



# Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) II End of Project Evaluation

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Tonkolili District: BRACE II map (red pins)

**Acknowledgement:** Many Concern and partner staff helped to make this evaluation happen, it was a pleasure to work with you all, and I am very grateful for your guidance and insight. But the real thanks go to the people of Tonkolili District who took time to talk about their lives and communities, even on busy market days.

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## Acronyms

ABC	Agricultural Business Centres
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BRACE	Building Resilience and Community Engagement
CDMC	Community Disaster Management Committee
CWW	Concern Worldwide
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
EPRH	Enhancing Productivity and Resilience of Households
EU	European Union
FBO	Farmer Based Organisation
FIM	Food Income and Markets Strategy (Concern Worldwide)
FFS	Farmer Field School
GbonFA	Gbonkolenken Farmers Association
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IVS	Inland Valley Swamp
LA	Learning Alliance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MADAM	Mankind's Activities for Development Accreditation Movement
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MSWG&CA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
NACSA	National Commission for Social Action
NSADP	National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
PHU	Primary Healthcare Unit
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SCP	Smallholder Commercialisation Programme
SLARI	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute
TDC	Tonkolili District Council
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association

## Project Data

### 1. Contractual information

Budget Line(s)	
Grant Contract No.	DCI-FOOD/2010/252-201
Implementing agency	Concern Worldwide
Project title	Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) II
Project location	Sierra Leone, Northern Province, Tonkolili District
Project duration	3 years
Project start date	April 2011
Original contract end date	March 2014
Project extension (months)	N/A
Project suspension (months)	N/A
Actual contract end date	31 March 2014
Names of Evaluator(s)	Sarah Hughes
Date of Evaluation	25 February – 18 April 2014 (revised date)
Date of Evaluation report	April, 2014

### 2. Financial information

Overall project budget	Amount 1,111,111 EUROS
EC funds contracted	Amount 1,000,000 EUROS
EC funds disbursed:	
Initial payment	Amount 353,622.00EUROS Date:01/07/2011
Intermediate payment	Amount 273,184.00 EUROS Date: 28/01/2013
Final payment	Amount 273,184.00 EUROS Date: 12/02/2014
Expenditure incurred by project at evaluation	Amount (to be released after final project financial report) Date: April, 2014

### 3. Executive summary

BRACE II has been a largely effective response to continued low levels of food insecurity and limited rural livelihood options in 91 villages in six of the poorest chiefdoms in Tonkolili District. Its extensive range of activities has reached the 5000 vulnerable households targeted as well as a wider population of these communities. This broad impact, together with a focus on including women and other vulnerable groups has helped reduce inequality, and if assisted by strong leadership (which still needs to be facilitated) will encourage trust and social cohesion.

The chief success of BRACE II has been in the improvement of agricultural assets (particularly rice and other seed which is managed by farmers' groups on a sustainable revolving basis), higher crop yields of the staple crop, rice, plus other crops which have been extended or introduced during the project such as cassava, groundnuts, sweet potatoes and several varieties of vegetables. Through attendance at Farmer Field Schools in 20 communities, many farmers (majority women) have learnt better cropping techniques, business planning, and group formation and management. The majority of households have reduced their hunger gap by 1-3 months through better food self-sufficiency and greater ability to purchase food. Vulnerable households have been directly assisted by the provision of small animals, seed and development of fish ponds.

Many of the conditions for achieving higher returns on agricultural assets have been put in place by BRACE II – in particular greater access to markets through the improvement of feeder roads, and the provision of crop processing machines such as rice mills and cassava graters. In addition important research has been carried out by Concern Worldwide's collaborating partner, Natural Resources Institute, UK on value addition and value chains. Farmers have good access to market information, including through regular community radio broadcasts of up to date prices. The introduction of VSLAs in 34 communities has been very successful with about half of them already performing above expectations. The VSLAs encourage savings and provide loans at reasonable rates of interest which has released many households from crippling burdens of debt and enabled them to make small investments in productive activities as well as paying for school fees and medicines. Community led social funds run by the VSLAs and farmers' groups perform an important role of social protection, especially for the more vulnerable.

The majority of farmers (91% according to the endline survey) now belong to a business group. With the existence of these groups, and more robust livelihoods of farmers, many are in a position to consider engaging with the government's Smallholder Commercialisation Programme. However, there are still a number of constraints, not least the faulty performance of the majority of ABCs in the District. Farmers have visited them on exchange programmes, but advocacy to improve them using the channels of the People's Forums and Learning Alliance which are facilitated through the project has not yet been considered. These channels have however been the project's most effective way of promoting dialogue between rights holders and duty bearers such as Tonkolili District Council and MAFFS.

BRACE II has not managed to realise the potential of some of its more innovative activities. This is the case with a successful pilot scheme for the System of Rice Intensification which would greatly facilitate farmers' uptake of IVS development, exploitation of crop processing machines (installation of which has in most cases only just been completed) and piloting of the recommendations in the value addition and value chain reports, alongside application of what was learnt in the value chain workshop held in May 2012. The far-reaching recommendations of the climate change study require further examination. These opportunities missed are often due to the burden of other activities and implementing partner capacity weaknesses.

A few of the BRACE II activities have been less successful. This is the case with small livestock distribution, where fertility rates were very low and morbidity rates very high. The uptake of eco-stoves has been very limited. Disaster Risk Reduction activities have focused on the establishment of Community Disaster Management Committees which have no doubt averted small scale domestic fire hazards but been powerless in the face of major fire hazards, such as those from bush clearance fires. The component did not embrace the urgent need for awareness raising on the impact of climate change and ensuing environmental management measures.

