

**ENHANCED ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN NEEDS:
THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT OF THE CRS DRIVE PROJECT**



Source: DRIVE Fieldwork

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Abbreviations

CRS:	Catholic Relief Services
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRIVE:	Displaced and Recent Returnees Households Invite Recovery
FCS:	Food Consumption Score
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
HHS:	Household Hunger Score
KIs:	Key Informants
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
NFIs:	Non-Food Items
rCSI:	Reduced Household Coping Strategy Index
S&S:	Shelter and Settlements
USAID/BHA:	United States Agency for International Development / Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
WASH:	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

The CRS DRIVE project was implemented from March 27th 2021 to the end of March 2022 in partnership with Caritas Kalemie and Caritas Kongolo, with financial support from USAID/BHA. The goal of the DRIVE project was to ensure that vulnerable households affected by armed and intercommunal conflicts in Tanganyika Province (of DRC), had access to humanitarian food, non-food items (NFIs), water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and agricultural livelihood assistance. Thus, the project assisted the project participants with food, shelter and settlement (S&S), and WASH NFIs and agricultural inputs. The DRIVE final evaluation assessed the extent to which the project had achieved its objectives, addressing what contributed to those achievements, challenges faced during implementation, and lessons and best practices learned for use in future programming.

Overall, the DRIVE project achieved its anticipated goal, objectives, and outcomes.¹ In so far as the project goal is concerned, both the Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) and the Household Hunger Scores (HHS) indicated improved food security at the household level. For example, the mean rCSI changed from 22.53 at baseline to 3.24 at the end of the project, and the median score changed from 19.80 at baseline to 1.5 by the end of the project. Similarly, the HHS score also indicated improved food security, whereby households falling under the *moderate* HHS reduced from 45.18% to 34.42%, and those falling under *severe* HHS moved from 54.82% to 2.88%. The Food Consumption Score (FCS) also paint a positive story, whereby at baseline 96.09% of the households fell under *poor*, 3.26% fell under *borderline*, and only 0.65% were under the acceptable. After DRIVE interventions, only 12.11% were under the *poor* category, the rest fell under *borderline* (52.56%) and *acceptable* (35.33%) categories. The findings on food security were qualitatively reinforced by statements from project participants whose observations can be summarized by a statement from a female group participant. She observed the following: “Before CRS/Caritas arrived, my family was barely having a decent meal. Many are times we had no meal the entire day, but CRS assisted us to meet our basic needs including food.”

The NFIs were also highly appreciated as essentials that enabled project participants to undertake kitchen and hygiene activities with ease. The following statement from a female respondent revealed that the NFIs also helped to reduce tensions between the hosts and project participants: “We were in constant tensions with our hosts because we kept on borrowing their household wares, but after receiving our NFIs from Caritas/CRS, the tension ended and our relationships became stronger.” These sentiments were also repeated in other FGDs. Quantitative data revealed an increase in the proportion of households that were using appropriate hygiene practices. For example, those storing clean water increased from 12.24% at baseline to 91.23% at the end of the project. Similarly, households with handwashing knowledge increased from 38.23% at baseline to 95.14% at the end of the project, and 75.95% of these households had handwashing stations with soap and water, an increase from 1.80% at baseline. These findings were also reiterated in FGDs and KIIs, who shared how project

¹ Outcome 1: Returnee households who have access to land in targeted communities of Tanganyika province experience improved food security by the end of March 2022, restarting their agricultural livelihoods after receiving seeds, tools, and training on best agricultural practices (BAP).

Outcome 2: Conflict-affected households in targeted communities of Tanganyika province receive essential S&S assistance to meet their basic S&S NFI needs by the end of March 2022

Outcome 3: Conflict-affected households in targeted communities in Tanganyika province cover their WASH-related basic needs to enable appropriate hygiene behavior by the end of March 2022.

Outcome 4: Conflict-affected households in targeted communities of Tanganyika province improve their food security by the end of March 2022.

participants had adopted some hygiene practices after interacting with the project. KI statements summarized the feedback on WASH as follows: “Through the project we learnt the importance of washing our hands and since then, the majority of us have been washing our hands to protect ourselves from diseases like cholera” (male KI). Another said, “We have noticed reduced sicknesses in the community since we started washing our hands” (female KI). “Most of us store clean water using the water cans that we bought using the support we got from CRS/Caritas.”

In the agriculture component, households practicing some form of improved management practices or technologies increased from 0% at baseline to an overwhelming majority (96.5%), while those that had adopted improved post-harvest storage practices increased from 0% at baseline to 75.90% at the end of the project. At the time of the fieldwork, project participants were hopeful that their food security would continue to improve because their crops were almost ready for harvest, especially in the Sola region.

The DRIVE project was appropriate because it addressed the felt humanitarian needs (food, S&S and WASH NFIs, and agriculture support) of the target beneficiaries. This was demonstrated by statements from project participants who termed the DRIVE project as “life-saving” because it found them on the verge of giving up on life due to the suffering they were going through, including lack of food and household related NFIs. The activities undertaken in the project – including beneficiary targeting, community engagement, assistance delivery modalities (fairs, cash, and direct distributions), and the agricultural support – were all relevant and contributed to the achievement of the project goal, as demonstrated later in the report. Further, the project accountability system, the effective information sharing channels, the use of M&E data to inform project decisions, and the strong partnership between CRS and Caritas all built towards successful delivery of the DRIVE goal. Notable also is that the flexible nature of the DRIVE project, in terms of choice of intervention sites and the assistance delivery modalities, enabled the project to achieve its set targets within the stipulated project implementation period. Additionally, the DRIVE project was efficiently implemented, with all budget items implemented as per the proposal, giving value for money to the project participants.

Three lessons emerge from the DRIVE project. First, being an emergency project, DRIVE benefitted highly from the flexible approach of the project that allowed quick turnarounds in response to unpredictable displacement alerts, enabling timely response to the project participants. Second, in addition to having a strong partner on the ground (Caritas), the coordinating, monitoring, and guidance role of CRS was critical in the realization of the project objectives. Third, since the host community is the first voluntary responder to the needs of the displaced persons, emergency assistance should not disrupt/destabilize that humane community approach to displaced persons through creating compensation expectations. Instead, the project efforts should be geared towards boosting the community means of livelihoods in order to boost food availability in the community. For example, in agricultural host communities, supporting their food production will go a long way to enhancing food availability in the community, even after the project has exited.

There is no doubt that to a more significant extent, the DRIVE project was able to achieve its goals and objectives, as demonstrated by the quantitative outcomes and qualitative feedback from project participants. Considering that the DRIVE project is an emergency project, its achievement in the agriculture component is worth highlighting, especially to emphasize the need to mainstream it or have it as a core focus in strategy for early recovery. Some

recommendations come to the forefront. First, CRS needs to improve on its beneficiary identification process to avoid hurting prospective project participants and/or leaving out genuinely displaced persons. This can be done by embracing flexibility in terms of registration timing and offering detailed training to the listers to impart them with skills that embrace human dignity. Second, consider giving preference to cash distributions to project participants whenever possible to avoid the many complaints that come from both the vendors and project participants. Third, incorporate host communities as automatic project participants in the agriculture component. Fourth, the agriculture component design should adopt a holistic approach to agriculture – that is, in addition to production and storage, savings and marketing (including value addition) may be included as core activities. Fifth, commitment to partnerships with actors should be well vetted to avoid community disappointments and tarnishing of CRS's name in the communities.

1. Background to DRIVE VII project

In 2020, the eastern part of DRC experienced outbreaks of violence, particularly in Tanganyika Province and its immediate neighbours, such as South Kivu and Haut-Katanga. These inter-ethnic skirmishes resulted in a humanitarian crisis, due to the severely compromised quality of life and living conditions of the affected population. Apart from the tragic loss of lives that occurred as a result of the violence, numerous people were displaced from their homes, robbed of their livelihood, and faced precarious/desperate living conditions such as food shortages, lack of/poor shelters, unsanitary living conditions, and increased vulnerability for women and children. Thus, CRS, with funding from USAID BHA, launched the DRIVE project to provide prompt and urgent support, particularly to vulnerable households of afflicted communities in Kalemie, Kongolo and Manono Territories in Tanganyika Province.

The goal of the DRIVE project was to ensure that vulnerable households affected by armed and intercommunal conflicts in Tanganyika province, had access to humanitarian food, non-food items (NFIs), water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and agricultural livelihood assistance. Afflicted individuals eligible for support were internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. The strategy of implementing this critical assistance was broken down into four main sectors of intervention: Food assistance, shelter and settlement (which basically provided household and clothing items), WASH provision and promotion, and agricultural assistance. These assistance sectors were informed by the baseline study and DRIVE experiences from earlier phases of the project.

