LFSRP). At the time of evaluation some training activities had been completed as late as October/November 2013 with no certainty on whether and how post training support and follow-up would be provided. The quality of the trained communities or groups will not be the same as those that received full support.

2.4.5 Overall cost versus the benefit:

This evaluation was not able to assess this component for the following reasons;

- The data available was on actual expenditure figures but to assess the benefits there was need to track and analyse the household income and expenditure attributed to the project and starting with a particular intervention type right from the onset of the projects. For example for a household with keyhole gardens we would need to get how much they used to spend on vegetables and what they are spending now which helps to determine what they are now saving to get a net benefit in financial terms. A project might have spent M211 to reach a household but monthly that same household is saving M40 from buying vegetables which has to be discounted or factored in the analysis. If they are selling the produce we would need to get the patterns and sales figures which we also provide for in the analysis of the benefit. This will need to be done for each component to be useful. We can then derive an overall project figure from the individual components.
- There was need to split between households or groups that received the full support from those that did not receive the full support in the analysis. It will be unfair to determine the absence of a benefit by lumping a WV group that was not properly supported together with a CARITAS group that received the full support. If costs can be split to that detail then we can support the inefficiency of cost application to the benefit a group and household level.
- Given this scenario the evaluation is only able to provide a crude analysis of using the expenditure against the numbers reached but this is not reliable and useful.

Project	Actual Expenditure	HHs reached	Direct beneficiaries	Cost/HH	Cost/Individual
FULL	1 257 182.39	5 959	29 795	211	42
LFSRP	2 028 022.37	5 668	28 340	358	79

2.4.6 Sustainability of cost of the interventions

This varied from one project component to the other. For the voucher component the cost is being sustained by local traders as they have been able to continue offering goods using market channels without support from the project. Households with enhanced income can buy these goods. Non-participating households also benefit from the new products introduced by the local traders.

Keyhole gardens have been replicated by households not targeted by the projects, which is a good indicator for sustainability if no free inputs are given. There were reports from KIIs of households that in the second cycle used their own inputs on keyhole gardens.

For other elements conclusive analysis and commentary is not possible. PSPs and CA have not been fully tested using best practice. All PSPs and CA initiatives still require project support because only a few principles had been applied. A good example is on the PSPs where no group had paid for the services of PSPs which is supposed to be the norm and point at which sustainability of the project cost can be determined. Some groups that claimed to have been trained by PSPs had at the time of evaluation not completed full SILC cycle to determine if they meet the minimum standards and effectiveness of PSPs.

2.5 Contribution towards impact

Orange plus towards orange minus: Small scale interventions like homestead gardens and SILC initiatives were a good foundation for starting self-sustaining initiatives in the short term however own production levels and productivity remain low. Ensuring long term, sustaining the impact and ensuring consistency of quality of change remain critical.

2.5.1 Availability and accessibility of food

Through keyhole gardens households have direct and ready access to and consumption of diversified vegetables throughout the year. Households no longer depend on purchased vegetables but own production. Most owners of keyhole gardens who are saving on buying vegetables are able to divert the savings to buy other food varieties they cannot grow. 36.6% of households used SILC loans to buy food. Availability of vegetables is only an intermediary result and more investigations are required to understand the impact on the nutrition status of households. The projects had positive impact on stigma associated with keyhole gardens in Khotso-se-Metsi. Initial belief was that they were meant to provide food needs only for HIV/AIDS affected households. This was based on a previous project that had only promoted keyhole gardens for households affected by HIV/AIDS.



Figure 3: Trench garden in Bobete

2.5.2 Access to financial services

SILC has enabled members to access financial services to improve the well-being of their households. SILC loans have been used to address household social or consumption needs with a significant 17.4% using on school fees and 23.6% on non-food items.