BRACE II's main challenges have been institutional. The strong track record of engagement with government authorities and Tonkolili District Council (TDC) and MAFFS has continued through inclusion and collaboration in many BRACE II activities. Both organisations are highly appreciative of this involvement. However government bodies such as these still have limited material and management capacity and more direct capacity strengthening which was planned was not always followed through. The local implementing partners, MADAM and GbonFa have also been challenging in terms of slow implementation and poor reporting. GbonFa received intensive systems and finance support and has improved its capacity in the course of the project. Concern made a sustainable choice in selecting local CSOs for implementation but the price in terms of the level of investment needed by a proactive Concern management and close attention to maintaining good communication was not consistently reached.

BRACE II has confirmed lessons learnt from earlier projects and produced some new lessons and insights, for instance the understanding that vulnerable household heads can be active and capable, and that young men and women face particular pressures which are critical to the future of rural livelihoods. The evaluation concludes that in general BRACE II has consolidated the gains of earlier projects to the extent that most communities can progress to a more developmental model of programming which will capitalise on their potential and follow through on the innovations and studies carried out in BRACE II.

The key recommendations pick up these main themes:

- The graduation model of programming should be taken to the next level and include consideration of community driven approaches which encourage ownership and sustainability.
- The pilot conducted on SRI and other similar innovations should be the focus of productive activities in a future programme.
- A comprehensive ecology friendly approach which includes attention to climate change and watershed management must be urgently adopted.
- The value addition and value chain analysis and marketing reports produced by NRI should be used as a basis for programming on smallholder commercialisation. Advocacy is needed for services such as those offered by ABCs to be brought closer to farmers.

- Within a focus on institutional strengthening, farmers' groups should be assisted to become FBOs, and perhaps in future cooperatives.
- The lessons regarding partnership should be followed up and the necessary safeguards built in to project management and the early phases of projects.
- The Learning Alliance and People's Forums should be continued as valuable instruments for strengthening governance relations between local authorities such as Tonkolili District Council and communities.
- The Concern Worldwide Tonkolili Integrated Programme model and the new projects commencing within it should be supported and outcomes measured according to cross-cutting indicators.

## 4. Chapter one: Introduction

### 4.1 Background, outline purpose and scope of the evaluation

The 2014 end of project evaluation is to assess the Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE II) project's performance against the DAC evaluation criteria and to demonstrate its results to the donor, partners and project beneficiaries for accountability purposes. The evaluation assesses the project's commitment to and strength of 'Value for Money' (that is the three concepts of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness) in all its operations. The evaluation has taken place against the background and evaluations of the earlier projects : BRACE I (2007–10) which was implemented in two chiefdoms of Tonkolili District, Kunike, and Kunike Barina ; and Enhancing Productivity and Resilience of Households (EPRH) project (2010-11) which was conducted in 3 chiefdoms Kholifa Mabang, Kholifa Rowalla and Yonibana). It is set within the context of continuing donor, government and civil society poverty reduction programming in Tonkolili District and will contribute to the body of knowledge about effective poverty reduction programming in the Northern Province context.

#### **BRACE II synopsis**

Tonkolili district was particularly seriously affected by the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991 – 2002) because it was the stronghold of the rebel group. Although the country is now peaceful, the protracted period of conflict, wide scale displacement and residence in camps had profound social, political and economic consequences which are still evident, for instance in sign boards advertising resettlement programmes in the post-war period, and 'new' villages in Malal Mara chiefdom.

Post-war development efforts have concentrated on regaining pre-war levels. Physical assets and infrastructure had been severely looted and destroyed, subsistence agriculture had been significantly disrupted with livestock killed and homes and farms destroyed. Low agricultural productivity, limited access to seeds, tools, land, markets and limited options for income generation for households trapped many communities in a perpetual cycle of poverty. While pre-war rice production levels have been regained, they are still inadequate to permanently break the poverty cycle.

In the social context, the gender inequality faced by women and girls is extreme, and manifested for instance in limited access to and control over resources such as land and income. The breakdown of community structures, poor hygiene and nutrition, limited access to health care and information, give no support to girls who are vulnerable to sexual and gender based violence and early teenage pregnancy (38%, MICS report, UNICEF, 2011). HIV rates are increasing in urban centres and communities neighbouring the settlements of armed forces and the large sugarcane plantation in Magbass.

The overall objective of BRACE I was to 'promote sustainable livelihood options and reduced vulnerability of the extreme poor households in the targeted villages by the end of 2010.' The shorter EPRH programme was more focused on rapid improvement of rice production and seed

storage following price rises in 2008.

The **overall objective** of BRACE II is 'to contribute significantly to the realisation of food security for 5,000 vulnerable households in Tonkolili District, Sierra Leone by the end of the project, by building on on-going rehabilitation and development initiatives'.

The project adopts a **sustainable livelihoods approach** combining improved and increased food production with diversifying market options and access through value addition for small scale farmers. It also emphasises the building of partnerships at community, district and national levels. The objectives are in line with the Government of Sierra Leone's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2008-2012, entitled the 'Agenda for Change', and the third PRSP, 'Agenda for Prosperity' 2013-17 ; as well as the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP) 2010-2030 ; and one of its cornerstones, the Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP).

BRACE II has been implemented over a 3-year period, 2011-2014, in 6 chiefdoms: Kunike, Kunike Barina, Kholifa Mabang, Kholifa Rowalla, Yoni and Malal Mara in Tonkolili district. Malal Mara chiefdom is the most remote and a new implementation area for Concern's Food, Income and Markets (FIM) programme strategy. The 5,000 target households comprise female-headed households, households with orphans, physically challenged persons, terminally ill persons, and pregnant and lactating mothers. The project also targets community farming groups to expand on their food production and income levels in the target areas.

The project has **4 Expected Results** :

Result 1 : Enhanced food production levels for poor households through improved farming techniques and increased knowledge of nutrition.

Result 2 : Increased access to market and income generation through value addition, and use of market information.

Result 3 : Reduced vulnerability of individuals and communities to natural and human-made hazards through improved understanding of and preparation for disasters and diversification of livelihood sources.