The agricultural assistance was provided to empower and support returnee households that had access to land. The intended support was in the form of seeds, tools, and beneficial agricultural practices to help them restart their agricultural livelihoods, as well as boost food production in the targeted communities. The WASH sector aimed at supporting afflicted households with the relevant NFIs to alleviate their proneness to illnesses, such as cholera and typhoid, that may further reduce quality of life. Moreover, hygiene promotion was conducted to ensure that individuals knew how to better prevent illnesses. Similarly, the S&S sector, intended to provide project participants with NFI assistance for household goods/items. The food sector intended to provide unconditional food assistance to targeted communities for three months in order to improve dietary diversity and food security among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and recent returnee populations.

To determine the most effective and efficient ways to deliver support to the project participants, CRS conducted market assessments to get market price ranges, as well as to determine the most efficient and effective modalities to deliver support to project participants. In addition to its six years of experience implementing the DRIVE project, CRS triangulated the baseline data with information from other humanitarian actors to identify the most appropriate modality for delivering support. Further, the DRIVE project embraced a flexible approach to the distribution modality (direct distributions, fairs, or cash) in order to serve project participants in the most efficient way possible to achieve its objectives.

2. Evaluation Methodology

The DRIVE project final evaluation set out to determine the project achievements and outcomes and generate learning to be applied during future phases of implementation. To achieve this objective, a mixed methods approach was used, which not only allowed for the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, but also helped to generate a nuanced understanding of project results and factors contributing to those results. Both primary and secondary data was collected. Primary data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data utilised was collected during the baseline, PDM, and the final evaluation, while qualitative data was generated from FGDs and KIIs. Secondary data was collected through a review of DRIVE project documents. The evaluation questions are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

To what extent did the project achieve its objectives?
What were the project’s major outcomes ? How did they compare to the project’s intermediate results, strategic objectives and goal?
To what extent was the project implemented as designed ?
What effect did the project have on participants’ well-being ? What effect did the project have on local markets ?
What unintended outcomes or effects did the project have as concerns project participants or other project stakeholders (e.g., local markets, host communities)?
How did project outcomes vary by subset of the participant population?
What factors contributed to project outcomes?
To what extent was the project strategy, including targeting strategy, community engagement strategies, choice of modalities, and complementary activities, relevant ?
To what extent was the project strategy, including targeting strategy, community engagement strategies, choice of modalities, and complementary interventions, appropriate ?
To what extent was project strategy efficiently executed ?
To what extent was the project accountable to participants?
How did the project communicate with participants?
To what extent did the project mainstream protection and gender into design, implementation, and monitoring of activities?
How did the project utilize data generated by monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) systems?
What role did project partners play in the project?
To what extent did the project coordinate with other actors?
What challenges did the project face during the execution of activities? What did the project do to adapt in the face of these challenges?
What lessons learned and best practices were drawn from the project that can be applied to future phases of implementation?
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to inform future programming.

The above questions were answered using both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected through a household-level survey using a questionnaire that targeted the person who received assistance on behalf of the household. The qualitative tools anticipated data that would broaden understanding of the quantitative data, and also give nuance to the key outcomes of the project. The qualitative tools used included FGD guides, Key Informant guides for community, project staff and partners. Table 2 below gives a breakdown of the samples for the baseline, PDM, and final evaluation.

Table 2: Sample Breakdown

Evaluation	Quantitative	
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	sample	
Baseline	1,978	
PDM	1,798	
Final evaluation	493	15 FGDs and 14 KIIs

2.1 Sampling

Quantitative data for this evaluation is drawn from the baseline and PDM studies. The quantitative baseline sample was 1,978 households, while that of the PDM was 1,798. These samples are statistically comparable and enabled analysis of the data within the various indicators. These households were sampled using a two-stage stratified sampling method by placing the project participants into two groups. Group 1 was for IDPs and group 2 was for returnees. The IDPs had received core emergency assistance (S&S, WASH, and food), while the returnees had received complementary (agriculture) support in addition to the core emergency support. The sample was selected using a 95% level of confidence and a margin of error of 6%. The baseline study was done through random sampling at the village level, while the PDM was done through random selection of project participants, who were interviewed during the fairs. The final evaluation sample was smaller than the baseline and PDM samples first because the final evaluation relied heavily on the baseline and PDM data, and secondly because 493 was considered a statistically sound sample size to represent the views of the project participants.

A two-day training was held with the enumerators to enable them to understand the questionnaire and also to guide them on research ethics. The training focused on background information about the program, research ethics, processes and procedures, use of tablets, and a detailed question to question discussion, including conducting mock interviews. Data was captured using tablets through the CommCare electronic data collection application. The data was primarily analyzed by calculating mean, median, and standard deviation, frequencies, security indexes and scores for categorical variables. Additionally, independent t-test were conducted to assess statistical significance in the outcomes between the two strata. The data is presented in frequencies and scores of the key indicator variables. Further, qualitative data was collected using Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informants (KIs) and is presented in narrative forms, thematically, providing explanations for the quantitative data.

3. Findings

This section presents the findings of the final evaluation guided by the evaluation questions, which are presented in the methodology section. This report is structured into: overview of the DRIVE implementation, relevance of the project, appropriateness of the project, efficiency, outcomes, gender, partnerships, knowledge management, Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, challenges, lessons learned, summary, and recommendations.

3.1 Overview of the DRIVE implementation. Extent to which DRIVE was implemented as planned?

Overall, the DRIVE project activities were implemented as planned, within the stipulated time from March 27, 2021, to March 26, 2022. For example, the core activities of the project including targeting of project participants, monthly delivery of the core assistance, and the agriculture support, all happened as planned and within the set budget of \$6,998,589. Where

challenges were experienced (for example, inaccessible villages due to insecurity or infrastructure challenges) the project relocated to other villages that had targeted project participants. Some of the ways in which the project contributed to the wellbeing of the participants include:

Positive

- ✓ Meeting project participants' humanitarian needs (food, S&S and WASH NFIs.)
- ✓ Enabling the returnees to re-start their agricultural livelihood activities, helping them produce some food.
- ✓ The host community felt that the project had lifted the burden of taking care of the displaced persons from them, meaning they could concentrate on their own families.
- ✓ The project created a sense of acceptance of participants by their hosts because they could fend for themselves, and some also shared their assistance with the host families.
- ✓ The project created employment for project staff and community members who worked as agriculture extension agents.
- ✓ The project created business for vendors and also helped grow local markets in terms of the quantity of sales, especially during the fairs.
- ✓ The project opened up the villages to vendors, who would sell their items in the villages where fairs took place, even after the project had ended. It also opened up some of the roads because staff frequently used them (the vehicles revived the neglected roads).

Negative

- ✓ The Project participants were of the opinion that the vendors tended to overprice their supplies. The vendors explained that they did this in order to meet transport costs and also to make profits, causing higher prices than the local ones participants were used to. The project participants had other ways of accessing their needs locally, at lower prices. For example, for food, they could buy directly from the farmers at the farm price. For NFIs, they do not mind walking the long distances to go to the nearest markets to find the same items at cheaper prices. A female participant had this to say: "In our normal lives, we walk very long distances, so we do not need money for transport, we can just walk to the markets and buy the things we need. The money for transport can be used to cater for other needs."

3.2 Relevance of the intervention

Under this criterion, DRIVE's implementation strategy was examined to establish whether it was doing the right things. The activities under investigation were the targeting strategy, community engagement strategies, choice of modalities, and complementary activities.

3.2.1 Targeting

The DRIVE beneficiary targeting was activated by alerts that signalled population movements. After confirming the alerts and establishing that the populations involved fell under the CRS target for project participants, CRS initiated the targeting process. The targeting process involved identifying, interviewing and documenting the displaced persons who fit within the CRS criteria. The beneficiary identification phase involved visiting locations where population movements had occurred within the CRS operation jurisdiction to ascertain the displacements and also to establish whether the displaced populations met other CRS criteria, like meeting the minimum number threshold of 2,500 people. Those who met the criteria were recruited into

the project beneficiary list on behalf of their households. In other words, an individual represented a household. Further, household members of those who qualified as displaced persons were also listed through a physical identification and documentation process. To a greater extent, the targeting process was successful and enabled the project to identify genuine project participants. However, due to the nature of population movement, where people do not arrive at the same time, some people were not listed and therefore, they were left out of the beneficiary list. A suspicious attitude towards the displaced persons made the listers not list some genuinely displaced persons as project participants. Some households/individuals in the households were not listed because the listers doubted the information they provided. Thus, they did not receive assistance from the project.