Table 8 : Percentage distribution for on use SILC loan in the 8 Districts

	Use of SILC loans											Total
	Medic al/he alth expe nses	Buy food	Hous ehold non-food items (soap s)	Pay ing deb ts	Buy agricu ltural inputs	Farm imple ment s	Start an IGAs/l nvest ment	Scho ol fees	Family celebra tions	Homestea d improveme nt	Other(s pecify)	
Total	7.2	36.6	23.6	4.2	1.8	1.9	2.3	17.4	1.6	1.1	2.5	100.0

A key informant extension worker recited what is believed to be a common statement from SILC members:

“We no longer have stress for school fees as we can use SILC to cover these needs.”

SILC was having indirect and direct impacts on food availability. Besides buying food other members have used loans to buy agri-inputs (1.8%) and farm implements (1.9%). These were regarded as essential in timely planting and enabling improved food production by households. SILC members whose groups shared-out have mostly used the money on food (36.6%) and non-food items (23.6 %).

SILC has improved awareness on the importance of savings by households. This has seen diversification of savings mechanisms used by households after the introduction of the SILC component; savings and credit cooperatives (6.8% before to 28.5% after SILC), and other local community groups (9% before to 23.6% after SILC). Savings in the house declined from 64.8%

before SILC to 25.4% after SILC. The diversity of savings mechanisms improves the resilience of households. No strong savings culture had been observed at baseline.

Key informant and FGDs expressed the importance of the SILC social fund in assisting members with grants to address social needs avoiding reliance on more risky coping mechanisms.

2.5.3 Changes in income

In designing LFSRP and FULL potential was seen in household generating income “from the sale of surplus crops to meet other food and non-food needs”. Evidence on this could not be obtained as owners could not recall any recent, with the last 60 days, sales figures. The small size of the gardens means production may be sufficient for own consumption without excess for sale. In most villages every household has a garden which limits the local marketing opportunities. Bad road infrastructure, limited volumes produced and lack of farmer organization limits the scope for accessing external markets.

2.5.4 MNCH practices

Nutritional status of mothers and children

The projects had a positive impact on household level dietary diversity. More than 60% of the surveyed households had access to more than four food groups per day, 27.7% three food groups, 8.2% with one and 4.1% with two. Despite the diversity the diets for most households were based mainly on energy dense, but micronutrient poor starchy staples. Of the food groups consumed the most mentioned by households were cereals (97%) and vegetables (94%) and oils and fats (82%). The percentage of households consuming micronutrient rich food groups such as meat (37%), milk (34%) and fruits (10%) was very low. Though not an adequate measure the dietary diversity points to intermediate changes attributable to the projects. Applying the FAO Household food consumption scores (see Annex for explanation on the score) showed the following for the sampled households:

Less than 21: Poor dietary diversity = 6.9 percent of households

22- 44: Borderline/ Fair dietary diversity= 22.2 percent of households

Above 44: Acceptable dietary diversity= 70.9 percent of households

Hygiene practices

Proxy indicators point to positive changes being made through hygiene education provided by Care Groups. 97.5% of the respondents washed hands after using the latrine and before feeding children. Access to water is not be a barrier to safe hygiene practices as survey results show that 81.7 % of the households used improved water points which is higher than the national rural coverage of 73% in 2011.⁴ Most water points are accessible with 5.8% of households collecting water in their yards and 59.6% accessing water points between 5 to 15 minutes.

⁴ According to WHO/UNICEF the Joint Monitoring Programme for WASH <http://www.wssinfo.org/data-estimates/table/>

Child Care Feeding Practices

Positive changes are being seen on some aspects of dietary intake following the comprehensive approach to feeding adopted by the projects in promoting nutrition health services and keyhole gardens. Training provided by Care Groups improved household feeding practices; with the majority (66.81%) having under-5 children consuming four and above meals per day.

Table 9: Percentage average meals consumed by children under the age of 5 in 8 Districts

	Average meals consumed						Total (%)
	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four times	More than four times	None	
Total number	14	61	233	215	409	2	934
Total (%)	1.50	6.53	24.95	23.02	43.79	0.21	100

Complementary feeding remains a challenge despite the majority (70%) of households not having experienced food shortage in past 30 days. In focus groups there was acknowledgement that training on complementary feeding was delivered but this was not being practised. The recommended complementary feeds were not being provided children were being fed maize meal (*papa*), leafy vegetables, vegetable broth and sour porridge. This is significantly different and of lower nutritional composition and diversity than what is obtained from the DHS 2009 “fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin A (63 percent); meat, fish, poultry, and eggs (46 percent); and foods made from grains (28 percent).⁵ Non availability of some food groups (e.g. potatoes, peanut butter, carrots) and limited income was attributed to inability to provide complementary feeds.

