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MID TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: FEED THE FUTURE HINGA WEZE ACTIVITY USAID/RWANDA

Overview of the Assessment

The Learning Evaluation and Analysis Project (LEAP) III team conducted a mid-term performance evaluation of the Feed the Future (FTF) Hinga Weze Activity, which included a cost benefit analysis (CBA) for specific value chains. The objective of this evaluation was to optimize the activity's implementation to improve performance over the remaining life of the activity, in addition to helping USAID determine next steps to sustain the activity's positive outcomes.

FTF's Hinga Weze Activity works in ten districts throughout Rwanda: Gatsibo, Kayonza, Bugesera, and Ngoma in the Eastern Province; Nyabihu, Rutsiro, Ngororeo, Nyamasheke, and Karongi in the Western Province; and Nyamagabe in the Southern Province. The Activity has three objectives: 1) sustainably increase farmers' incomes, 2) improve the nutritional status of women and children, and 3) increase the resilience of the agriculture and food systems in the face of a changing climate.

Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, combining a desk review, qualitative interviews, and quantitative data collection to answer five evaluation questions. These questions covered areas such as increasing farmer income, linkages to processors and aggregators, providing financial, human and material resources to terracing and irrigation farmers, increasing farmer productivity and climate resilience and improving nutrition for women and children.

A quantitative survey instrument was developed by the LEAP III team alongside Dalberg Research, reaching 408 farming households in all ten districts where Hinga Weze is implemented. Qualitative information was obtained through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. A CBA was conducted on three crops- maize, orange fleshed sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes- to assess the benefits and costs of different technologies intended to increase productivity and climate resilience.

Findings

- Hinga Weze is well regarded in Rwanda, and has excellent coordination at all levels.
- There are well targeted nutrition interventions that address the diverse challenges in Rwanda, and respondents reported behavior changes as a result of the interventions.
- There is a need for improved data to monitor and better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all Hinga Weze activities.

Recommendations

- Expand linkages between farmer cooperatives and buyers to ensure the sustainability of program benefits.
- Strengthen capacity among cooperatives and agro-business owners to promote sustained growth, including training terracing and irrigation farmers on equipment maintenance and improved business practices.
- Hinga Weze should promote strong governance of cooperatives and extension models, including the Twigie Muhunzi model, improving management and building upon successful activities by Community Health Workers to promote nutrition and youth engagement.