



**U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Office of Food for Peace**

Quarterly Program Performance Report

Awardee Name: CARE **Country:** Zimbabwe
Award Name: Takunda **Award Number:** 72DFFP20CA00007
Start Date: October 1, 2020 **End date:** September 30, 2025
Reporting Period: FY2021/Quarter I - October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020
Submission Date: 30/01/2021

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ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATIONS

BDS	Business Development Services
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
BPC	Bulawayo Projects Center
CFA	Cash for Assets
COP	Chief of Party
CV	Community Visioning
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DIS	Development Information System Planning for HH Census
EA	Environment Africa
EKG	Evidence and Knowledge Gaps
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FY	Fiscal Year
GYSD	Gender Youth and Social Dynamics
HA	Hectare
HHs	Households
IDEAL	Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IYF	International Youth Foundation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNCH	Maternal and Child Health Nutrition
NAZ	Nutrition Action Zimbabwe
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PI,P2,P3	Purpose 1, Purpose 2, Purpose 3
PCS	Program Cycle Support
PMU	Project Management Unit
R&I	Refine and Implement
RCT	Randomized Control Trials
RMNCAH	Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health
SBC	Social Behavior Change
SBCL	Social Behavior Change Lead
SMTN	Sun Mountain
SoW	Statement of Work
ToC	Theory of Change
TVET	Tertiary, Vocational and Educational Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
ZIPIT	ZIMSWITCH Instant Payment Interchange Technology

I INTRODUCTION

I.1 Program Overview Table

Takunda is a five-year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) funded food security and resilience program. The program focuses on Manicaland and Masvingo provinces targeting 301,636 vulnerable and food insecure women, men, and youth (young men and women) from extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households (HHs); HHs with adolescents, children, and women at risk of chronic and acute malnutrition. The targeted communities face the following key challenges that impede their ability to attain food and nutrition security: (1) poverty and limited financial resources; (2) gender inequalities and limiting negative social norms, cultural beliefs, and behaviors; (3) limited youth empowerment; (4) weak institutional/organizational governance and accountability. Takunda will address these challenges through a number of critical pathways aimed at sustainably improving HH income, nutritional status, and resilience to shocks and stressors while prioritizing the cross-cutting areas of gender equality, youth empowerment, local governance and accountability, and environmental safeguards. Table I below provides an overview of the Takunda program:

Table I: Takunda Program Overview

Geographic Focus: Zimbabwe - Buhera and Mutare Districts (in Manicaland Province), Chivi and Zaka Districts (in Masvingo Province)
Program Goal: Sustainable, Equitable, and Resilient Food, Nutrition and Income Security in Masvingo and Manicaland
<p>Purpose 1: Gender equitable income among extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households, women, and youth increased</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 1:</i> Increased adoption of income-earning diverse livelihoods for extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households, especially women and youth, and former HA and CFA recipients</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 1.2:</i> Services/systems for engagement of women and youth in livelihood activities improved</p>
<p>Purpose 2: Nutritional status among children < 5, adolescent girls and women of reproductive age improved</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 2.1:</i> Infant and young child, maternal and adolescent diets and health practices in emergency and non-emergency improved</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 2.2:</i> HHs with potable water and safely managed sanitation facilities increased</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 2.3:</i> Utilization of Quality Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) and nutrition services increased</p>
<p>Purpose 3: Impacts of shocks and stresses reduced for extremely poor and chronically vulnerable households, women and youth.</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 3.1:</i> HH and community adaptive, absorptive and transformative capacities to address environmental, economic, climatic and other shocks and stressors improved</p> <p><i>Sub-Purpose 3.2:</i> Transformative capacities in integrated systems, structures and services support equitable and sustainable use of productive resources and assets</p>