Result 4 : Strengthened district and community level democracy by providing support to the Tonkolili District Council (TDC) and empowering the communities and civil society groups.

The project has been implemented by Concern Worldwide (the contracted authority) with Mankind Activities for Development Accreditation Movement (MADAM) and Gbonkolenken Farmers Association (GbonFA) as local partners and Natural Resource Institute, University of Greenwich – UK as a collaboration partner to the project. There is strong collaboration too with the devolved government line Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Tonkolili District Council (TDC) and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project.

## 4.2 Methodology and processes

The evaluation took place in the final month of BRACE II implementation. It was able to consult endline as well as baseline reports, and other relevant project documentation.

The evaluation team consisted of the external evaluator, accompanied by BRACE II M/E Officer, Ramatu Dumbuya (for 5 of the 6 fieldwork days) as a learning counterpart. A BRACE II team member accompanied the evaluation team on each fieldwork day, and the team met a partner field agent in each of the 6 fieldwork locations. The GbonFa Programme Manager, Salieu Kamara accompanied the team on 2 of the fieldwork days.

The field sites visited were selected according to the following criteria: one remote and one more accessible village per chiefdom, a representative sample of project interventions chosen at random, a representative sample of project beneficiaries chosen at random across the 6 chiefdoms (13 villages in total).

Mixed evaluation methods were used to collect primary and secondary data, of both a quantitative and qualitative nature so as to embrace all the many components of the project. These methods included:

- Documentation review on line, and in Freetown, Makeni and Magburaka.
- Meeting in London UK with Natural Resources Institute (NRI), University of Greenwich experts.
- Semi-structured interviews with key informants including staff accompanying the field visits.
- Focus group discussions with mixed farmer groups, a women's group, project beneficiaries. Wealth ranking and proportional piling exercises (for crop production and project activities) were used as discussion starters.
- Participant observation and semi-structured discussion with beneficiaries at project sites.
- In-depth interviews with a sample of project beneficiaries for case studies.
- Transect walks.
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with Concern staff in Tonkolili and Freetown.

### **4.3 Limitations and constraints encountered**

The evaluation itinerary was extensively field based to allow for a one day visit to each of the project chiefdoms. While this was necessary, inadequate time was allowed for meetings and debriefing in Magburaka and Freetown and information quality may have been compromised as a result.

Programme staff at all levels were preoccupied with the final weeks' liquidation activities. This limited their time and attention for the evaluation. In addition two new FIM projects were starting up and diverting the attention of managers. The evaluation team counterpart was pulled away to these activities on the last day of field work and her learning was a little inconclusive.

The endline report was finalised just before the evaluation. It was found to be inaccurate for some indicators (particularly with regard to the overall outcome and Result 1) and the evaluation field methodology was adjusted to focus on reviewing these particular results, to some detriment to the treatment of other indicators. There are also weaknesses in the baseline material, these are discussed later in the report.

There has been some staff turnover in the course of the project and a number of both Concern and partner staff are relatively new which has constrained continuity and institutional memory.

### **4.4 Conduct of the evaluation**

See itinerary and persons interviewed in Annexes 2 and 3.

## 5. Chapter two: Findings and Analysis

### 5.1 Relevance

**BRACE II was generally well designed** to meet the needs of targeted beneficiaries and be appropriate to the external and policy contexts of Sierra Leone. The overall objective and 4 expected results address the main elements of a sustainable livelihoods programme designed to achieve food security as expressed in food availability, food accessibility and food utilisation. The project activities are comprehensive, though ambitious despite many of them being carried through from the earlier projects BRACE I and EPRH. Result 3 which addresses vulnerability includes mainstreaming activities such as HIV/AIDS and gender awareness training which are common to all Concern Worldwide interventions in the same locations. It also includes functional literacy (in Malal Mara chiefdom only), which was relevant given high levels of illiteracy, but too limited to be directly functional for productive activities.

The **logframe indicators** are largely output indicators often expressed as percentage increases in a given activity for a given target group. Certain outcome indicators, such as the impact of increased income on the payment of school fees and consequent presumed improvement in school enrolment and attendance; or the impact of better nutrition on childhood development, might have been included. The logframe was slightly amended following an EU monitoring visit in 2012.

BRACE II continued to work in the poorest chiefdoms in Tonkolili District, extending to Malal Mara, a more remote chiefdom which had not been treated before. This was relevant to the project's purpose. The variation in length of treatment of different communities may have been a factor in the effectiveness of the programme (see discussion below).

Two beneficiary groups were **targeted**, vulnerable households (selected according to Concern's criteria); and community farming groups. The activities which directly targeted vulnerable households were distribution of seeds (rice, cassava and vegetable seed in Malal Mara only, and groundnut seed to farming groups in many locations) ; distribution of livestock ; and development of fishponds. Seed distribution is a standard input in recovery programmes and was certainly appreciated by target groups. However it can encourage dependency and this may have been the case in some communities, especially as it appears that the allocation described above may not have been strictly adhered to everywhere by the implementing partners. Small livestock distribution was appropriate as beneficiaries reported that it was their most important source of immediate income to combat endemic risks particularly disease; and fishpond development was appropriate as fish are a favoured source of protein as well as a regular source of income. Seed rice distribution is discussed below.

Care was taken to ensure that vulnerable households were well represented in community farming groups, with the majority of members (60%) always being women, including young women. During the field visits there was a noticeable 'presence of women in numbers'. Importantly, for both the farming group activities and targeted distributions it is clear that two-way **redistribution** of the harvest has taken place on a wide scale; that is both redistribution of the fruits of targeted distribution from vulnerable households to extended family households on the one hand ; and redistribution from extended family households (or the community in general) from community

farming group activities and others to vulnerable households on the other<sup>1</sup>. This reflects the largely interdependent nature of rural communities and is therefore relevant and beneficial as it reinforces the social fabric. Further study would however be useful to determine which individuals still fall through the social net and if so what the reasons are and what form of social protection would be appropriate for them.