The targeting activity is surrounded by various challenges. First, some people who are not genuinely displaced persons lie that they are displaced, with the hope of benefiting from the project. Second, some displaced persons are not present during the household identification process, meaning they are not listed as project participants. Third, during the questioning to identify genuine project participants, some genuinely displaced persons may not respond to the questions accurately, due to the trauma they have experienced. In addition, the tone used by the listers may scare and disorient them. In some incidences, the staff get bullied by those forcing to be listed, yet they are not genuine. Consequently, the staff find themselves in a tough corner where they have to decide whether a person is genuine or not, and in some cases, the genuine ones were left out – not intentionally, but because of the pressure the listers go through. It is a point where the balance between being humane and the quest to list only genuinely displaced persons is tested. The suspicious attitude by the staff has both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, it ensures that only genuinely displaced persons are listed. On the negative, genuinely displaced persons are left out. This is the issue that the project will need to deal with in subsequent DRIVE phases.

We did not know they would be assisted. We did what we had to do, to welcome them into the community, because it was the right thing,
-A male FGD participant

We did not help them because we had plenty but because it was the right thing to do. We too can find ourselves in the same destitute situation.
- a female FGD participant

3.2.2 Community engagement

The DRIVE project benefited from communities in two ways. First, by using community leaders to reach the displaced persons. This was a good community entry strategy because community leaders were aware of where to find the IDPs living within host communities. However, not all leaders were aware of all the IDPs' whereabouts, hence the need to use community members and IDP leadership as well. Second, the communities played an important role in welcoming and taking care of the displaced persons. They offered security to the displaced persons who were running away from insecurity. These communities also assumed the responsibility of hosting the displaced persons and taking care of some of their needs prior to the DRIVE project intervention. Whether actively or passively, the host communities lived peacefully with the displaced persons. The mere fact that communities welcomed the displaced persons into their villages and homes without coercion is a very important factor in the displaced persons' support system that should be encouraged and supported, because it is a voluntary, self-sustaining practice entrenched in the human value for each other and the need to support each other in times of need/trouble (Ubuntu).

The question of host communities needs to be understood from two perspectives. First, the host community innately holds the desire to contribute to the welfare of the displaced persons, whether through an active role by hosting them in their homes, or passively by allowing them

to live within their vicinity. This is not only positive in terms of ensuring support to the displaced persons, but it also has some implications for continued support post project period. For example, some IDPs take longer to return to their homes and continue living with the host communities. This happens post project support period, meaning that the displaced persons continue to somehow benefit from the host communities.

Whereas some host community members may expect to be assisted, this should not be encouraged to avoid eroding the Ubuntu spirit of assisting each other. However, the project should consider extending the agriculture assistance to the host communities that live with displaced persons. This move will not only help to increase food production within the host communities, but also will enhance food availability, even to the displaced persons. Although it is assumed that the IDPs leave after the project ends, the reality is that some remain longer with host communities, depending on the security situation in their homes. This means they continue relying on the host communities for their survival. Thus, supporting host communities in food production will be an indirect way of supporting the IDPs after the project has ended.

3.2.3 Choice of assistance delivery modalities

Prior to the implementation of the DRIVE project, CRS had gained experience from six earlier DRIVE project phases distributing assistance using three modalities, namely: the fairs, cash, and direct distribution of items. Fairs involve bringing vendors together in an open market and providing vouchers to project participants to make their purchases. In direct distribution, project participants are supplied with the various items directly. With cash, project participants receive physical cash to make their own purchases in their place of choice.

Each of the modalities has its own pros and cons depending on the locality of the intervention. Thus, to identify the best distribution modality in the intervention sites, CRS conducted a rapid market assessment covering NFI, shelter, and food markets. The aim was to evaluate the local markets' structure, integration with other markets, vendor capacity, and supply chains for NFIs and food. Further, CRS triangulated its primary data with information from other humanitarian actors to identify the most appropriate modality for delivering NFIs. Paper vouchers in fair settings, direct NFI kit distribution, cash payments, or a mix of modalities were used in this DRIVE. The project was flexible in the use of delivery modalities, and this allowed for change in the use of a modality from one site to the other, as need arose. For example, in some sites, the first distributions were through fairs and the subsequent ones were through cash, depending on the challenges experienced during the first distribution. FGDs and KIIs revealed that the three modalities were generally accepted, but there was a high preference for cash. Thus, the DRIVE project did the right thing, having flexibility in its distribution modalities because it allowed for switching from one to the other in situations where the first one failed to deliver as anticipated.

The DRIVE project categorised households into three assistance groups: Category 1: HH size of 1 to 3 people - \$34 voucher per month; Category 2: HH size of 4 to 7 people - \$62 voucher per month; and Category 3: HH size of 8 or more people - \$90 voucher per month. Assistance accorded per household varied depending on the number of household members, as presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Assistance accorded to the households per sector

Sector of Intervention	1-3 People HH (voucher/ Cash Transfer Value)	4-7 People HH (voucher/ Cash Transfer Value)	8 or more people HH (voucher/ Cash Transfer Value)	Average Value of Cash and Voucher transfers per HH of 6
Shelter and Settlement NFIs	\$52	\$58	\$63	\$56
Sanitation and Hygiene NFIs	\$18	\$22	\$27	\$24
Food Assistance	\$34	\$62	\$90	\$186
Seeds and Tools	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$60

These cash and voucher values were informed by the previous DRIVE phase whose findings showed that this amount of assistance was sufficient and appropriate. FGD participants and KIs with the project participants commended the idea of the varying assistance amounts depending on the household members, noting that it ensured fairness in the assistance allocation.

Generally, CRS managed the assistance delivery well and it was rated a success in all the FGDs and KIIs. The fairs had pre-preparation activities including identification of vendors through a competitive process, vendor-beneficiary meeting to discuss and set price limits, and beneficiary sensitization on fairs conducted by CRS. Some issues emerged during the implementation and CRS was able to resolve some, while others remained unresolved. Table 4 below presents the issues raised and the actions taken.

Table 4: Stakeholder feedback on fairs

Issue	Stakeholder feedback		
	CRS	Beneficiary	Vendor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project participants 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High item prices in the fairs, in comparison to local markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advised the project participants to negotiate prices during the fair Changed from fairs to cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project participants unsuccessfully negotiated prices Project participants purchased fewer items than they would have if the prices were lower. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blamed transport costs for increased prices Blamed short notices, meaning the demand was high at the market and therefore prices went up.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor quality of food in the fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed from fairs to cash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complained that some food items were spoilt/not of good quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denied the allegation, noting that their items were of good quality. Complained of reduced business, losses and delayed payment of up to 2 months

3.2.4 Complementary/Agriculture activities

The main complementary activities were under the agriculture components. These included trainings and agricultural input provisions (seeds and tools). The agricultural project participants were extremely appreciative of the agricultural support they received. They observed that the DRIVE project enabled them to re-start their agricultural activities after losing all they had through the conflicts.

- ❖ Based on the above findings, the study determines that all the DRIVE activities (targeting, community engagement, delivery modalities and the complimentary activities) were relevant in achieving the goals of the project. Thus, the project did the right thing to include these activities in the project design.

3.3 Appropriateness of the DRIVE project

This section examines whether there was need for the DRIVE project at all – that is, its value in relation to the needs of the project participants. While it is true that communities will always have needs, a review of DRIVE project documents revealed that prior to its implementation, Kongolo, Kalemie and Manono territories had experienced inter-ethnic skirmishes that resulted in a humanitarian crisis. People had been displaced, losing their livelihoods, exposing them to lack of food, shelter, and hygienic living conditions. Discussions with project participants in FGDs exposed the untold suffering that the displaced persons had experienced, including going for days without basic needs like food and shelter.

To save their lives, IDPs escaped from their homes, leaving everything behind. The returnees also described their situation, noting that they came back home to nothing because their homes had been torched and their economic activities disrupted to an extent that they needed to start afresh, but they did not have the means to. In addition to the physical needs, some of the displaced persons also were going through psychological challenges due to the violence and the losses they had witnessed. As presented later in the report, the food and NFI scores at the baseline also depicted a very needy situation. Simply put, the DRIVE project assisted people who were in critical need of humanitarian assistance, and this enabled them to continue living. Comments from the FGD and KII participants alluded to this fact. Participants highly appreciated the program, calling it a religious intervention, declaring CRS/Caritas as ‘God-sent to save His suffering people.’ The host communities were also of the same opinion, reiterating that the assistance given to project participants was lifesaving and a relief to them, because it lifted a huge burden of meeting the needs of the displaced persons off their shoulders and enabled them to focus on their families’ needs.