<i>Sub-Purpose 3.3: Gender-inclusive, intergenerational management/decision-making on household and community productive resources and assets enhanced</i>		
Target Beneficiaries (disaggregated by program element and by FY2021 – FY2025)		
Program Element	Participant Numbers	Participant HHs
Agriculture /Private Sector Productivity	165,035	41,961
Maternal & Child Health Nutrition & WASH	239,350	61,017
Climate Change-Adaptation & Civil Society	154,163	35,052
Roles and Responsibilities of Takunda Partners		
<p>CARE provides the Consortium with leadership, technical support, expertise, and mentorship in all areas (nutrition, WASH, agriculture and livelihoods, resilience, youth, gender, and environmental management). Additionally, this includes contracts, finances, staffing and management of all partners</p> <p>Takunda’s three Zimbabwean NGO partners are the Bulawayo Projects Center (BPC), Nutrition Action Zimbabwe (NAZ), and Environment Africa (EA). They have implementation responsibilities across all four districts in their respective technical areas (per agreed scope of work). BPC serves as the lead Implementing Partner (IP) on Tertiary, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) as well as Business development Services (BDS) under P1 (Livelihoods). NAZ is the lead nutrition IP under P2 (MNCH and WASH). EA leads in Natural Resources Management (NRM) and Early Warning Systems (EWS) under P3 (Resilience).</p> <p>Takunda’s two international partners are the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Family Health International 360 (FHI 360), with Sun Mountain (SMTN) as a contractor. IYF is Takunda’s youth lead and FHI 360 is the leading the Social Behavior Change (SBC) component of the program.</p>		

1.2 Operational Context

Takunda’s program area comprises a dynamic and complex operating environment in southern Zimbabwe. The reporting period was characterized by rising incidence and prevalence of COVID-19, limited access to health services, rising levels of food insecurity, high commodity prices, as well as a deteriorating economic environment¹.

As the head of the consortium, CARE has existing signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in their areas of operation with Rural District Councils and has government authorization to work in the targeted districts in Zimbabwe. Partners continue to enjoy strong community and stakeholder support for the rollout of the program in Zimbabwe.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/monitoring-covid-19-impacts-zimbabwean-households>

Predictions stated that the 2020/2021 agricultural season would receive normal to above normal rainfall, with chances of flash floods in some areas². This prediction proved to be correct in this quarter as Takunda targeted areas received a significant amount of rainfall, with some areas experiencing floods, violent storms and damage to homesteads due to La Niña weather patterns. The actual amounts of rainfall received in the targeted districts could not be ascertained at the time of reporting. Farmers embarked on land preparation, re-planting and some farmers in Manicaland as well as parts of the Masvingo Provinces have reported incidences of waterlogging and leaching. As a result, some farmers had to replant because of poor emergency due to waterlogging. The management of waterlogging requires improved soil and water technologies that facilitate drainage and infiltration to ensure farmers get good crop yields. At the time of reporting, details on the hectares and percentage of farmers affected could not be comprehensively ascertained.

Since reports of the first imported COVID-19 case in Zimbabwe on March 20, 2020, local transmissions and deaths have been on an increase. As of December 28, 2020, the country had about 13, 148 COVID-19 confirmed cases, including 10,705 recoveries and 354 deaths³⁴. The number of COVID-19 cases are projected to increase rapidly due to the inflow of migrants returning home for the Christmas holidays from South Africa, Botswana and another neighboring country. The COVID-19 has exacerbated Zimbabwe's dire economic and food insecurity, drastically affecting the lives of people in both urban and rural areas. The majority of people in Zimbabwe are practicing COVID-19 preventative measure such as hand washing and sanitization, social distancing, wearing face masks⁵. However, frequent hand washing is constrained by water and soap shortages in some areas⁶. The effects of COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns in Zimbabwe has resulted in job losses and considerable fall in incomes which subsequently affect household access to food and health services⁷. COVID-19 has offered both opportunities and challenges for people and organizations in Zimbabwe as businesses and operational modalities have to realign their operations with technological advancements (i.e., e-marketing, e-payments, e-learning and in some cases e-monitoring). Takunda's implementation strategies will align to the new way of doing business, both at organizational and implementation levels.

Access to and utilization of essential health services declined during the reporting period compared to the same time last year⁸. This could be due to health staff going on industrial strike, the high costs of health services and fear of contracting COVID-19 at health centers. This could have negative impacts on access to maternal and child health services for pregnant women, adolescent girls and children under 2 years of age.