The following exercise conducted in 2 villages visited during the evaluation illustrates this point :

#### **Wealth redistribution exercise**

Members of large mixed farming groups (40 – 60 members) were asked to divide into four sub-groups : better off, less well off, worse off, extremely poor. The majority social profile of the groups which resulted was : better off –middle-aged and older men, some middle-aged and older women ; less well off and worse off (the biggest groups) – middle-aged women, younger men and women ; extremely poor – older women (widows), disabled men and women.

The extremely poor group spoke about how they had used increased income resulting from project activities and listed – paying school fees for children and grandchildren, paying for labour, buying medicines. They were then asked to go and find their relatives in other groups ; at least half of them went to stand by those in the better off group. Those in the better off group listed paying for school fees, paying for labour, buying medicines for vulnerable relatives, improving their houses, assisting vulnerable members of the community and investing in small businesses as the benefits of their additional income.

The exercise is also interesting as it suggests that young women are not necessarily always amongst the poorest, but they are certainly amongst the most vulnerable given the high rates of early marriage and childbirth, the prevalence of sexual and gender based violence, and the number of agricultural tasks which fall to women – namely food preparation, weeding and transportation of goods. Young women are not a specifically targeted group in the BRACE II project. They have benefited from the general priority given to women's inclusion in different project groups and activities.

**Rice production** is the most important farming activity of beneficiary groups<sup>2</sup>. BRACE II activities (in Result 1) were weighted towards agricultural production in general, though not enough on improvement of inland valley swamps (IVS) which is the main government strategy for improved rice production<sup>3</sup>. Modernising and diversifying agriculture, including rice production, has two purposes : achieving food self-sufficiency, and also maintaining farming as a viable livelihood option especially for young people in the rural areas. It is important to keep physically fit men on the land to support

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of a household is those eating from the same pot. In other words a widow is considered a female headed household even though she may have adult children and/or relatives residing in the same village.

<sup>2</sup> Rice production ranked consistently in top position in group crop ranking exercises because of its importance for both consumption and sale.

<sup>3</sup> A consultant for Concern Worldwide (David T) has countered this saying that more research is needed to verify the impact of converting swamps into IVS as there are indications that the toxicity of swamps is being affected as well as downstream farmers receiving less water for their own plots. Concern's conclusion has been to support existing plots but not convert anymore until the impact of doing so is fully understood. This is being followed up in the new programme.

women farmers with their labour for increased production. Yet government economic policies are driving them to seek diverse income opportunities. It is estimated by the TDC that 60-65% of young men in Tonkolili District go to work in the mines, very often in order to secure 'quick' money. Modernising agriculture has the potential to secure both food and income, and for these young (and older) farmers it most often means mechanising agriculture. In Mawarr village, Kholifa Mabang chiefdom, a young man threatened to go to work at the ADDAX sugar plantation if the Ministry of Agriculture failed to provide a tractor to plough his rice fields. An older farmer participated in an entire group discussion about factors of production and only later when visiting his cassava farm added that his real priority was hiring a tractor for ploughing. BRACE II introduced power tillers into a few communities but found that they were of poor quality and broke down frequently. It is probably pragmatic to continue to research options for mechanisation in future given the pre-eminence of agriculture on the one hand and government economic policy trends on the other.

BRACE IIs Result 2 has emphasised **income generation** from agricultural value addition and marketing more than the earlier projects. **Access to income** is a major production factor for farmers (for hiring manual or mechanised labour), as well as being an essential part of meeting food and all other basic household needs in the context of Sierra Leone's macro-economic framework<sup>4</sup>.

It is evident that in order to maximise relevance BRACE II has **adapted to changes in context** and lessons learnt during implementation. A good example is the adoption of the VSLA approach half way through the project after the community banks (Yoni Community Bank in Mile 91 and Masingbi towns) proved to have very high interest rates.<sup>5</sup>

All BRACE II activities have been cognizant of **national, Concern and partner policies**. Result 4 has focused on institutional strengthening but frequently been challenged by levels of capacity weakness in government bodies, partner organisations and even within Concern which were not anticipated. The effectiveness of the remedial strategies adopted will be discussed below.

**Score for Relevance: 4.5/5**

## 5.2 Effectiveness

This section should be read alongside the Progress Towards Achieving Indicators table in Annexe 1. The section adds important findings that are not covered in the table as well as discussing those which are included in the table.

**Overall outcome : to contribute significantly to the realisation of food security for 5,000 vulnerable households in Tonkolili District, Sierra Leone by the end of the project, by building on on-going rehabilitation and development initiatives.**

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<sup>4</sup> The Third PRSP 2013 – 17.

<sup>5</sup> The BRACE II Project Manager comments : Concern is promoting access to savings facilities and credit as well as other financial services as an essential component of sustaining the livelihoods of the poor. Loan products offered by micro-finance institutions are not favourable for farmers since farming is seasonal and loan repayments for micro-finance institutions are mostly required on either a weekly or monthly basis. Concern's Micro-finance Advisor recommended that we should consider VSLA as an option for the farming groups following an assessment conducted in August 2011.

BRACE II activities have embraced the fact that food security for vulnerable households is only achieved through a combination of increased food production, especially of the staple food – rice ; diversification of crop production to improve diet, but more importantly to maximise the potential for sale of surplus production in order to pay for farm labour, and purchase food ; and food redistribution within and between extended family households.