Safe Motherhood

Care seeking behaviour by mothers is positive despite the time demands to access services.

Table 10: Percentage distribution of households by distance to the nearest health centre

	Distance to health centre(in hours)						Total
	Within the same village	Outside but 1-2 hours away	Outside >2-3 hours away	Outside >3-4 hours away	Outside >4-5 hours away	Outside >5 hours	
Total number	205	952	418	128	34	38	1775
Total (%)	11.55	53.63	23.55	7.21	1.92	2.14	100

A significant percentage (68.8%) of husbands and partners accepted HIV testing after counselling.

Breastfeeding practices

Awareness on breastfeeding practices has been created despite the contestation practice. To increase and sustain change there is still significant work needed to address beliefs and attitudes targeting lactating mothers and other community groups; with HIV/AIDS stigma and practices of lactating mothers being key targets.

⁵ DHS, pp141

'Initially HIV+ mothers were the ones who were encouraged to exclusively breastfeed since it was argued that other supplementary foods would be detrimental to their children. This made exclusive breastfeeding unpopular because people associated it with the virus. On the other hand mothers started to fear that if they breast fed exclusively they will be labelled as positive'

Elderly caregivers blamed lactating mothers for practices that do not produce breast milk.

..... When we were breastfeeding we used to remain indoors and just focus on the child for three months. Nowadays young mothers, even those who have people to help them do not want to give their children full attention and this affects the quantity of breast milk because the more you feed a child the more milk is produced'.

'Porridge helps lactating mothers to produce sufficient milk. However they do not like it and associate it with big stomach'.

2.5.5 NRM and Vouches

Visible positive indicators of the NRM component included restored land which is greening again, springs that had dried-up now yielding water, structures that have remained intact and behaviour change by livestock herders who were motivated to protect conservation structures

Contribution to access to food by vulnerable households: More than 1600 received vouchers which made communities to buy food and non-food items which were scarce during the crisis period. Focus group participants also indicated that vouchers had made a positive impact on their livelihoods and helped resolve money-related conflicts within households.

2.6 Potential and conditions for sustainability of the project

This section goes beyond the established results and aims to help inform CRS and partners to put in place mechanisms for ensuring functionality, maintenance and management of the initiatives that have been supported. Assessment of sustainability hinged on an analysis of the mechanisms and systems that the projects put in place to ensure both the sustainability of the asset and the intended benefits derived from it. The projects had varied sustainability mechanisms in the design including those that were community driven, handing over to other agencies and special structures emerging from the project.

The sustainability measures of the project that were assessed include:

2.6.1 Mechanisms for phasing over to communities

Various components of the projects had community based mechanism to which some of the project functions were to be phased over and some had already started. The community based structures include Lead Farmers, Farmer Extension facilitators, Village Agents and Private Service Providers, matsema groups and Nutrition Clubs. The infusion of lead farmers who are

supported by ward based extension staff into the project activities was one of the key strengths of this project. Only a few among extension workers, village agents, FEFs and lead farmers were aware that they were part of the sustainability mechanism of the projects. A good practice is to create awareness on sustainability mechanisms among key stakeholders from inception and consistently during the life of a project. Other community based mechanisms like use of PSPs and VAs for continued implementation of project activities had not been sufficiently tested to determine their capacity and readiness. Both VAs and PSPs were still being supported by the project. Once trained, SILC groups are expected to function independently.

FAO and Extension Officers produced a CA handbook which has technical information on agronomic practices as reference material and 'how to do' manual. These can be produced and distributed to farmers. This knowledge may complement the extension training conducted by the Extension Workers.