- ❖ Based on the accounts of the project participants and other community members (hosts), this evaluation determines that the project was appropriate and responded to the needs of the target Project participants

3.4 Efficiency of the intervention: How well were resources used?

The evaluation examined how well resources were used – that is, the extent to which the intervention delivered results in an economic and timely way. To achieve this, the evaluation investigated the budget expenditures across the project activities, including monitoring and evaluation exercises, project sectors, fairs and cash modalities, and logistical planning.

a) Monitoring and evaluation activities’ efficiency

The baseline was done on time, just before the project activities were initiated. Baseline findings informed project staff on sites and project indicators. The market assessments were particularly important to

"CRS found us at our lowest. We were facing starvation and disease."
-Male FGD

"God sent Caritas to rescue us, otherwise some of us would have died."
-Female FGD participant

informing the project on the best distribution modalities and this helped to save project money, as discussed later. There were no delays in the start of the project.

b) Project sectors and budget

The DRIVE total budget was \$6,999,580. The project remained with this budget, with 80% (\$5,842,150) being used on direct costs, while 20% (\$1,157,430) was utilized on indirect costs. Table 5 below presents the planned and actual budget per sector:

Table 5: Project budget

Assistance item	Planned budget (USD)	Actual Budget (USD)
Agriculture inputs and tools	360,000.00	341,003.13
NFI	587,900.00	570,283.20
Wash	206,800.00	209,602.56
Food	1,369,116.00	1,473,226.89
Total	2,523,816.00 (36.06%)	2,594,115.78 (37.06%)
Project budget		6,999,580

The variations between the planned and actual budgets were driven by two factors: First, at the planning stage, the project may have anticipated larger numbers of project participants, but targeting revealed lower or bigger numbers than the anticipated one. Second, market assessments informed the project on the most efficient ways to deliver assistance. Specifically, the use of fairs and cash cut down on transport costs and enabled savings of the funds that would have been used for transportation of goods if direct distributions had been done.

At the close of the final evaluation, some project activities were still ongoing in Nyemba territory. A total of 2,301 people were being supported using savings that had been realised as described above.

c) Fairs/cash assistance delivery modalities

The CRS procurement department undertook vendor identification activities. The vendors were selected through a process where they were required to qualify as vendors who could supply the required goods.

The following activities demonstrate efficiency in the project:

- Use of fairs and cash modalities, which ensured that the risks of financial losses were eradicated from CRS. Both the vendors and the project participants were satisfied with the voucher amounts.
- To ensure that the voucher process was not abused, CRS prepared unique vouchers for each category of support. The vouchers were well controlled to ensure that no fraud happened. The vendors and project participants were well warned about the repercussions of abusing the vouchers (which meant being removed from the list of vendors/project participants).
- Using SOFICOM, a third-party financial services provider, to make payments to the vendors and project participants. This lifted the financial risk and time off of CRS.
- CRS, through the procurement department, also identified vendors who had the capacity to sell goods and services at the fairs. This step was meant to bring in only those vendors who had the capacity and integrity to provide goods and services in the fairs.

d) Logistical planning

Due to its partnership with Caritas and logistical arrangements in the implementation sites, the project was able to cut down on logistical expenses. Considering that CRS/Caritas implemented activities in areas where no other NGOs were implementing the same activities, duplication was avoided, resource allocation was responsive, and efficiencies were gained. CRS worked closely with other NGOs through UN OCHA to make sure that they did not implement where other NGOs were implementing.

- ❖ Based on the financial budget information presented under the efficiency section, it is clear that the DRIVE project displayed value for money through the various project activities and the funds were efficiently utilised. It is also worth noting that DRIVE not only meet its targets in terms of households and the sectors supported, but also saved funds that were being used to support project participants in Nyemba territory.

3.5 Accountability to participants

The DRIVE project's accountability to participants began at the start of the project. It was guaranteed through both information sharing (amongst staff, to project participants, and other stakeholders including partners), as well as feedback and response processes to queries raised. These were continuous processes from the start to end of the project. The aim of sharing information, especially to project participants, was to enable them to be aware of their rights, so they could question anything they felt was not going well. A number of feedback channels were used, namely: a beneficiary help desk at the fairs, suggestion boxes at the local leaders' offices, a hotline, and other informal ways, like approaching a staff or a community leader to express an issue. The most common issues raised were about targeting and fairs. On targeting, some people complained that they had been left out of the list, yet they were genuine IDPs/returnees. On fairs, issues raised were about prices and quality of food sold.

All the raised queries were responded to by the CRS accountability team through the relevant project implementation sectors. The challenge, though, was that some people, especially on targeting, reported too late, after the process had been completed. Where the complaint came on time, it was verified and if found true, the complainant would be listed as a project beneficiary. Another challenge was that some people were lying, wanting to benefit, even though they were not genuinely displaced persons, as per the targeting criteria. Further, some people presented their issues late in the process, so it was not possible to address the queries. For example, a person who brings a targeting query in the third month could not be considered for assistance.

- ❖ The DRIVE project was accountable to the project participants through the various project communication channels. However, there is room for improvement, especially in making sure that the target participants are well aware of the channels to follow early enough to help them raise their issues.

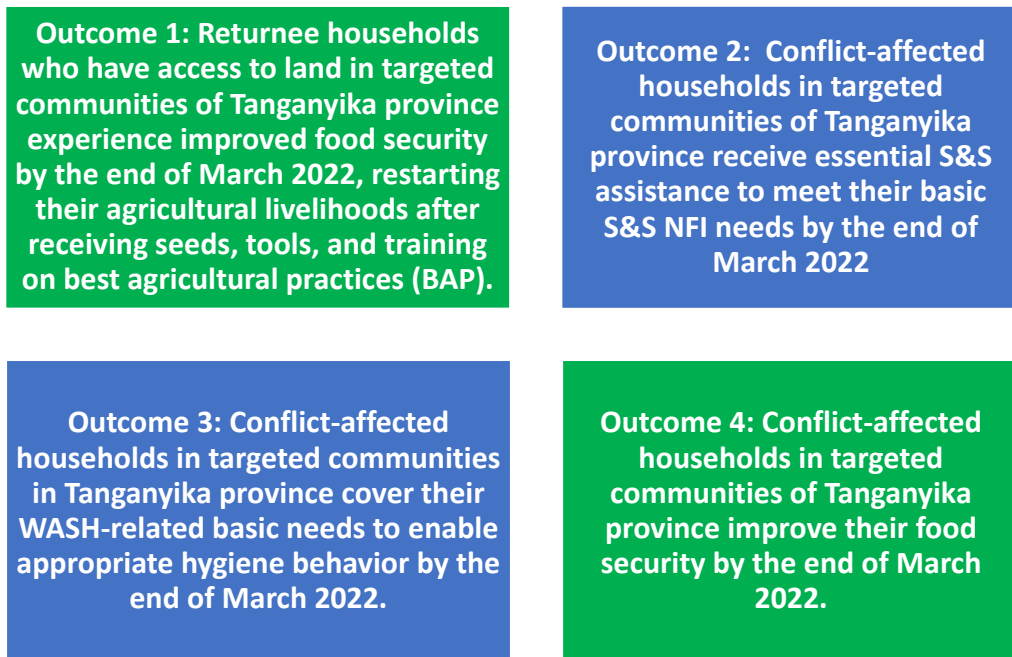
We had lost everything and our farms were bushes. We did not have the energy to farm because first of all we were weak and hungry and secondly, we did not even have the farm inputs.

- A female participant

3.6 DRIVE project outcomes

This section discusses the DRIVE project outcomes in response to the final evaluation questions that sought to establish the project's major outcomes and how they compared to the project's intermediate results, strategic objectives, and goal. The four anticipated DRIVE outcomes are listed in Figure 1 below.

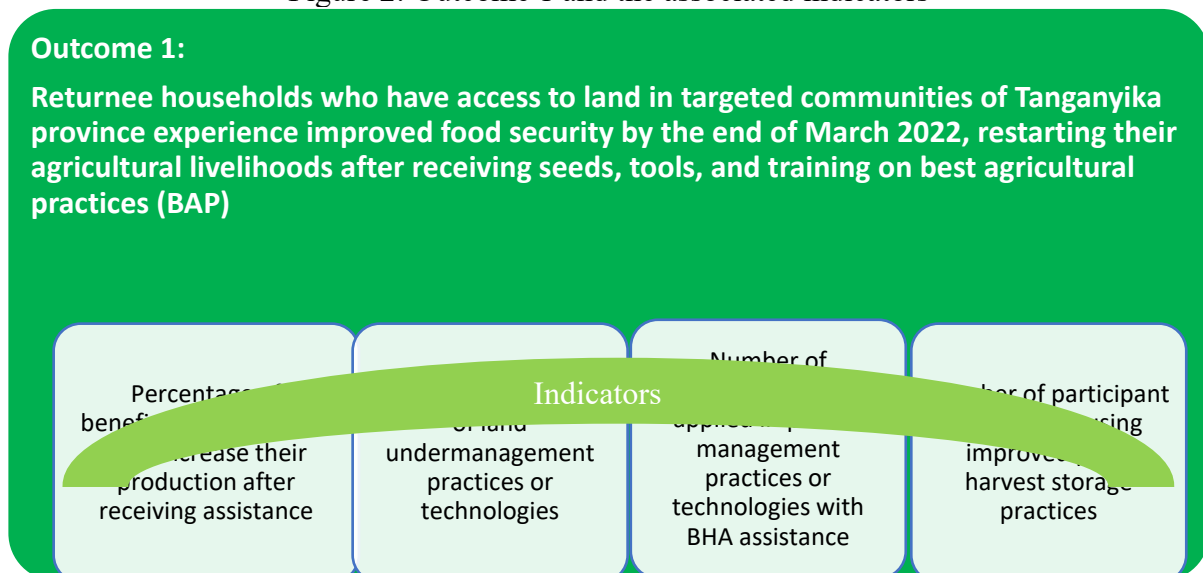
Figure 1: Anticipated DRIVE outcomes



Each of these outcomes are discussed within the sectors. Figure 2 below presents outcome 1 and its indicators.

