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ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATIONS

BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CLA Lead	Collaboration Learning and Adaptation Lead
FY	Fiscal Year
IDEAL	Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IPA	Innovation for Poverty Action
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health Nutrition
PCS	Program Cycle Support
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
R&I	Refine and Implement
RCT	Randomized Control Trials
RFSA	Resilience and Food Security Activity
SoW	Statement of Work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WQAP	Water Quality Assurance Plan

I INTRODUCTION AND OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Takunda is a five-year Resilience Food Security Activity funded by USAID/BHA and implemented by a consortium¹ primed by CARE in Zimbabwe. The program started on October 1, 2020 and is currently going through its refine and implement phase. Takunda's goal is to achieve sustainable, equitable, and resilient food, nutrition, and income security in Masvingo and Manicaland provinces of Zimbabwe. The program is implemented in the Buhera and Mutare Districts (in Manicaland Province), and in Chivi and Zaka Districts (in Masvingo Province).

I.1 Operational Context

The second quarter of fiscal year 2021 was characterized by the continued prevalence of COVID-19, food insecurity, high commodity prices, as well as a deteriorating economic environment². In January, the Government of Zimbabwe imposed a national COVID-19 lockdown that moved the COVID-19 classification from level 2 to level 4. This lockdown lasted two months and was followed by a relaxation of lockdown measures from level 4 to level 1. The effects of COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns in Zimbabwe continue to erode incomes which subsequently affect household access to food and health services³. Takunda staff continued to comply with the Government of Zimbabwe, CARE, and other consortium member's COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in program activities. The key SOPs included maintaining social distancing, temperature checking, washing of hands and sanitizing, and the proper wearing of masks. There were no specific surges in infection among targeted rural populations and project sites and most of the COVID-19 cases were reported in the urban centers.

Zimbabwe recorded a favorable rainy season that was deemed to be above average and led to an improvement in food supply. Despite this favorable season, income and food access is expected to remain constrained in Southern, and Western areas, where Takunda is operational^{4, 5}, due to depressed income-earning activities. The Takunda program areas are characterized by a projected stressed food insecurity phase (IPC Phase 2) for the period of March - May 2021, requiring humanitarian assistance⁶. It is worth noting that this reporting period coincides with the peak of the lean season with about 3.4 million people in rural areas of Zimbabwe projected to face a crisis or emergency food insecurity⁷.

The market prices for some goods and services, especially fuel and bread prices increased during the quarter, with the parallel market exchange rates as the key driver of high and

¹ The consortium members include Bulawayo Project Center, Environment Africa, FHI360, International Youth Foundation and Nutrition Action Zimbabwe

² <https://fews.net/southern-africa/zimbabwe/key-message-update/january-2021>

³ <https://fews.net/southern-africa/zimbabwe/food-security-outlook/february-2021>

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-key-message-update-despite-anticipated-improved-food-access-income-expected>

⁵ <https://fews.net/southern-africa/zimbabwe/food-security-outlook/february-2021>

⁶ <https://fews.net/southern-africa/zimbabwe/key-message-update/january-2021>

⁷ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/zimbabwe>

increasing prices⁸. Takunda will continue to monitor changes in the operational environment, and if identified assumptions and risks do change and significantly affect program results, Takunda will undertake necessary adaptive management USAID approval.

Zimbabwe continued to experience a stable social and political climate in the last quarter, and program areas did not witness any concerns in cohesion or political upheaval. This stability is expected to continue in the coming months and will provide a conducive opportunity to conduct early engagement activities with the local leaders and communities.

2 ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

This quarter was focused on getting the key planning processes of the Refine and Implement year underway. Takunda received support, guidance, and direction from the Program Cycle Support (PCS) team of the Implementer-Led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) activity. PCS, in collaboration with USAID/BHA staff, supported Takunda to review its Theory of Change, identify key information gaps, and begin the process of filling these gaps. The inception workshop, gender and social dynamics and community visioning workshops culminated in the identification and prioritization of evidence and knowledge gaps (formulated into formative studies, pilots, and scoping studies).

At the end of these workshops and consultations, Takunda developed scopes of work for priority research and processes to take place during the refine and implement year. Four scopes of work were submitted to BHA and approved: namely, Gender Analysis (GA), Social Behavior Change (SBC) formative research, Agriculture Value Chain, and Off-Farm Opportunities, Capacities, Financial and Labor Market Assessment.

In addition to the above studies, Takunda identified several micro-studies, pilots and learning areas for implementation in the refine and implement year. These were consolidated in the Refine and Implement Workplan and submitted to BHA at the end of the quarter.