### **Village selection and the progression of activities**

BRACE II recognised that communities and farmer groups consolidate their gains over time and generally progress from needing material inputs to needing capacity strengthening in governance along with linkages to district and national institutions. Therefore BRACE II did not treat villages uniformly but selected from the range of project activities available according to a set of criteria based on the interventions of earlier projects together with the opportunities for development each village presented at the project outset. Though clearly an efficient strategy in terms of staff and resource deployment, it has been hard to track the effectiveness of this strategy. The cover page photo which pinpoints the location of all 91 communities targeted in the 6 chiefdoms, shows clearly where the concentration of communities was (57% or 47 communities in Malal Mara chiefdom). These communities received the largest package of activities as Mala Mara chiefdom was treated for the first time and has a high poverty index.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand communities in Kholifa Rowalla were the least remote and had been included in earlier projects ; they benefited from fewer activities. The variants for being able to assess value for money are far more complex than these of remoteness and length of inclusion in Concern activities. They would include the very variable ecology from village to village, and the effects of food price fluctuations, the latter being more sharply felt in communities close to urban centres. It was beyond the brief visits afforded by this study to determine whether value for money was achieved across the 91 communities. At the output level the project would have been more effective if the individual and group capacity strengthening elements accompanying distribution of inputs had received even more attention across the board. Institutional capacity strengthening is addressed under Result 4 and discussed in more detail below.

### **Result 1 : Enhanced food production levels for poor households through improved farming techniques and increased knowledge of nutrition.**

(see also the findings relating to Result 1 indicators in Annexe 1 : Progress Towards the Achievement of Indicators).

#### **Improved food production**

Farmer Field Schools (FFS) which have been the government’s key strategy for improving farming techniques were held in 20 communities with training support from SLARI. They have been very successful and should be continued. The methodologies are farmer friendly and furthermore solid groups emerge which have the potential to progress to becoming FBOs if given the appropriate support<sup>7</sup>. Women have benefited from all the modules, and especially from the vegetables module

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<sup>6</sup> Malal Mara activities : 35 metric tonnes of seed rice distributed to 700 vulnerable households in year 1 ; 10 new farmer groups ; 4 FFS and 10 school green clubs ; 20 new Para vets were also trained ; 10 adult literacy trainings.

<sup>7</sup> This finding is not consistent with Paul Wagstaff, Concern Agricultural Advisor who recommended (July 2012) that FFS should remain for learning and experimentation and that agri-business development should take place through farmers’ groups. Therefore it should be followed up.

as they are now producing much better crops which are selling at higher prices. The market for pepper is especially lucrative (Le 22,000 per sack for dried pepper in Masingbi market).

The high availability of seed in communities, especially rice seed through retention or purchase, is a major project result. Seed loans continue to be paid back effectively with small interest after harvest. However, since the activity is a continuation from earlier projects it was perhaps surprising to learn from respondents in several communities that the majority are still storing seed at home even though they appreciate the better conditions obtained in a store. In Malal Mara this is the case for 78.9% of farmers. (Seed Recovery Assessment Report 6 March 2014), , 6 seed stores were constructed during the project but perhaps it was a missed opportunity not to have constructed more ? A cassava shed constructed by villagers in Makorie Kabia village, Kholifa Rowalla chiefdom through their own means illustrates the possibility of farmers taking their own initiative. The shed is fit for purpose for the time being and the group has drawn up a business plan for constructing a more permanent building when profits allow. The price of imported materials such as cement and zinc sheets may be beyond the means of many groups but the possibility of loans for the construction of seed stores could be considered as an option in future.

Farmers have increased their production but in many cases probably still not sufficiently to reach the threshold needed to participate profitably in the government smallholder commercialisation programme (SCP). Two constraints emerged during the evaluation (and there may be more). The first is about cost which is related to both ecology and also to the preferences of smallholder farmers in Tonkolili District. There is still reluctance amongst farmers to expand or shift their rice cultivation from upland farms to IVS which would be more productive. On the ecological side, some farmers do not have extensive swamp land, or only seasonal (boli) rather than perennial swamps. Upland areas appear to be extensive but fallow periods are in fact shortening<sup>8</sup> and the soil is becoming exhausted. Land preparation requires levels of capital outlay for labour or machinery which many small and vulnerable farmers still cannot afford. The situation has worsened with the increase in the price of daily wage labour from Le 5,000 to Le 10,000 as a result of competition from the industrial agriculture and mining sectors. Farmers say their reluctance to develop IVS is due to the large initial outlay required to prepare a swamp, though they accept that in the long run it is less labour intensive than upland farming. Women's access to land is more tenuous because of inheritance traditions. Swamp land with the possibility of groundnut and vegetable production in the dry season may be more attractive to women if a way can be found to support the initial investment required and protect the return due to them at harvest time. Farmers also prefer upland areas for mixed cropping.

BRACE II would have been more effective in pushing forward IVS if it had been able to follow through the successful SRI (System of Rice Intensification) pilot which it conducted on the MAFFS farm at Makali Agricultural Centre, with at least a couple of FFS. SRI has the potential to produce 2/3 harvests a year with less seed and less water. As it was, the FFS concentrated more on other crop production than on rice.

The second constraint is the sharp division between the management of group production and individual production. With respect to the material and financial capital needed to improve production and invest in value addition, farmers are seeing the value of group farming. But even

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<sup>8</sup> Increasing Pressure for Land: Implications for Rural Livelihoods and Development Actors  
A Case Study in Sierra Leone, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Oct. 2012

though they are used to pooling labour (through labour groups), they appear very reluctant to pool or bulk their individual seed or harvest in order to increase opportunities for value addition and marketing. The social units of management at issue here could be investigated further as they are a barrier to innovation.

**In summary** BRACE II interventions have improved food production through appropriate trainings and demonstration techniques but to be more effective could have promoted improved rice production and storage as a priority.

### **Value addition and value chain analysis**

NRI has carried out some excellent analysis on value chains and conducted a highly appreciated workshop for staff and many collaborating partners of BRACE II (Concern (Tonkolili and Freetown staff), Madam, GbonFa, MAFFS (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security), SLARI (Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute), Tonkolili District Council (TDC), CoDALS, Wana Farmers Association). The NRI expert was making her final visit to research the rice value chain during the evaluation. However, this expert advice and training has not been capitalised on adequately (or at all in the case of the final mission). Given the potential that some farmers now have to add value to and market their increased production, and the positive results obtained from certain pilots such as the cassava farming group in Madusia village, Yoni chiefdom, follow up on these studies and trainings in future projects must be a priority. As a first step project staff and implementing partners need further training in how to apply the advice and recommendations.