² <http://www.cfuzim.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/msd2021.pdf>

³ [https://www.africanews.com/2020/12/29/coronavirus-zimbabwe-covid-19-update-28th-december-2020//](https://www.africanews.com/2020/12/29/coronavirus-zimbabwe-covid-19-update-28th-december-2020/)

⁴ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/zimbabwe/>

⁵ <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/481281610384678412/monitoring-covid-19-impact-on-households-in-zimbabwe-results-from-a-high-frequency-telephone-survey-of-households>

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/monitoring-covid-19-impacts-zimbabwean-households>

⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/monitoring-covid-19-impacts-zimbabwean-households>

⁸ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/zimbabwe/> Zimbabwe Situation Report Last Updated 4 Dec 2020 (OCHA)

The Civil Protection Unit and the Meteorological Department shared early warning information on Cyclone Chalane through different media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter for quick and easy communication. This resulted in an increase in participants in risky areas taking heed of the messages⁹. Fortunately, the Cyclone weakened upon reaching land, causing more rains with little- to-no destruction.

Although basic goods are generally available on the formal markets, inflation continues to erode purchasing power and the affordability of food and other essential goods. This has resulted in increased numbers of desperate families eating less, selling off precious belongings and going into debt, a trend continuing since July 2020¹⁰. During the reporting period, cash shortages continued as banks limit cash withdrawals. This pushed people towards mobile/electronic monetary transactions, such as Ecocash with high user charges, ZIMSWITCH Instant Payment Interchange Technology (ZIPIT), and bank cards. The official exchange rate fluctuated between 81.50 and 81.79 Zimbabwe Dollar (ZW\$) to the US Dollar (USD). The rate of inflation continued on a downward trend from 659.4 at the end of September 2020 to 348.59 in December 2020 and this is partly due to the foreign exchange auction that that has stabilized the formal exchange rate¹¹.

Takunda will continue to monitor changes in the operational environment, and if identified assumptions and risks do change significantly making achievements of results impossible, the program will liaise with USAID for necessary adaptive management.

2 ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Key activities undertaken during the startup of the Refine and Implement (R&I) year of Takunda included: start-up meetings with Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA); the Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Team, specifically their Program Cycle Support (PCS) Team; the identification of evidence and knowledge gaps; a refinement of Takunda's Theory of Change; and the development of initial statement of work for priority research and processes to take place during the R&I year.

Takunda partners held a partner (internal) Start-Up Workshop where staff received an orientation on the program's technical approach, management plan, and first-year refinement process. The Takunda partners clarified roles and responsibilities for each of the consortium partners.

PCS assisted Takunda with rectifying basic logic or other flaws in the ToC diagrams, such that inception discussions can remain focused on the identification of critical information gaps that will drive formative research plans in the refinement year (versus ToC logic challenges, etc.). PCS again provided Takunda staff with detailed guidance and facilitative support on using the ToC to identify and document information gaps that Takunda will discuss with BHA during

⁹ <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/75587>

¹⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/zimbabwe-food-idAFL5N2F13G8?edition-redirect=uk>

¹¹ <https://tradingeconomics.com/zimbabwe/inflation-cpi>

inception conversations. These meetings were well attended by Takunda PMU with support from CARE USA.

3 INTERGRATION AND CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Community Visioning

In preparation for the Community Visioning (CV) exercise that will help communities envision the change they want to experience in their communities, CARE developed preliminary guidance and a guideline that is undergoing refinement. The CV guideline lays out the stages and considerations to follow in operationalising the CV concepts, objectives, principles and procedures. The guide introduces the CV concept and provides a step-by-step process on how to implement the approach based on CV principles. The guide reflects the sequential process of consultation, planning and producing a Community Action Plan (CAP) through the Community Visioning Process.

3.2 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment

As part of the Refine and Implement phase, Takunda program staff had an orientation on BHA expectations and standards on effective gender integration in Takunda, with reference made to the BHA's ADS 205 document for continuous guidance during project role out. The review and refinement of purpose-specific TOC gender pathways followed with technical support from BHA. Takunda then developed an initial Gender Analysis Scope of Work (SoW) to guide the Gender Analysis process set for quarter two. The process entailed the identification of Evidence and Knowledge Gaps (EKGs), which will inform the gender study. A review of the SBC, value chain and market systems SOWs and CV process will ensure effective gender integration from the onset of Takunda. As part of preparing for the Gender, Youth and Social Dynamics (GYSD) consultation workshop, Takunda worked on BHA's gender assignments which were again submitted to BHA and made part of the gender workshop presentations.