As an off-shoot from the inception workshops and consultations, Takunda was able to identify opportunities to engage with USAID funded technical mechanisms. These included Strengthening Capacity in Agriculture, Livelihood and Environment (SCALE), Learning Evaluation and Analysis (LEAP III), Practices, Research and Operations in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (PRO-WASH), USAID Advancing Nutrition and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to support in the design of interventions, trainings, analysis of study outputs and tracking progress of interventions ([Annex I](#)).

The program conducted district and provincial stakeholder sensitization and inception meetings in the four operational districts. Takunda sensitized key district stakeholders, especially the District Food and Nutrition Committees (DFNCs), Ministries of Local Government, Agriculture, Gender, Small and Medium Enterprises on the Takunda project. The inception meetings presented an opportunity for them to share their ideas, views, and recommendations

⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-key-message-update-despite-anticipated-improved-food-access-income-expected>

on smooth implementation of the project: for example, they emphasized the need to share workplans, progress reports and joint monitoring activities⁹. The engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders allowed a deeper understanding of their expected roles in the implementation of program activities.

In preparation for the startup of program activities, mostly priority studies and pilots or micro experiments, Takunda validated all operational Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) across the ninety-two (92) wards and submitted to IPA (a USAID RCT evaluation contractor) for sampling of RCT VIDCOs. A VIDCO is a cluster of villages. IPA finalized the selection of 75 control and 125 treatment VIDCOs. Takunda finalized the commodity call forward during the reporting period, as the program prepared for nutrition rations distributions. Engagements for a shift from food for assets to cash for assets with USAID/BHA began during the quarter and will continue during the next quarter.

3 INTEGRATION AND CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Community Visioning

The Takunda staff participated in the community engagement workshop facilitated by PCS and brought together BHA and the two Zimbabwe RFSAs (Amalima Loko and Takunda) through a two-day roundtable discussion. The community engagement roundtable enabled the exchange of experiences on four important questions: (i) who you plan to engage (stakeholders); (ii) how you plan to engage (process); (iii) what information might come out of this engagement (data), and (iv) how you will use the information (action). Following this workshop, Takunda developed the Community Visioning Guide which was approved by BHA. The guide is for the training of Takunda staff who will be facilitating the community visioning process.

3.2 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment

Takunda finalized the Gender Analysis SOW following the Takunda Gender Youth and Social Dynamics consultation and inception workshops, as well as a series of reviews by BHA. BHA approved the GA SOW and Takunda moved to recruiting the consultants for the Gender Analysis. Takunda received four tenders, and a review of the submissions done by the technical team and the CARE tender committee. The program selected the successful candidate based on their technical capabilities, experience in conducting the Gender Analysis in Food Security and Nutrition programs and the financial bid price that fitted within the set budget. The project submitted the Curricula Vitae of the prospective consultants to BHA and is awaiting approval. In a separate activity, Takunda continued to review other technical areas' SOWs, tools, and guidelines, to ensure adequate integration of gender, social dynamics, and women's empowerment across sectors.

⁹ The report submitted to USAID will be different to the one submitted to stakeholders. We are thinking of submitting a sanitized version to stakeholders that will speak to the National Development Strategy I for Zimbabwe. This might take the form of regular updates and not very detailed reports.

3.3 Environmental Compliance

The process of preparing the Initial Environment Examination started with the environmental contractor, Sun Mountain International, being engaged to undertake the assignment. Takunda shared project documents (Log frame, Theory of Change, project narratives) with the contractor for desk review. Progress that has been made towards preparations for the Initial Environment Examination study with field activities expected to kick off in April. The Initial Environment Examination will include the development of a Water Quality Assurance Plan and Environment Monitoring and Mitigation Plan, **Climate Risk Management**, and Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP). Takunda and Sun Mountain held an inception meeting and agreed on a plan for staff training and field data collection.

3.4 Institutional Strengthening and Local Capacity Building

Using the Food and Nutrition Committees, across the four districts Takunda sensitized all stakeholders on the program. The sensitization was done through inception meetings. The inception meetings resulted in a mutual understanding of the expected roles for each of the stakeholders for the effective implementation of the program. One-on-one engagements with various stakeholders continued during the quarter. Annex 2 shows the stakeholders engaged in the quarter and their expectations.