### **Improved nutrition**

The 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) states that stunting levels for children are 38%, which is an increase on the 2008 report. Stunting increases with age and is 49% for the 18-23 month group. The evaluation found little evidence for this decline ; direct observation did not suggest malnutrition in babies, though there was evidence of stunting amongst older children. Respondents indicated a good knowledge of food groups and the importance of a balanced diet, but most households do still experience a hunger gap and household eating hierarchies may be an issue which has not been addressed by the project.

Several project activities targeted selected vulnerable households inputs with a nutritional dimension. Two inputs – fishponds and vegetables – were successful, the third input – small livestock – was largely unsuccessful. The livestock input would have been more significant in terms of income addition as livestock are still primarily used as an insurance policy for small households, but fishponds and vegetables have been more effective in terms of nutrition for beneficiary families.. The livestock input is assessed in Annexe 1.

Fish pond development was managed by staff members of the partners GbonFa and MADAM. It used local labour (youth who have gained skills they can and are replicating), and was organised through a committee of beneficiaries in the targeted communities. In one case (see case study section 6, Chapter 3 below) the chairlady of the committee is capable and managing her ponds well. She has already increased her income and her family's nutrition, and passed on her skills to others. In another case (Binkolo village, Mala Mara chiefdom), 11 beneficiaries are awaiting their first harvest. The group includes widows of different ages, and disabled men and women of different ages. The group has engaged a volunteer focal point (able-bodied man) who supervises several youth to clean and manage the fishponds. It is not known how strong this arrangement is and

committee capacity strengthening will be key to sustainability. The group has plans to expand the number of fishponds in the swamp.

Vegetable production by women has been widespread and used to improve the diet of many families.

**In summary**, fishery and livestock husbandry are quite high risk activities which if successful will probably be more important for income generation than for nutrition. Effective improvements in nutrition will require other more targeted strategies including continued vegetable production.

## **Result 2 : Increased access to market and income generation through value addition, and use of market information.**

### **Increased market access and information**

One high value project input has shown a particularly high return in support for access to markets - the construction of 25 culverts, sometimes several along the same road, and other feeder road improvements. The culverts are well constructed by Concern's engineering team with local contractors, and culverts constructed over 5 years ago during BRACE I testify to their durability and to communities' willingness and ability to maintain them. In the feeder road improvement, as in other project construction activities, local youths (majority men and a few women) were trained and employed (for food only) to carry out the activity. A few youths said they had been able to transfer their skills elsewhere. The opened feeder roads are being well used by pedestrians, motorbike taxis (Okadas), and vehicles. Young Okada drivers say they can go longer distances, make more trips and earn more income to pay off their bike loans. Several of those interviewed have ambitions to progress to driving vehicles or industrial machinery. Apart from improving market access the roads have considerably eased the burden of transporting the sick to health facilities which is greatly appreciated by respondents.

**Market access** has improved in both directions with the roads. Farmgate prices have risen as there is competition amongst traders reaching villages. Farmers can also go to market themselves, though as discussed above they may still be retailing rather than wholesaling their goods. This is a particular problem for women. Younger women in particular often act as buyers for traders, taking loans to purchase goods in small quantities (eg. palm oil in pints), which the traders bulk (eg. palm oil into gallons) and trade at higher prices. At least women now have opportunities to take more than a head load to market if they have the capital, and several respondents mentioned the benefits of not carrying heavy loads on their health.

Market information has also been an extremely effective means of promoting market access and business planning. The market price bulletin broadcast by community radio at Mile 91 was a low cost but high return project activity. The broadcasts are in the evening when women can listen to the radio (it was reported that their husbands remove the batteries when they go out). Market information dissemination is timed mostly for the beginning of planting when traders or local seed dealers require seeds to maximize profit and exploit farmers ; and harvesting period when the prices are low - so that farmers can make informed decisions on whether to sell, and if so at what price and where. The information provides them with the opportunity for better bargaining with traders. Nevertheless the radio station would obviously prefer a continuous subsidy for their broadcasts. Mobile phones are also used, but fewer women own mobile phones.

**In summary** market access has improved considerably due to the project, but farmers are still held back by limited value addition and risk aversion.

### **Greater saving practices**

The increase in small business groups (see Indicator 8 Annexe 1) reflects entrepreneurial spirit as well as greater income. It is noticeable to what extent women and men, including those in vulnerable groups, invest very small amounts of capital in goods, or agricultural activities which will bring them a small return. The promotion of VSLAs has responded highly effectively to this environment (see Case Study section 6, Chapter 3). Concern and its partners have an opportunity to build on the early success of the VSLAs and plan for the promotion of group or collective businesses using VSLA share capital on the one hand, and succession of the initial groups to new groups on the other hand.

VSLAs have been an important mechanism for community led social protection. Through very small weekly contributions of members to the Social Funds, many of the most vulnerable households have been able to cope with disease and other common hazards.

### **Functional adult literacy**

The service provider delivered satisfactorily against the contract. The levels of literacy obtained are rudimentary on the whole, but these basic skills have given beneficiaries enormous confidence and been an entry point for their engagement with their children's education, and with wider community activities.

**Result 3 : Reduced vulnerability of individuals and communities to natural and human-made hazards through improved understanding of and preparation for disasters and diversification of livelihood sources.**

### **Diversification of livelihood sources**

Crop diversification has been a very effective strategy of BRACE II. Farmers, including vulnerable groups, have been able to improve their food self-sufficiency, but more importantly to enhance their ability to purchase food and meet other household needs through sale of high value crops such as groundnuts. See Indicator 13 in Annexe 1 and case studies in section 6 Chapter 3 for more information on this result. In cases of crop failure due to hazard (which was reported), more farmers can rely on having income to purchase food. This is in keeping with the national picture of 65% rural household food purchase from markets (Sierra Leone Food and Nutrition Policy Review 2013). Seed revolving schemes are functioning well.