The Voucher programme was implemented through local markets allowing for continued access to goods and functionality of market systems. The use of local vendors will allow continued supply of goods locally. The vendors can easily apply pricing skills received from training facilitated by the project. New product varieties from the voucher programme are now part of regular stock with vendors. Rehabilitated community natural assets have motivated communities to continue working on select days on new sites without expectation for payment.

For CA and key-hole gardens access to inputs is key for continued practice. In most project sites inputs are not readily accessible and expensive. No post-project input supply mechanism had been put in place.

2.6.2 Resource generation by communities for continuous operation of the initiatives:

Community fundraising mechanisms for the FULL project that were developed in Leribe were innovative ways for beneficiaries to generate income to buy inputs for the keyhole gardens. 30.2% of SILC members planned to continue practicing the methodology after the project. The September 2013 MIS only reports on 62 supervised groups with total assets worth US\$26,096. Some of the groups have not been monitored but have continued to function without support from the project. A fairly high, 81.4%, of the assets were in loans in people. Return on savings at time of reporting was 38.4% which is high and clearly in excess of interest rates that could be offered by other financial services providers.

2.6.3 Phasing over or linkage to other on-going or future projects:

These are mechanisms designed as exit strategies and expected to sustainably function beyond the project. Except for CARE which had a clear strategy of absorbing some project components in the upcoming MICA II project in Quthing, the rest of the organisations had a list of existing and on-going projects in the Districts but no clear mechanisms of phasing over. Examples of potential projects for phasing over or linkage included; WVL's ADPs, Government's Rural Finance Intermediate Programme (RUFIP) and MICA II in which CRS is a Consortium member.

At activity level the projects worked with Agricultural Extension Services but there was no strategic focus on institutional strengthening. The expectation that Extension Services would continue supporting farmers is over ambitious given the current capacity limitations of the unit. The current Extension staff to farmer ratio is more than 1:350. The projects needed a phase where the sustainability mechanisms would be tested for effectiveness with monitoring, supervision and certification by partners. The chances of most project interventions for both projects not being able to continue are therefore very high unless alternative funding

mechanism is in place. The suggested handover strategy to existing government departments and local structures does not have a formalised protocol, referral system and terms of handover required for taking full responsibility and accountability to future project outcomes.

2.6.4 Checklist for estimating sustainability

Sustainability is not an event in itself, but, rather a process. It is a set of conditions which need to be met on an ongoing basis to ensure the desired outcomes. The different conditions that were identified as necessary to ensure sustainability of livelihood interventions were used to develop a checklist for estimating sustainability. The checklist is based on a crude judgment of giving a “+” when the condition was assessed to have been in place; a “-” when the condition was not in place; a “+/-” when it was there for some and not there for others and an “n” when it was not applicable. During project evaluation, this checklist was used to determine if all the conditions necessary for sustainability were included for each intervention.

Table 11: Checklist for estimating sustainability						
Condition for sustainability	Rating for each intervention					Overall Assessment
	CA	HG	SIL C	VFW	NRM	
Ownership	-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Most CA plots neglected and/ or left fallow – HH have access to a diverse range of vegetables from gardens – In most NRM sites communities have continued to work without any conditional transfers – HH able to access food and non-food items during the peak hunger periods
Ability to meet maintenance costs	+/-	+	+	+/-	+/-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CA viewed as labour intensive. ✓ SILC savings used to buy
Realistic timeframe for implementation	-	+	+/-	+/-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Time frame for implementation too short for CA & NRM ✓ Further back up support required for SILC, NRM
Linked to other programmes	-	+	+/-	-	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No clear mechanisms to link with other on-going programmes
Environmentally friendly	+	+	n	+	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All interventions promote restoration of degraded lands
Use of local resources	+/-	+	+	+/-	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unable to source sufficient agric-inputs for CA plots
Access to extension or business support	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Limited access to Extension services due to a high Extension to farmer ratio. ✓ Limited input supply chain for CA & KHG
suits local context/conditions	-	+	+	+	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Local conditions limit application of all CA principles.