3.5 Youth

Takunda worked on the Off-Farm Opportunities, Capacities, Financial and Labor Market Assessment Statement of Work (SOW). Takunda's inception workshops— which identified evidence knowledge gaps, barriers and economic challenges faced by youth, adults and people living with disabilities— informed the SOW. The developed SOW, complimented Gender, Social Behavior Change and the Agriculture Value chain studies to demonstrate the linkages that exist between the studies. BHA provided review comments to include adult off-farm opportunities, and after Takunda incorporated these, BHA approved the SOW. Findings of the study will inform curricula choice and the context of life skills, leadership, technical, entrepreneurship and employability trainings, sector targeting for vocational training, internships and mentorship for youth, women, and men. Takunda initiated the consultant's recruitment process after the approval of the SOW.

3.6 Social Behavior Change

The program finalized the Social behavior change Landscape Analysis, a Literature Review, and findings used to inform the design of the social behavior change formative research. Following the PCS facilitated inception workshops and evidence and knowledge gaps identification sessions, together with findings from the SBC Landscape Analysis and Literature Review, Takunda developed SBC formative research SOW and BHA approved the SOW on March 24, 2021. Takunda advertised for consultant(s) to lead the formative research, and the selection of consultant(s) is expected early April 2021. The program developed an online survey to assess Takunda staff SBC knowledge and capacity and will be administered to all staff. Results of this assessment will help FHI360 develop tailor-made training and ongoing capacity development and mentoring tools and activities for building skills and the technical expertise for integrating SBC approaches and interventions in project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

3.7 Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

The Refine and Implement Inception Workshops, Gender Consultations, and Community Engagement meetings presented an opportunity for Takunda Technical Leads and BHA and USAID mechanisms subject matter experts to engage in improving the program design. These interactions also provided an opportunity for Takunda to receive information on other ongoing interventions, studies, and communities of practice. Furthermore, the USAID/HAR mission office facilitated engagement with other USAID funded programs and has identified specific engagement with the activities having geographical or technical overlaps with Takunda.

Separately, two sessions were set up with the Malawi Resilience Food Security Activity (Titukulane) implemented by CARE. The sessions helped Takunda teams to refine the SOWs(Gender, Social Behavior Change, Agriculture Value Chain and Off-Farm Opportunities, Capacities, Financial and Labor Market Assessment) and to begin to anticipate the process of the culmination workshops, including lots of guidance and building connections with peer technical leads in Takunda and Titukulane. The CLA Lead participated in three Strategic Learning Knowledge Working Group meetings led by IDEAL to learn and share knowledge and good practices with all RFSAs globally. The Communications Specialist attended the USAID Partner Communication meetings to learn about the USAID Storytelling strategy for implementing partners. Collaboration with SUN Mountain of Environmental Compliance started and is ongoing.

4 SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY

Takunda continued to sensitize staff and stakeholders on the need for sustainability of interventions. Takunda sustainability evolves around community empowerment, starting with community visioning, participants organizing themselves into groups, and building or strengthening local service provision models.

5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

CARE USA became CARE Zimbabwe's new Lead Member, effective the 1st of February 2021. As part of the transition from CARE Canada to CARE USA, a functional review of CARE Zimbabwe is ongoing, and the scope of the function is on all program support (PS) functions, which are Finance, Administration, IT, Logistics, Procurement, Grants and HR. The objective is to build a more sustainable and optimal organizational structure and operational model that will effectively and efficiently support program objectives, ensure quality, impact and compliance with CARE USA and donors standards. CARE Zimbabwe anticipates that this new relationship will result in added impact for more program participants by widening funding access, investment in our new programming and business development initiatives, and establishing more effective programs and program support systems. However, the transition comes with delays in procurement, financial transactions, and some administrative hiccups affecting some of Takunda program's start up activities, such as procurement of equipment and supplies. With continued dialogue and a shared interest in improving things across the board, Takunda anticipates the smooth running of all support sectors in the next quarter. Takunda continued with staff recruitments and onboarding processes for new staff with MCHN, Commodity and Resilience Managers, Technical Specialists and Field Officers coming on board during the quarter. Takunda oriented new staff members on the program.

6 LESSONS LEARNED

- The R&I inception workshop and associated consultations were crucial for identification, contextualization, and prioritization of Evidence Knowledge Gaps that are to be addressed through formative studies, and continuous learning. The studies will help refine the Theory of Change and inform appropriate interventions.
- Having a draft GA SoW in place prior to GYSD consultation helped to facilitate in-depth, meaningful discussions with BHA geared towards coming up with concrete actions to improve the draft SoW. Resultantly, based on learnings from GYSD, the SoW was updated, and the approval process was completed more expediently.
- The district inception meetings presented an opportunity for Takunda to get ideas, thoughts, and recommendations from stakeholders, which has initiated the refine and implement process. The district stakeholders emphasized the need for Takunda interventions to be tailor made to communities' aspirations for sustainability and sustainability should be emphasized from program start and throughout the life of the award.