3.6.1 Outcome 1:

Figure 2: Outcome 1 and the associated indicators



On the agriculture component, the project only supported households that had access to agricultural land (5,969 households, equivalent to 31,313 individuals), constituting 99.5% of the targeted 6,000 households. Of these households, 2,127 were from Kalemie, while 3,883 were from Kongolo. The support provided was in the form of seeds, farm tools, and training on best agricultural practices. FGD and KII discussions revealed that prior to the displacement, returnees were small-scale farmers who mainly practiced subsistence farming, using basic farming methods. When they returned home, they had to start afresh but they had no inputs including seeds and tools. In their own words, “it was difficult to start farming again.” These sentiments were echoed across all the FGDs in different sites with participants disclosing that the assistance they got from CRS enabled them to start farming their own farms rather than in other people’s farms in search of food.

C02. Percentage of beneficiary households who increase their production after receiving assistance

The findings reveal increased production from 0% at baseline, where project participants had not undertaken any farming activities due to the displacement, to a 72.25% increase after getting assistance from CRS.

The support was given in three categories, as presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: outcome performance per category



Assistance	Percentage of households that increased food production after assistance	Hectares under improved management practices	Individuals who had applied improved management practices	Percentage of households using improved post-harvest storage practices
Category 1	75.52%	14.3%	16.6%	84.38%
Category 2	72.09%	72.1%	71.9%	82.69%
Category 3	64.55%	13.6%	11.5%	82.35%

It emerges that category 2 overwhelmingly topped the lists for those with land under improved management practices (72.1%) and those who were using improved management practices (71.9%). Category 1 topped the list of those who had increased their food production (75.5%) and those who were using improved post-harvest storage practices

(84.4%). Notable is that category 3 was the least performing in the three indicators. However, it is worth appreciating the performances within the indicators, especially the fact that the assistance enabled project participants to resume farming activities in the first place. FGD participants in Sola reported that their production had increased after receiving support from CRS – that is, training and input support. In Kalemie, farmers had yet to harvest their crops, but were happy they had crops in their farms and were hopeful they would get some harvest. Their concern, however, was that they would not have much of a harvest, because the seeds came late, some were not favorable for their region, and the rains were not enough.

Availability of food during the farming season enabled us to concentrate on the farm activities. This helped us to cultivate more land than we used to before.
-Male Participant

A2. Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with BHA assistance

Figure 3: female farmers in Sola display their DRIVE supported groundnuts and maize

In addition to tools and seeds assistance, project participants were trained on improved farm management technologies.² The project intended to support farming in 1,800 hectares. At the end of the project, a total of 1,507 hectares (83.72%) of the targeted land was under improved management/technologies. FGDs/KIIs with community members revealed that the increase in land under cultivation was due to the assistance that had been given by the project. Key informants and FGD participants alluded to the fact that in addition to the physical support, the mere presence of the CRS staff in the communities also made the project participants feel pressured to increase the land under cultivation because they did not want to appear ungrateful and disinterested. They wanted their farms to have crops so that they could communicate their appreciation of the assistance and demonstrate they had taken heed of the training they received.

A3. Number of individuals (participants) who have applied improved management practices or technologies with BHA assistance

Generally, households that received agriculture assistance had applied improved farm management practices after receiving the training. A total of 5,760 households, an equivalent of 28,836 individuals, (96.66% of the target) had applied improved management practices in their farms. While this is a positive outcome, it is important to note the following: First, the majority of farmers practiced mixed farming practices – that is, they retained their old ways and also adopted the new ones they had learned. Second, in the second agricultural season, some reverted back to the traditional farming methods and vice-versa. Whether or not they chose to retain improved farming methods or not depended on: perceived or real required labor to implement the improved farming practices, comparison of produce from traditional farming methods and improved farming methods, and pessimism or the “wait and see” attitude.

- *Intensive labor requirement for improved farming practices*

FGDs revealed that project participants felt that some farming practices were time intensive and therefore they did not want to engage in them. For example, mulching and tilling the land instead of burning the bushes was seen as cumbersome.

² No bush burning, planting in a line, crop mulching, thinning of plants, pest control, use of terraces and fallows, crop rotation, use of manure

- *Comparisons of production from traditional and improved farming practices*

This factor was multifaceted. First, in some areas the crops did well, while in others the crops failed. The failure of the crops was either because of the environmental conditions (inadequate rains or diseases) or because of late planting where seeds were not provided on time. In some areas, especially in Kalemie, rains failed and pests were problematic. Additionally, seeds were supplied late or the variety supplied was not good for the targeted area. As a result, some villages in Kalemie did not do well, meaning there was no major difference in production between farms that applied improved farming methods and those that retained the traditional practices.

In Sola, where the agricultural assistance activities happened at the right time, the harvest was good and appreciated. Project participants disclosed that there was a big difference between the farms that used traditional methods and those that used improved farming practices. Farms in which improved farming practices were used were reported to be more productive and easier to operate in, even during the harvesting phase. The training activities were highly appreciated and associated with improved food production.



Figure 4: Improved Groundnuts and maize farms assisted through DRIVE project

A4. Percent of participant households using improved post-harvest storage practices

An impressive percentage (75.90%) of farmers indicated that they were using improved post-harvest storage practices. In Sola, all (100%) of the farmers reported use of improved post-harvest storage practices, while in Kalemie, only 61.71% of farmers were using it. This was partly due to the fact that their production was low and therefore they did not see the need for post harvesting storage practices, and partly because they had received assistance late. Further, some farmers doubted modern farming methods and opted to continue with the traditional post-harvest storage practices, which included storing their maize above the fireplace.

There was no difference. Look at the farms and you will see that they are all not doing well whether you used the improved methods or not. Those who used improved methods are at a loss because they spent more labour in the farm.
-A male FGD participant

The findings on the agriculture component of the DRIVE project are testament that indeed the project was able to contribute to improved food security in the targeted areas and most importantly, it helped farmers regain their source of livelihood. While those who received NFIs

only were worried about their next meals, those who were in agriculture were excited about the harvest they had already gotten or were expecting to get. In their words, “It is better to have crops in the farm because they give you hope that there will be food at some point, than not have anything that one is waiting for.” The following statements in Figure 5 gathered from key informants and FGD participants give a summary of the indicators.

Figure 5: Summary Opinions about the agriculture component of the DRIVE project

Most of the households have increased the land we are farming on since we started working with CRS because we got tools and seeds (KI).

Most of us have used the farming methods we were taught, although we are also using the traditional ones (Female FGD).

Some of us have started harvesting groundnuts and this is helping us with food and we expect to harvest more food (Female FGD).

At least some food is available in the community from our farms and it will increase as we continue to farm using the improved farming methods (KI).

3.6.2 Contextualizing the DRIVE agriculture component

There is no doubt that the agricultural component of the DRIVE project has left an indelible mark in the hearts of the beneficiary communities. The training and provision of farm tools, including seeds, was highly praised – not forgetting the increased production and the hope of continuing after the project exit. Further, DRIVE enabled communities to resume their livelihood activities, and this has set them on a path of recovery.

Key informant and FGD interviews revealed pertinent gaps in the implemented activities, though. For example, farmers were still not convinced about the new cassava seed varieties. It was criticised as rotting too quickly, unlike the traditional variety, which takes a longer time to mature (3 years) but does not get spoilt. The community members observed that the modern breed matured fast (1 year), but it got spoilt within three months of maturity. Another issue of interest is the revelation that adoption of the improved farming methods was not fully embraced, and some farmers criticised it on the basis of being labor intensive with no difference in production, when compared to the traditional methods.