3. Conclusions and Lessons

The following section outlines some broad conclusions made by the survey team using the information gathered across the evaluation areas. These in turn lead into some focused lessons emerging from both conclusions and the data gathered.

1. Short term humanitarian interventions provide a good foundation for linking recovery to self-sustaining development programming, however in these two projects there was absence of a comprehensive response that links emergency, recovery and long term development initiatives at macro, meso and micro levels.
2. The key ingredients for a comprehensive response programme include;
 - a. investment in national prediction mechanisms, preparedness and response capacities
 - b. Integrated livelihood components defined by the project beneficiaries rather than the technocrats. A focused programme with clear integrated project components will avoid stand-alone projects.
 - c. Wider and intensive joint planning and coordination mechanisms for buy-in by stakeholders
 - d. A clear system for tracking and sharing of results
3. There was limited cross learning and complementarity among consortium members due to scattered programming or operating in isolation at micro and meso level. This was because at these two levels there were no clear protocols, referral system and Terms of References (TORs) to promote complementarity and linkage.
4. The duration of the humanitarian support was generally very short for LFSRP project and effective implementation period was reduced from twelve months to less than six months. The year-on-year funding arrangements have a negative effect on continuity of initiatives, especially when funding does not match the cycle of operation.
5. Climate change remains a real threat to the lives of people dependent on agricultural related initiatives. Most CA plots were affected by shocks such as drought, early frost and flash floods. Four degrees of warming are projected for this century⁶. Adaptation to climate variability and change offers a means of assessing and responding to potential impacts. Climate change sensitive interventions like adaptive farming practices, adaptive farming calendars, improved seeds and flood prevention and response were not mainstreamed.
6. The provision of inputs over the years by different agencies using approaches and methods that reinforce dependency on external sources have made communities to be in the waiting mode and have weakened innovation. Dependency on free hand-outs in the project is high as evidenced by some CA plots and Keyhole gardens not having been planted because people were waiting for 'promised agricultural inputs'.
7. Low CA acceptance levels have been attributed to applying the CA principles without overlaying them to the local context and the drought that made it difficult to preparation CA basins as the ground was too hard.

⁶CGIAR Research program on Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).Unlocking the potential of social learning for climate change and food security: Wicked problems and non-traditional solutions. 2013

8. The voucher programme was successful as it used existing and functional market systems to address household food needs.

4.0 Recommendations

Table 12: Main recommendations

Issue	Recommendation
MACRO LEVEL	
1. Development of a comprehensive response model to food insecurity	To ensure linkage and integration of emergency, early recovery and long development programming, the DMA and other stakeholders should conduct harmonised country context assessments that provide clear trends that inform different responses to food insecurity. Building on existing information sources on household vulnerability, an integrated context analysis will provide extra layers of information on historical trends of food security, nutrition, and shocks with other information such as land degradation, roads, markets, etc., to identify priority areas of intervention and appropriate programme strategies. This will complement FAO's 3W meant to identify synergies and complementarities in responding to different situations.
2. Funding cycle for early recovery interventions	For sustainability of early recovery livelihood interventions to be achieved, CRS and others should advocate for donor funding that is predictable, flexible, untied and appropriate in duration. The intervention should match the funding cycle or be phased in such a manner that the remaining activities will be completed by the following funding cycles.
3. Improving the performance of the Consortium	While recognising the critical role played by the Consortium in bringing different actors to respond to the food security crisis in the country, there may be need to strengthen; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sharing and learning of best practices among Consortium members. This includes M&E frameworks and best practices for each of the intervention supported. ✓ Complementarity, synergy and linkage of interventions based on comparative advantage. There is still need to shift from operating in isolation at District level to complimenting each other's effort.
4. Buy-in and commitment by government	Recognising the mistrust between government and NGOs in Lesotho, it may be advisable that the Consortium together with UN agencies take effort to nurture the relations with government. This is likely to take time but knowledge sharing platforms such as the Interest Group, CAADP processes and the Food Sector Coordination Forum should continue to be used to advocate for a shift from fragmented to joint planning.
5. Government Resource allocation in food and nutrition sector	Recognising that government resourcing prioritises programmes that have a subsidy component e.g. Block farming. Engaging government should be a prerequisite at the time of project design if commitment and resource allocation is to be influenced by development players.
6. Production and dissemination of reference materials and manuals	To avoid generic programming pitfalls and promote continuous spread of knowledge for successful interventions in Lesotho, a collective effort is required to produce and disseminate easy to read or illustrative reference materials already developed e.g. CA, SILC, KHG Guides.
7. Mainstreaming cross cutting issues	Recognising that mainstreaming of cross cutting issues still remains in project design documents, there is need to have a rigorous follow up of cross cutting issues during implementation.