7 PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

The plans for Quarter Three of Fiscal Year 2021 are outlined in the Table below.

Table I. Plans for Quarter Three of Fiscal Year 2021

Planned Activities	Month: 2021	Comments
Community Engagement and Community Visioning	April-August	Training of Takunda staff and stakeholder engagement followed by community entry meetings
Formative Studies Consultants Approval	April/May	Submission by Takunda and approval by BHA – for Gender, Off-farm, Capacities, Opportunities, Financial and Labor Market Assessment, Social Behavior Change and Agricultural Value Chains studies
Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop	April	Two weeks facilitated by BHA, attended by Takunda and Amalima Loko
Formative Studies Field Data Collection	May/June	Led by Consultants with technical support from Takunda Technical Leads. This will include trainings and logistical preparations.
Pilots and Scoping Studies	April/June	Led by Takunda. Enriched porridges, Care Group functionality, Watershed management
Year 2 PREP submission and approval	May 3	Submission by Takunda and approval by BHA
Africa Centre for Holistic Management visit	May 12-15	Jointly with BHA and partners
BHA Mission Visit	June	Review Takunda program start-up

Household Census	May/June	Training of enumerators followed by data collection
Environmental compliance	April to June	Training and field data collection for IEE, WQAP and PERSUAP
Monitoring and Evaluation Database Development	April ongoing	STREAMs database development and training of staff
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Development	April to July	Submission to BHA in July 2021
Warehouse and Commodities	April to June	Developing of Commodity and Warehouse forms for Commodity Management Training, Acquiring warehouse pallets. Warehouse already identified.

ANNEXES

Annex I. Summary of Potential Areas of Engagement for Takunda with USAID Mechanisms

USAID / Mechanism	Brief Notes on Takunda engagement	Period of Engagement
NASA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geo-location of project/intention areas-Monitoring of watershed interventions areas (providing historical maps) • Natural Resource Management Systems -Vegetative Cover Information systems • Providing analysis model for resilience of production systems for example adoption and scale up of resilient designs for water recharge systems, agricultural technologies. • As an evaluation model/tool looking at the before and after situation for example Takunda proposed water retention structures, catchment management systems. • Takunda may also benefit from NASA on retrospective analysis of ENSURE interventions for seasonality and how the interventions faired through stress moments. 	Life of Award
SCALE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training to build negotiation, facilitation and communication skills using the Making Me a Change Agent model. This is because Takunda will engage in a lot of facilitation across all purpose areas and hence one once off training would help in standardization. • Agriculture and Natural Resources Management through training on resilient designs for watershed /landscape designs both micro and macro catchments 	Year 1/2 Year 1/2
LEAP III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEAP III technical support is welcome mostly targeting Agriculture and Livelihoods pillar (Purpose I). The initial engagement is envisioned on providing technical support on financial viability or analysis on Takunda prioritized value chains both on/off and non-farm and could train staff on approaches to social and financial analysis of prioritized value chains. 	Year 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could identify areas of financial analysis for the enriched foods assessments 	
Advancing Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in developing a market-based model for producing enriched foods and learning on promoting consumption of micronutrients in low-income settings 	Year 1/2
PRO-WASH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support design and implement a Human Centered design for latrine use and access. 	Year 1/2

Annex 2. Stakeholder Engaged during the Quarter and their expectations.

Stakeholder	Expectation
Local government (Provincial and District Development Coordinators)	Give authority to work in the target areas. Expect Takunda to give regular progress updates and report in line with the Government National Development Strategy I for 2020 - 2025.
Rural District Councils	Takunda should be collaborate with Rural District Council, Forest Commission and EMA in forest management and value addition and asset creation activities
Environmental Management Agency (EMA)	
Forestry Commission	
Ministry of Youth	Program to continue working with ward level change agent staff for sustainability
Ministry of Health	Program to involve health personnel in designing and implementing health and WASH activities
Ministry of Women Affairs	Program to be better coordinated in terms of training and maintaining a database of trained participants and TVET activities.
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	Can complement Takunda on Nutrition education and school feeding
District Development Fund and Public Works	Takunda should engage all relevant stakeholders in siting community gardens and catchment protection.
Ministry of Agriculture	Takunda to collaborate with ward level Agritex and Veterinary department staff for extension delivery
Zimbabwe Republic Police and President Office	Program to regularly update them so that they are given necessary security support