The small livestock distribution was also intended primarily for income generation ; successful in the case of fishpond development, but unsuccessful in the case of small livestock as discussed earlier.

### **Improved understanding of and preparation for disasters**

Concern uses a predominantly Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach to reducing individual and community vulnerability to disaster. BRACE II's main strategy was to establish and train Community Disaster Management Committees which focus on fire hazard. This choice was logical enough and the activities (regular patrols to monitor fire hazards and clearing of bush to create fire belts) were appropriate enough for household level fires ; however they failed to raise awareness of any aspect

of environmental management. Thus the evaluation coincided with the period of farmland preparation and slashing when vast uplands are burnt throughout the District. At Masuba village, Mala Mara chiefdom, a bush fire had swept through the village a few weeks earlier and destroyed 12-13 houses, as well as household goods and seeds. Fortunately only one person was injured. The fire belt had proven quite inadequate to hold back the fire and the village was deserted of menfolk who had left to seek employment in the nearby Magbass sugar plantation so as to earn enough to rebuild their houses and regain the capital needed to buy seed and begin the farming season. In this case of major (but regularly recurring) disaster, wage labour was the best recourse but it is an unsustainable strategy for addressing environmental degradation in the long term. The School Green Clubs have had a similarly limited scope. Treeplanting has been tried, but not very successfully, and school gardens appear to be focused on improving vegetable production and a clean environment, rather than wider environmental awareness raising.

**Eco-stoves** promotion did not fare much better (see Indicator 14 Annexe 1). This was a low cost project activity but the result is nevertheless disappointing. The water solubility of the stoves was already raised in the BRACE I evaluation, was this a lesson learned which might have led to adaptation ?

**In summary,** Concern has not yet fully adapted its DRR approach, nor is the government's Environment Protection Agency providing a better national policy framework for environmental awareness and management. However BRACE II (and also the earlier projects) have conducted studies which have pointed the way forward regarding climate change and comprehensive watershed management. These may have been too broad and ambitious for BRACE II to adopt in the short term (the climate change study recommendations would certainly have had budgetary implications beyond the scope of the project), but they will provide useful guidance for more longterm strategic and developmental thinking.

#### **Greater understanding of issues such as HIV/AIDS and gender equality**

Typically, respondents (in 2 villages where activity ranking was carried out) did not give high importance to the trainings they had received as compared to the direct support for farming activities. However they were able to recount the different topics covered which were wide ranging, for instance in Masuba village, Mala Mara chiefdom : management of conflict, social cohesion, roles and responsibilities of elected committee members, children and women's rights. The women's group in Yoni Bana village, Yoni Chiefdom which is a strong and cohesive group with a capable and respected chairlady were confident about applying messages to reduce domestic violence and HIV prevention such as condoms in their homes and with their adult children. Although cascade training methods such as those used in BRACE II have weaknesses, the same messages are reinforced by other Concern programmes in the same villages which may encourage behaviour change. Yet use of HIV prevention methods remains very low (11.3 abstinence, 16.5% condom use (internal assessment)) and with increasing labour mobility increasingly needed. More direct methods such as drama were used in a few communities but were not mentioned by respondents during the evaluation.

**In summary** BRACE II has mainly been effective in reducing inequality by improving women's productive roles, which are supported by their stronger involvement in community roles such as committee responsibilities in farming and other groups. The mainstreaming trainings which promote

health and social change serve to back up these improvements by addressing some of the underlying reproductive and social constraints holding women back.

#### **Result 4 : Strengthened district and community level democracy by providing support to the Tonkolili District Council (TDC) and empowering the communities and civil society groups.**

##### **Community level democracy strengthening**

Each of the input based BRACE II activities has been managed through the establishment of a committee. The committees have elected members, including many women, who have received training and mentoring in their roles and responsibilities. While an appropriate strategy, many committees are likely to have overlapping memberships and it is doubtful that they will all be sustainable. Thought should be given to consolidating committees in a future programme of CBO strengthening.

Individuals classified as 'vulnerable' are often quite capable and assuming leadership positions. However leadership styles are generally autocratic and leadership training is needed. Lack of trust emerged from the evaluation as a significant constraint to development even where the necessary skills exist, for instance in the case of establishing new VSLAs in villages where there are waiting lists for membership.

##### **Community and District linkages**

Concern has a strong track record of engagement with government authorities and Tonkolili District Council (TDC) and MAFFS have continued to benefit from inclusion in BRACE II activities such as participating in, and in the case of MAFFs conducting trainings, as well as following up activities alongside BRACE II staff and partners. Both organisations are highly appreciative of this involvement. However government bodies such as these still have limited material and management capacity and more direct capacity strengthening which was included in the BRACE II proposal (for instance training of volunteer social workers for MSWG&CA and support to MAFFS veterinary department) has not been carried out. Tonkolili District Council was assisted in producing an impressive District Development Plan 2013 -15 with community participation, and in establishing a website (which they do not have the connectivity to update), but other planned continuous capacity strengthening has not taken place. The project's support of National Tree planting Day in Malal Mara gave visibility to MAFFS which was appreciated ; other opportunities such as uploading videos of People's Forums onto the TDC website could be encouraged. BRACE II has also maintained a good relationship with SLARI and used their services as well as inviting them to participate in expert workshops.