3.3 Environmental Compliance

Takunda developed a SoW for the activity-level Initial Environmental Examination (IEE). The IEE will be a first assessment of reasonably foreseeable impacts on the environment of each proposed activity. This will provide sufficient information and analysis regarding the environmental effects. Takunda, based on threshold levels, will use the IEE findings to make determinations on whether the activity can go forward, and under what conditions. Takunda requested a waiver from BHA for submission of the IEE from the end of the first quarter to the end of the refinement period, September 30, 2021. The reason for this is to allow Takunda sufficient time to consult with communities to confirm the types of interventions for which the IEE is necessary. BHA approved this request on November 20, 2020.

3.4 Institutional Strengthening and Local Capacity Building

The program is still in the start-up phases and therefore nothing has taken place yet in terms of collaboration with and/or capacity building of host government/local institutions.

3.5 Youth

Takunda began the process of holistic integration of positive and inclusive strategies of young women/men and adolescent boys and girls into implementation plans of the project. Takunda staff participated in BHA's start-up virtual workshops where youth engagement, inclusion and empowerment objectives were highlighted as cross-cutting in all three project purpose areas. There was also a reflection and review of Takunda's ToC to ensure adequate youth integration in other studies and processes like SBC, CV, value chains and market systems. Youth intervention areas were clearly articulated featuring the importance of close coordination between the consortium partners towards a common goal. Takunda has developed an initial SOW draft for a 'Youth Opportunities, Capacities, Financial, and Labor Market Assessment' in preparation for the study in project areas. The assessment will address identified information gaps having reviewed existing literature and past program reports.

3.6 Social Behavior Change Communication

Social Behavior Change (SBC) start-up activities during this period under review centered on defining an initial Scope of Work (SoW) for technical support; initiating a Landscape Analysis survey; conducting an SBC literature review to help inform project design, and developing an initial SBC Capacity Development plan. The SBC Capacity Development Plan aims to orient and strengthen appropriate competencies of project staff so that they can successfully achieve the project goals using evidence-informed SBC activities across all program purposes.

4 SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY

Takunda oriented new staff on the program sustainability and exit strategy which revolves around two complementary approaches, namely empowering communities to organize themselves into groups and structures that help participants pursue their goals and groups and simultaneously identifying local service providers (both public, private and community members) who will provide services and/or inputs to community groups.

5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Takunda finalized the program's start-up work plan and shared with all partners. Takunda did most of the activities virtually, as the nation was under lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the work plan, Takunda initiated staff recruitments and the procurement process, inception meetings, and setting up of the PMU. Takunda held a Program Management Unit (PMU) meeting to discuss operation modalities, roles, and responsibilities. Takunda signed the IPIA (CARE USA and CARE Zimbabwe internal project agreements) and partner sub-agreements during the quarter, with all partners showing commitment to make this program a success. Takunda shared finance report templates with partners as well as the plan for finance compliance monitoring in the next quarters.

Through virtual meetings, Takunda, in collaboration with USAID and CNFA, announced the Zimbabwe Resilience Food Security Assistance programs, namely Takunda and Amalima Loko. Following the announcement, Takunda participated in several combined meetings with the USAID Harare/HAR Office to discuss operational modalities.

CARE established a Project Management Unit made up of consortium partner staff – specifically 1 from FHI 360, 1 IYF and 7 CARE staff. Takunda filled about 70 percent of key leadership positions in the quarter, and these comprised of the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP), M&E Lead, GYSD Lead, CV Lead and CLA Lead. BHA approved the absence of the Chief of Party (COP) from the activity, from October 1, 2020 through to January 15, 2021. The DCOP took the reins during the reporting period with remote support from the COP. Recruitment for other positions started, including the development of job descriptions, job grading, posting job announcements, interviewing applicants, and short-listing candidates. Takunda will fill the remaining positions on an incremental basis next quarter.

Staff orientation will continue in phases as more staff come on board. During the quarter, all members of the Takunda PMU participated in a training on USG compliance led by CARE USA. This equipped participants with USAID/USG rules and regulations, Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) and compliance in all program and program support areas. CARE will share this information with sub-partners to ensure compliance with donor regulations. Another critical training has been scheduled for the next quarter for all partners to ensure consistency in program systems, expectations for performance, and performance review across the consortium.