MESO or DISTRICT LEVEL	
8. Better coordination and partnership at District level	To effectively respond to food insecurity crisis, it may be advisable that each district develops an Early Recovery Strategy framework using meso level planning and coordination tools such as Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP) This will help the Districts to develop multiple-year and multi-sectoral plans that indicates what needs to done in a bad year (emergency), typical year (Early recovery) and good year (development or investment year). The Local government as the responsible authority should take the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of these plans.
MICRO LEVEL or PROGRAMMING	
9. Improving ownership and maintenance of initiatives	There is need to go beyond conducting rapid needs assessments to community based visioning in order to inform the relevant and priority interventions by the target beneficiaries.
10. Making communities integrate the different initiatives	Recognising that integration and linkage of livelihood components are only reflected in project designs, efforts should be made by support organisations to make local communities be able to integrate the different livelihood components that can transform their lives. As an example the communities should be able to articulate how SILC savings may enable purchase of inputs required for CA and Keyhole gardens and how NRM initiatives may increase productivity in CA plots and reliability of water sources for Keyhole gardens.
11. Free hand-outs of inputs	Conditional transfer of inputs should be promoted to reduce incidences of overreliance on external assistance.
12. Strengthening Extension services at community level	To complement the government extension services the two projects made efforts to build capacity of lead farmers or FEFs, VAs, PSPs, and Care groups, however there is need for more training and back up support not just a once off training. There is need for non-monetary incentives for the lead farmers to continue function. Extra seed packs, training on specific training needs, exchange visits and visibility materials may motivate them. These can be discussed at project inception.
13. Improving sustainability mechanisms for the different interventions	All future interventions should develop a jointly owned transition strategy and plan at project design, inception and throughout the life of a project. While training of community based structures was the key strategy for the two projects, the training duration was short (once or twice and 3 days at most) and without back up support.
14. Specific Intervention Recommendations	CA: Promote CA which considers the local context (open grazing, labour availability) and upholding of all the six principles. Specifically promote CA where there is guarantee for protection of plots and even consider mechanised CA. The six principles should be promoted with few farmers instead of spreading too thinly in all the Districts. Harmonisation of input support is required so that the farmers fully benefit from the technology.
	SILC: Increase monitoring visits to the groups in order to improve adherence to standard procedures. Each partner to have dedicated MIS person to be responsible for management of the data. Review the performance of the VAS and PSPs against the standard guidelines and adapt to local context.

	Homestead Gardens: Promote preservation of vegetables to minimise harvest losses from keyhole and trench gardens. Promote Community Fundraising mechanisms and input supply chain to ensure farmers do not depend on external support for their input requirements.
	Voucher for Work: With improved communication network coverage it may be good to explore the potential of E-Vouchers as a transfer modality.
	Natural Resource Management Initiatives: Taking a micro-watershed management approach may be the starting point in addressing expansive land degradation.
	MNCH: Mainstreaming of nutrition sensitive activities in future programmes.

[Annex 1: Terms of reference for the End of Programme Evaluation](#)

[Annex 2: Statistical report](#)

[Annex 3: Schedule of work for Field Teams](#)

[Annex 4: List of documents and reports reviewed](#)

[Annex 5: List of tools used in data collection](#)

[Annex 6: Detailed analysis on achievement of objectives](#)

[Anne 7: Tools for linking Relief, Recovery and Resilience](#)