The cassava seedlings they gave us did not grow as tall as ours. Then when they matured, they did not have big cassava like ours. To make matters worse, they could not last long in the farm and so it was a loss.
A female FGD participant

There were also disagreements on the traditional way of laying seedlings on the soil. For example, the traditional way of placing the cassava seedling upright vs the modern way of slanting it. All these issues expose the attitude change dilemma that cannot be addressed overnight and needs more time. It also reveals a competition between tradition and modernity, a hidden call for sustained training that incorporates a practical demonstration component, such as demonstration farms. In the case of cassava, it emerged that the communities preferred the traditional variety because the cassava lasts longer in the farm, assuring them of food security. This thinking exposes a

We cannot eat all this cassava together. So our traditional cassava is better because it last for three years and this assures us of food security
-Male FGD participant

subsistence farming mindset that farms are only for subsistence use –that is, to meet immediate needs. In other words, farming is not seen as a business enterprise and, therefore, the production is only for subsistence use.

The above observations expose the need for the DRIVE project to treat emergency response as a community entry point whereby, after the community’s humanitarian needs have been met, the project then embarks on the recovery phase. The recovery phase should take into consideration the fact that behaviour change takes time and, therefore, an adequate implementation timeline and budget cannot be overemphasised. Further, the project will need to consider taking a holistic approach to the agriculture component that goes beyond production and storage to include marketing, in order to enable communities to experience value for their farm work.

3.6.3 Outcome 2

Conflict-affected households in targeted communities of Tanganyika province receive essential S&S assistance to meet their basic S&S NFI needs by the end of March 2022

The indicator for this outcome was the number and percent of individuals reporting satisfaction with the quality of the NFIs received. DRIVE supported 50,646 project participants with shelter and settlement NFIs. Of these, 6,872 were IDPs, 36,749 were returnees, and 7,025 were host community members. At baseline, none (0%) of the 1,798 respondents reported satisfaction with the quality of S&S NFIs they had, but almost all (99.26%) of the respondents interviewed at the end of the project reported high satisfaction with the quality of the S&S NFIs they received from the project. This was also confirmed by FGD participants, who revealed that most of the S&S NFIs they purchased was of good quality. To demonstrate that the quality was good, they reported that they were still using most of the items they purchased during the fairs. The only concern was that due to the high prices at the fairs, they were only able to buy a few items.

3.6.4 Outcome 3

Conflict-affected households in targeted communities in Tanganyika province cover their WASH-related basic needs to enable appropriate hygiene behavior by the end of March 2022.

A total of 14,529 project participants were assisted with sanitation and hygiene NFIs. Of these, 1,481 were IDPs, 12,273 were returnees, and 775 were host community members. An overwhelming majority of these project participants reported satisfaction with the contents (93.93%) and the quality (99.12%) of the WASH NFIs they bought.

Table 7 below presents the gender breakdown of the NFI scorecard.

Table 7: NFI scorecard across genders

	Baseline	PDM
C01. Percent of participant households scoring 3 or lower on the NFI Scorecard	8.36%	88.00%
M&F	7.57%	87.91%

MNF	3.64%	92.11%
FNM	18.12%	85.55%

Generally, the NFI scorecard improved for both genders. Project participants adopted the WASH practices they had been trained on, including handwashing practices at the three times (95.14%), using soap and water, knowledge about the three critical handwashing times (75.95%), and hygienic storage of clean water practice (91.23%). Just like the S&S NFIs, respondents' concern was the high prices at the fairs, which reduced their purchasing power.

C01. Percent of participant households scoring 3 or lower on the NFI Scorecard

Overall, there was an improvement of household hunger score, from 37.30 to 95%. There were no major differences across the assistance categories, as presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Outcome 3 indicator performances

Assistance	% HH with Scorecard NFI≤3	% of HH that had been trained on WASH, including the three times handwashing practice.	% of HH using soap and water (and knowledge about the three handwashing times)	% of HH using hygienic storage of clean water practice
Category 1	76.45%	96.17%	78.01%	89.17%
Category 2	89.13%	95.38%	75.64%	92.75%
Category 3	84.37%	92.05%	73.41%	91.21%

Table 9 below shows that there was overwhelming improvement of the NFI Scorecard for all household members.

Table 9: NFI Scorecard across gender

Gender	Baseline	PDM
M&F	7.57	87.91%
MNF	3.64	92.11%
FNM	18.12	85.55%

On NFIs, men were more satisfied than the women, who would have wished to get more of the WASH and other household NFIs. This is because it is women who are involved directly in the use of the NFIs. However, it is clear that the project achieved its NFI objectives.

3.6.5 Outcome 4

Conflict-affected households in targeted communities of Tanganyika province improve their food security by the end of March 2022.

A total of 38,148 individuals were assisted with food. Of these, 6,889 were IDPs, 31,259 were returnees, and none were host community members. Overall, the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) mean for both males and females improved from 23.02 at baseline to 2.25 at end-line. The median also improved from 20.80 at baseline to 1.5 at the end of the project. Table 10 below provides the breakdown of the rCSI across genders.

Table 10: rCSI across gender

Mean and Median	Baseline	PDM
Mean	22.53	3.24
Median	19.80	1.5
Standard deviation	11.00	4.17
Mean rCSI - Female and Male Adults (F&M)	23.02	2.25
Median rCSI - Female and Male Adults (F&M)	20.80	1.5
Mean rCSI - Adult Female, No Adult Male (FNM)	20.15	3.09
Median rCSI - Adult Female, No Adult Male (FNM)	18.40	1
Mean rCSI - Adult Male, No Adult Female (MNF)	18.97	2.64
Median rCSI - Adult Male, No Adult Female (MNF)	17.40	1.75
Mean rCSI - Children No Adult (CNA)	0.00	0.25
Median rCSI - Children No Adult (CNA)	0.00	0.25

Clearly the rCSI improved for all household members after the food assistance. Similarly, the households with *moderate* and *severe* Hunger Score (HHS) reduced from 100% at baseline to 37.30% at the end of the project. Table 11 gives a household breakdown of the HHS.

Table 11: Gender and HHS

Type of household	Baseline	Endline
Households with moderate and severe Household Hunger Scale (HHS) scores	100%	37.30%
Moderate HHS Score	45.18%	34.42%
Severe HHS Score	54.82%	2.88%
Percent of moderate HHS - Female and Male Adults (F&M)	43.97%	29.09%
Percent of Severe HHS - Female and Male Adults (F&M)	56.03%	0.00%
Percent of Moderate HHS - Adult Female, No Adult Male (FNM)	50.34%	33.44%
Percent of Severe HHS - Adult Female, No Adult Male (FNM)	49.66%	3.79%
Percent of Moderate HHS - Adult Male, No Adult Female (MNF)	52.86%	29.09%
Percent of Severe HHS - Adult Male, No Adult Female (MNF)	47.14%	0.00%
Percent of Moderate HHS - Children No Adult (CNA)	0.00%	0.00%
Percent of Severe HHS - Children No Adult (CNA)	0.00%	0.00%

Food assistance was structured in three categories, depending on household sizes, as presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Indicator performance per category of assistance

Assistance	FSC Acceptable	FSC Boderline	FSC Poor	rCSI	% of HHs Moderate	% of HHs Severe
Category 1	32.56%	52.54%	15.22%	3.41 & 1.70	31.23%	2.94%
Category 2	34.26%	54.66%	11.10%	3.20 & 1.46	35.57%	1.97%
Category 3	39.43%	50.47%	10.01%	3.11 & 1.35	36.47%	3.73%

The findings from the food security outcome indicators reveal no major differences across three categories. This is an indication that the amounts shared across the categories were adequate, a fact that was also reiterated in the FGDs. Overall, the DRIVE food intervention was the right decision because the food security indicators used (mean & median Reduced Coping Strategies, Household Hunger Scale, and Food Consumption Score) all pointed to food insecurity at baseline and the above findings demonstrate that this changed for the better.

3.6.6. Unintended DRIVE outcomes

Although DRIVE is an emergency project, it has shown potential to catalyse business growth in the targeted communities. At the market level, fairs are associated with increased sales. The fairs have also opened up villages to the vendors who visit their villages to sell their goods after the fairs. DRIVE has also opened up the roads to villages through staff visits using vehicles and subsequent activities like the fairs. In support of this outcome, a project beneficiary recounted how when they moved to the villages, it was all bushy but now the project has helped to open roads that community members also use. No negative unintended outcomes were reported.