Takunda will house all consortium partners on office in each of the five locations where offices are set up namely Buhera, Chivi, Masvingo, Mutare, and Zaka. This will promote team cohesion and ensure efficient resource use. Takunda identified office and warehouse space in the reporting period, and warehouse inspections took place in Masvingo and Mutare as the program initiated the setting up of offices. Takunda will finalize district office agreements in the next quarter.

Takunda developed a procurement plan to guide the purchases of materials and the engagement of services and to ensure that all purchases are within budget. Some equipment such as vehicles, motorbikes, laptops, and tablets are already in the procurement pipeline and Takunda will receive these in the next quarter. CARE sought for a change in the ‘specifications waiver’ on vehicles and motorbikes, and BHA granted this waiver. Takunda plans to procure more materials in the next quarter. BHA offered Takunda a donation of vehicles and supplies as listed in Table 2. Takunda has since received supplies. BHA and Takunda will finalize discussions on the vehicle donations in the next quarter.

Table 2: List of Materials Donated to Takunda by BHA

Item	Quantity
Height Boards	22
Height Boards Carrycase	22
Mother/Child Scale	21
Garmin GPS	20
Power Invertors	15
Asus Tablets	60 (5 cracked)

The BHA Local Mission trained three Takunda staff (i.e. the DCOP, M&E Lead, and GYSD Lead) on the Development Information System (DIS), which is a portfolio management system used to improve USAID's business and operational efficiencies in managing partner portfolios. Furthermore, the system serves as a repository for digital data sets.

6 LESSONS LEARNED

One major lesson drawn from the COVID -19 era is the push for people to work from home and embracing the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (e.g., zoom, Microsoft teams, WhatsApp etc.) to execute duties. Key strategic decisions now need to be made by organizations to ensure operations continue in an unusual operating environment while still meeting Takunda's set objectives and targets. Virtual program start-up workshops under the COVID-19 context calls for timely investment in ICT equipment and related hardware support to ensure connectivity for continued remote work.

7 CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Table 3 shows the challenges incurred by Takunda during the reporting period and the associated responses.

Table 3: Challenges and Responses

Challenge/Issue	Responses and Status
Operating fully remote in a context where staff face connectivity challenges resulting in failure to fully participate in virtual meetings.	Ongoing challenge; adaptive approaches such using different tools for group meetings and sharing discussion points before and after meeting are being implemented. Limited office presence within COVID19 protocols allowed those challenged by electricity and internet connectivity.
Mobility restrictions due to COVID-19 lockdown that impacted on start-up preparatory works such as regular interaction with key government officials and physical inspections of vendors.	Ongoing challenge: the program continues to identify opportunities to engage with key government officials when time and space allows. These include small gatherings with 2-5 persons for face to face conversations/ use of phone, email and printed communication.
Takunda had planned to have finalized recruitment of most key staff including Purpose leads in December 2020 but two of the three purpose leads turned down offers leaving Takunda with the need to re advertise.	Ongoing challenge: Takunda is continuing its recruitment challenged by lack of face to face engagement with candidates with others having to make difficult family decisions in the pandemic time. CARE is allowing staff to work from home/nearest office and only relocate to assigned project bases when the conditions improve for them to work and after the inception workshops period is over.

8 PLANS FOR QUARTER TWO OF FISCAL YEAR 2021

The plans for Quarter Two of Fiscal Year 2021 are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Plans for Quarter Two of Fiscal Year 2021

Planned Activities Quarter: FY2021/Q2	Month: 2021	Comments (Indicate Opportunity/Need for Media and/or USAID or Bilateral Mission Involvement, Particularly for USAID Project Monitoring Site Visits)
Finalization of Agreements for District Offices	January	
GYSD Consultation	January	Led by PCS/BHA
Inception Workshops	January/ February	Led by PCS/BHA
Phase I Staff Orientation	February	Bring up to date all staff
RCT Methodology Finalization – Characterization	March	Led by BHA
Community Engagement and Community Visioning	March	Starts with concurrence on methodology from BHA, then training of Takunda staff and stakeholder engagement followed by community entry meetings
Collection of Vehicle Donations	February	
M&E Database Set-Up	February	A key process to allow collection of household census data
Commodity Call Forward	February	
Start Household Census	March	Pending finalization of the RCT sampling; synergies to be built with the CV process as appropriate.
Recruitments – Finalization	March	
SoWs Finalization	February/ March	