3.7 Mainstreaming protection and gender into design, implementation, and monitoring activities

The DRIVE project design was deliberate in mainstreaming gender in all project activities. For example, while the project preferred women to represent their households, some households were represented by men. Most importantly, though, both males and females discussed how to use the assistance they received. The women were particularly happy about the fact that they received assistance on behalf of the family, noting that the project did well to give the assistance through the women because the assistance benefited all household members. These sentiments were also echoed by the men, who said that the project's decision to support households through women was strategic, especially with food, because it is the woman who knew what was required in the house in so far as food was concerned.

Women were best placed to receive the assistance because they are the ones who know what is best for each family members. They also know what to buy and what to leave
-A male FGD participant

I went to the market alone and bought everything but when I got home I realised had not bought cooking oil and salt. So we decided we would be going together with my wife because she knows what we need in the house
-A male FGD participant

At the end of the project, three quarters (75.11%) of women, compared to 26.69% at baseline, reported that they participated in household decisions about the use of food. According to them, the project helped to increase their participation in household decisions. For example, since they had access to the vouchers or cash, they were able to decide or be involved in household decisions on how to use the assistance given. The males reiterated the importance of involving women in household food decisions, noting that it is the women who are best placed to know what the household requires in terms of food.

3.8 Partnerships/collaborations in the implementation of DRIVE project

The project benefited from an implementation partnership between CRS and Caritas Kalemie and Caritas Kongolo. Caritas was a strategic CRS partner considering that it has field offices

in the targeted communities. The partnership with Caritas made it possible for CRS to assist the hard-to-reach populations with relative ease, and also to get timely feedback on project activities, including alerts of any population movements. The CRS /CARITAS partnership can be described as a complimentary one, where CARITAS run the day-to-day implementation of the field activities and provided monthly progress reports to CRS. On its part, CRS took the lead in coordination at the cluster level, as well as monitoring, guidance, and supportive roles to Caritas at ground levels. The monitoring, support, and guidance roles played by CRS were instrumental in the success of the DRIVE project.

Other actors in the project were the Government of DRC and OCHA. Under the government, the project worked with the Provincial Inspectorate of Agriculture Fisheries and Livestock (IPAPEL) who trained farmers on the best farming practices, and the National Seed Service (SENASA) who assisted in the seed certification. The Federation of Congo Enterprises (FEC) helped in the coordination of vendors who participated in the fairs. OCHA played the coordination role, especially in the identification of which partner intervened. SOFICOM provided payment services to the vendors and project participants who received cash. Generally, all these actors played their part well.

There was an unfortunate incidence in Lukwangulo, where CRS provided NFI assistance and ACTED was supposed to provide food assistance. However, ACTED did not provide the food assistance as anticipated. The FGD participants complained bitterly, blaming CRS for lying to them that they would supply them with food and failing to honor their promise. The females who had been recruited to participate in the FGD refused to be interviewed and, like their male counterparts, they blamed CRS for the unfortunate incidence of promising and not fulfilling the promise. The reason CRS was blamed in this instance is because the community could not tell the difference between CRS and ACTED. Since CRS had assisted with NFIs, it was easy to remember CRS and blame them. This incident serves as a caution to CRS to be vigilant in its selection of partners to avoid unintended conflicts with community members. CRS may also need to consider a damage control exercise in Lukwangulo village.

3.9 Program Knowledge Management

The DRIVE project's decisions were guided by data collected at different phases of the project. Decisions were made through monthly action review meetings, where information received from various sources was discussed and decisions made.

Some of the decisions made using the project data included:

- ✚ Change from delivery of NFIs through fairs to use of the cash modality in some areas. This was after the NFI data showed that the NFI scorecard remained low, prompting the staff to investigate the matter. The finding was that vendors were not bringing enough WASH NFIs, especially those that occupied larger spaces in the vehicle. Based on this finding, the project decided to give cash for NFIs to enable participants to buy the NFIs from the market instead of the fairs.
- ✚ The accountability data revealed that some genuine IDPs had been left out during the targeting exercise and, therefore, the project investigated to verify the information. A total of 177 project participants were identified and assisted in the second month of assistance.
- ✚ During the fairs, data collected indicated low satisfaction with some of the food items. For example, the prices for cooking oil. To respond to this, vendors were advised to only supply items that were being sold locally because they were cheaper.

- ✚ On seeds, it was noted that in some places in Kalemie, some communities did not want the maize seeds. They preferred to have the groundnut seeds, because groundnuts did well in the area and it also fetched them money, which they used to buy other food items.
- ✚ On advice from the food security cluster, DRIVE did not give slashers to the farmers despite persistent requests from project participants. This is because the project avoided contributing to violent acts through the use of slashers. However, the community remained in need of the slashers for clearing bushes.

3.10 Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The SWOT analysis presented here is informed by discussions with project staff, participants, partners, and also a review of the project documents.

3.10.1 Strengths: What did the DRIVE project do well?

- Reasonable/quick response timelines.
- Serving the hard-to-reach populations.
- Community engagement in identification and service to project participants.
- CRS logistical (vehicle) presence in the implementation sites allowed for quicker access to the implementation territories.
- Flexibility in choice of implementation sites allowed quick response to alerts as they came in, considering that alerts are unpredictable, and therefore, a predetermined choice of implementation sites is not feasible.
- Adoption of a flexible implementation approach that allowed use of the most appropriate delivery modalities (vouchers, cash, direct distribution), as per the implementation context.
- Experience and learnings from other DRIVE project cycles.
- Robust targeting approach that ensures that only genuinely displaced persons are assisted by the project.
- Capacity to undertake prompt targeting exercises to ensure timely beneficiary access to project assistance.
- Relying on research, especially the M&E components, including baseline, market assessments, PDMs, and final evaluations, as well as other monitoring data to inform project decisions.
- Effective communication and feedback mechanism within various levels of project implementation.
- Team spirit amongst the staff, relying on each other's experience to make urgent decisions where the need arose.

3.10.2 Weaknesses

- Targeting related challenges, especially in identification and household member listing
 - Leaving out genuine households.
 - Under listing members of a household.
 - Cases of inhumane handling of prospective project participants.
 - Listers' insecurity (incidences of violence).
 - Inadequacy in delivery of information about targeting days.
- Late/out of season farm inputs supply, leading to poor harvests.
- Vendor vs beneficiary dissatisfaction

- Vendor complaints about thefts by beneficiary during fairs.
- Vendor complaints about losses due to low business/few project participants at the fairs.
- Vendors complaints about delayed payments.
- Vendors complaints about reduced payments due to offered US dollar to Congolese Francs exchange rates.
- Beneficiary complaints about quality of food supplied at fairs.
- Beneficiary complaints about high prices at the fairs.
- Inadequate/non-engagement of IDP leadership in the project activities.
 - Challenges identifying genuine IDPs, especially where IDPs are hosted in the homes of the host community.
 - Untruthfulness by host community leadership to register non IDPs as project participants.

3.10.3 Opportunities

- Maintaining and encouraging the spirit of ubuntu amongst host community to the displaced persons way:
 - Host community voluntary support to the displaced persons.
 - Ways of enhancing host community food production capacity. For example, automatically considering them as project participants of the agriculture component.
- Transitioning from emergency to early recovery through agricultural activities (production, marketing, and value addition).
- Creating an emergency project learning document grounded in the various DRIVE project phases to prove the theory of change and demonstrate the value of emergency interventions.
- Partnering with like-minded organizations, especially in the implementation of the agriculture component to act as an exit and sustainability plan.
- Provision of other basic needs like health and education in the target communities.

3.10.4 Threats

- Continuous conflict outbreaks and influx of displaced persons in areas the project is already implementing and its budget implications.
- Loss of agricultural gains, especially in the returnee communities in the event that another conflict happens.
- Infrastructural logistics that not only affect access to target communities, but also inflate the transportation and security budgets.
- Insecurity.
- Climate uncertainty.

3.11 Challenges encountered

The DRIVE project was well thought out, and therefore, it anticipated and mitigated some challenges during the implementation stage. The anticipated risks included:

- Insecurity concerns in the volatile region rife with interethnic clashes. CRS took precautions through the security department that monitors the situation on the ground and advises staff accordingly. For example, where insecurity was rife, CRS avoided implementing in such places.

- Fraud risks: The DRIVE project has mechanisms that screen for fraud cases, especially amongst the vendors and project participants. Anybody found guilty is punished by being removed from the project activities. For example, a vendor who is found soliciting for favours from project participants by buying out their vouchers is punished by being excluded from participating in the fairs.
- Accessibility of target areas in relation to transportation: CRS partnered with Caritas on the ground to enable smooth running of the project.
- Displacement of project participants: No cases of displacement of project participants were reported during the project period. However, CRS mitigates for this by ensuring that they intervene in relatively peaceful environments for the time the project is in operation.
- Assessments to determine distribution mechanism (fair or cash option): CRS constantly monitors the distribution modalities and where there is need, a modality can be substituted with another. For example, there are instances where fairs have been replaced with cash.
- Weak markets: In response to the fact that availability of food and NFIs in the target communities is a problem, CRS adopts fairs as its modality, whereby vendors take their goods to the project participants through fairs. This not only makes it easier for project participants to access the required items, but also provides an opportunity for the vendors to increase their sales.
- Cash payment insecurities: CRS uses a third party to pay project participants where cash is involved.

However, the following challenges were experienced:

- Supplier delays in delivery of farm inputs, meaning late delivery to the farmers. This had a negative impact on production
- Inaccessible roads (state of the roads/bridges). This meant some displaced persons could not be reached with support
- Vendors not having adequate stocks during fairs
- Increased price during fairs by vendors
- Delayed vendor payments

3.12 Lessons learned and best practices for future programming

The DRIVE project employed a flexible approach in its operations. This allowed for change in choice of modalities to employ in different contexts, as well as choice of localities to implement the project. This enabled the project to deliver its desired outcomes. Further, the partnership with Caritas, who had a ground-level presence in the implementation sites enhanced CRS access and timely delivery of assistance to the project participants. However, CRS needs to be careful with the choice of partners so as to not engage those that may tint her reputation. To successfully support agriculture, timing of the seasons is critical. Therefore, at the design of the project, agricultural activities should be aligned with the farming seasons. Targeting women as household representatives to receive household assistance was strategic, as it not only ensured that support reached the households, but also enhanced women's decision making on the use of the assistance. The monitoring visits and prompt feedback to the implementors helped to arrest any situations that would otherwise make the work not go well. The project learnt along the implementation curve. For example, upon realizing that the fairs were not working in the first distribution, they adopted the cash modality in the next deliveries.

3.13 Summary and conclusions

The DRIVE project design was good/clear and comprehensive in the activities that enabled it to achieve its set goal and objectives. Thus, the activities were in line with the humanitarian needs of the targeted communities. DRIVE's flexibility in the selection of intervention site and assistance distribution modalities was considerate and reflected the reality of an emergency programme, whose dynamics cannot be fully planned for until the real situations are at play. The implementation strategy especially the choice of hard-to-reach communities and an enabling partnership is commendable, and this made assistance delivery attainable within the stipulated time, making what would have been very difficult to achieve look like an easy delivery. The DRIVE project served some of the most remote, hard-to-reach communities that had only seen Caritas/CRS since they became displaced. They were completely cut out of access to any type of aid and, therefore, not many humanitarian bodies could have reached them.

The agriculture complementary assistance is a good move towards achieving the DRIVE food access outcomes beyond the project cycle. In a way, it can be described as a symbol or a footprint of the aftermath of the implementation of an emergency programme. While there was nothing to show from the IDPs after the assistance, the returnees had every reason to smile as they showed off their harvest and crops in the farm. This exposed the potential of an emergency programme graduating to early recovery and setting up for community development. The agriculture component creates a sense of continuity to the community, a lesson that should be entrenched in emergency programmes, especially those working with returnees. Further, the findings reveal a difference between IDPs and returnees in terms of hope to continue. The presence of food in their farms gave hope and somehow created a sense of independence. This was not the case with IDPs, who were still hopeful that they would get more assistance in food and NFIs. The returnees were only asking for more support in their farming. The fact that communities are able to go back to their livelihood activities, and in an improved way, is commendable considering that this is an emergency programme with a short implementation period. The DRIVE project offers lessons for future interventions that focus on building back communities after displacement experiences, and more so on their livelihoods.

Overall, the project achieved its set objectives and outcomes and provided relief to not only the project participants, but also the host communities who had assumed the role of meeting the needs of the displaced persons in their homes and/or communities. This in itself helped to enhance relationships, creating a better co-existence environment between the displaced persons and the host communities. The CRS-Caritas relationship worked well and enabled the project to achieve its intended goal. On its part, Caritas was also able to successfully manage the emergency project on the ground with support from CRS. The DRIVE project can be credited for providing an opportunity to both partners to explore their strengths and weaknesses and learn from each other, more so on how to work better in future. More importantly, Caritas got an opportunity to learn from CRS's many years of experience implementing emergency projects.

The DRIVE project was deliberate in addressing the question of gender right from the targeting exercise to delivery of assistance at the household level. This is very important, considering that the question of gender is fluid in emergency situations where families get separated and women become the sole breadwinners. CRS's deliberate move to nominate women to be the household representatives was a good move towards ensuring that the assistance reached the other household members. The move also empowered the women, especially in the

participation and decision-making in regard to household, farm, and other activities. Men appreciated that the women were the right persons to make sure that the assistance was received in the households, citing the fact that the women involved them in the use of the assistance. Overall, there were no gender related violence cases emanating from the assistance given.

The findings presented in this report lead to a conclusion that the DRIVE project was a success as it achieved its goal and objectives of food and NFI provision and agriculture assistance that helped to address the much-needed humanitarian needs of the project participants. Asked what would have happened if the project had not supported them, FGD participants in various groups and locations repeated the same sentiments: “Some of us would have died.” The project participants termed the project as life-saving.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested to enhance performance of subsequent DRIVE projects.

4.1 Programmatic

1. The targeting phase is surrounded by beneficiary dissatisfaction due to various reasons, including rigidity in accommodating displaced persons after the first targeting exercise, lack of clear/inadequate information about the targeting dates/timings, and ‘listers’ suspicious nature when handling the prospective Project participants. Therefore:
 - a. CRS needs to consider flexibility around targeting, especially in areas where displacements are on-going up to a certain amount of time. The proposal is to have a provision for an on-going targeting exercise that lasts for about three weeks from the first targeting exercise.
 - b. In addition to use of local leaders to communicate with the displaced persons, use of representatives from the displaced persons, especially among the IDPs, to help identify and also get information to prospective participants. This will go a long way to increase the chances of passing project information on to the displaced persons.
 - c. In addition to the training that the listers receive, CRS needs to develop a detailed training manual to train listers, covering various topics but most importantly, the need to exercise a humane approach, while still ensuring that the process does not get flawed.
 - d. Recruiting the right listers. For example, social workers or those who have worked in humanitarian situations will go a long way to boost the outcome of this exercise.
2. The agriculture component of the DRIVE project has shown positive results in addressing the main objectives of the project. The current efforts can be boosted by re-designing the project to undertake a holistic approach to the agriculture component. This means that the project will use the emergency approach as a community entry point and thereafter focus on sustainable recovery efforts. Thus, the project needs to address the following:
 - a. Increase the agriculture component budget and implementation period from the three emergency months to about 36 months recovery period. This will allow for adequate beneficiary support time, at least for three seasons, before project exit. The first year can be used for training, including demonstration farms and production, input support. The second year can be used for continued production. The third year may focus on training on value addition and market linkages.

- b. Introduce a marketing/value addition component to the project to boost income generating activities within the communities. For example, groundnut processing through trained market-oriented women groups or even youth marketing groups.
 - c. Tap into local knowledge, especially to determine when to provide which support. For example, some crops will not do well in certain seasons, or some variety of seeds will not do well in one region, but will do well in another.
 - d. Provide timely supply of farm inputs based on the farming seasons, considering that each activity happens at specific times (land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, storage, etc.).
 - e. The question of cultural beliefs and practices in farming (modern vs traditional seeds, shift from a particular farming method to another, etc.) needs to be addressed through continuous training in order to have an effective attitude change.
3. The three distribution modalities are good but each one of them has its own challenges.
 - a. The project should consider cash as the preferred modality of assistance delivery.
 - b. Where fairs are used, CRS needs to inform the vendors about the fair dates three weeks from the actual fair activity to allow them ample time to prepare.
 - c. There is a need to pay the vendors the agreed amounts in the agreed currency and on time.
 4. The M&E department should initiate a study to establish whether the amounts given per category (1-3) are adequate in order to make informed decisions on whether to retain or change the amounts.

4.2 Host community support

1. The project should not encourage support to host communities with NFIs and food in order to avoid dependency and the risk of eroding community goodwill in hosting displaced persons that is deeply entrenched in their cultures.
2. Instead, the project needs to consider extending the agriculture component to the host communities who frequently receive displaced persons to boost food availability and affordability in the community.

4.3 Partnerships and collaborations

1. CRS partnership with Caritas is strategic and complementary, and therefore, should continue. CRS should continue the direct support they offer Caritas, especially in monitoring project activities.
2. CRS should carefully select partners to collaborate with in projects to avoid inconveniences, especially where sharing of activities is anticipated.
3. At the exit phase, CRS should try to link agricultural project participants to other actors to enable them to continue getting support for their farming. CRS can achieve this by conducting an NGO mapping exercise to establish which NGOs are operating in DRIVE project areas and sectors.