Quarterly **People's Forums** in which TDC 'goes to the people' are much appreciated by community and district authorities alike. The establishment of dialogue (encouraging transparency and accountability) is a firm step in the direction of democracy. Through dialogue the People's Forums have probably helped to overcome the setback of new Ward Councillors being elected at the last election 2012, replacing those who were trained by Concern under BRACE I. People's Forums have discussed key issues mentioned in the proposal : tax payments by large companies for community development, selection of Ward Development Committees, and roles and responsibilities of District Councillors, as well as their needs such as tractorisation and other inputs. Communities have even followed up promises made by the TDC but to little avail. This will be politically sensitive in the long run and Concern may wish to engage further so as to avoid destructive confrontations.

Monthly **Learning Alliance (LA)** meetings which have now continued for over 5 years are similarly effective in bringing District stakeholders from the public and voluntary sectors together. The recommendations made in the BRACE I evaluation eg. to organise learning visits have been followed up effectively (examples cited : conflict management, fish ponds and community mobilisation), as has the expert sharing and skills building between organisations. The LA is proud to have advocated on rights issues such as with the police and courts on non-incarceration of juvenile offenders, with the education department on teenage pregnancy, and with the Ministry of Health on gender based violence. These activities promote joined up government and the voice and influence of civil society. Priority issues for the LA in 2014 are land rights to protect the population in chiefdoms such as Malal Mara from disenfranchisement by multi-national companies, and teenage pregnancy.

Concern Worldwide is committed to ensuring the future of the LA after the end of BRACE II. The Plan is to sell the LA approach to Government ministries' sectoral/ NGO forums such as the NGO MAFFS forum, the NGO Health forum etc. It is expected that the key institutions that have been championing LA in Tonkolili will take the lead to promote the LA approach to these ministries who are expected to adopt the approach as part of their monthly forum activities. Selling the LA approach to MAFFS for example will hopefully be straightforward as the NGO forum functions similarly to the LA approach: monthly activities/meeting are hosted and financially supported on rotational basis by members of the forum according to a yearly plan

The obvious goodwill and commitment of members needs to be maintained and validated through their building the modest costs into budgets, including those of the TDC and line ministries. At this stage in its evolution it might be worthwhile the TDC taking over overall coordination as a sign of government recognition of the platform and of the interdependency or 'social contract' existing between government and civil society.

### **Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs)**

(See also Indicator 20 Annexe 1).

BRACE IIs inability to engage with the ABCs as planned raises some interesting issues. Most of them are related to the inappropriateness of the centres for BRACE II beneficiaries at the present time. As already discussed under Results 1 and 2 the majority of individual farmers are not producing enough or adding value sufficiently yet to find it worthwhile accessing an ABC. Some farmers' groups may be ready to do this but they are either too inexperienced in business planning, or unwilling because of distrust of the centres, or too dependent on farmgate traders (see case study below) to do so. The TDC acknowledges that few of the ABCs are functioning yet and that there are problems with the management and age profile of those in charge. Yet the ABCs are a key government instrument for the flagship SCP in the NSADP framework, and moreover a 20 year long programme. Though there may have been some justification for lack of engagement to date, it may be ineffective for Concern to ignore them in the long run, and more constructive to consider challenging the TDC and MAFFS with the experience of its own farmers' groups and their suitability for receiving similar services.

There is however a further constraint which is more associated with BRACE IIs effectiveness. Few (none ?) of the many different types of farming groups supported by BRACE II (FFS, women's groups, farmers associations etc.) have been assisted to register as a Farmer Based Organisation (FBO) or other structure which is recognised by MAFFS for entry to an ABC. The registration process is tedious, and involves opening a bank account, but it would have been worthwhile BRACE II having carried out a couple of pilots to gain the first hand experience which would then support an

advocacy campaign by the local population through platforms such as the People's Forums to bring ABC services down to farmers rather than forcing farmers to access a poorly situated and managed facility in which they have no buy in. Strengthening farmers' groups in this way might also offer a community led alternative to ABCs at least in the short to medium term.

### **National coordination**

The FIM coordinator attends MAFFs meetings at a national level on a regular basis and her input is appreciated. Concern staff are well represented in other NGO forums too. National representation is important alongside the local advocacy recommended above in order to more consistently challenge underlying political influences and constraints.

### **Effectiveness of implementation**

**Partnership** : A cornerstone of BRACE II's approach, and an application of a BRACE I recommendation, was to engage local partners, MADAM and GbonFA, in project implementation. The two partners had worked with Concern as service providers under BRACE I and were assessed at the beginning of the project by the Concern M/E Officer. Their capacity issues were underestimated and many capacity problems were encountered which slowed down and compromised implementation. However this does not invalidate Concern's choice. The key staff in a community-based project such as BRACE II are the field agents, and those met during the evaluation were generally capable and committed. However they did not receive adequate supervision and their ability to either innovate or solve problems at field level was thereby compromised. Concern made many efforts to address the capacity issues, including supporting the placement of a VSO volunteer with GbonFa for a 2-year period. She did a lot to improve systems and financial reporting, but after her departure additional monthly support was still needed from the Concern Partnership Accountant (based in Freetown). GbonFa's financial capacity has improved considerably (up to 60% according to one informant) but will still need further attention in future to manage projects like BRACE II. It appears that by the end of the project both trust and communication had suffered at every level of the project. Frequent staff changes in both partners and Concern contributed to this and because of the heavy demands of the project mitigating measures may have been limited.

**In summary**, the partnership choice was appropriate but a lesson learnt is that it comes at a price, and will only be totally effective if project demands are carefully weighed against partner capacity in determining the choice of partners, and sufficient attention is given to continuous capacity strengthening, as well as to strong communication throughout implementation.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

A great deal of attention was paid to monitoring and evaluation, the majority of it was effective. Detailed monitoring forms were developed and regular monitoring was carried out, which supplemented partner reports which were sometimes late and lacking in detail. A number of activity assessments have been carried out in the latter months of implementation. These have been very useful for the evaluation, though they are sometimes lacking in analysis (an observation that was also made in the BRACE I evaluation report).

As demonstrated in this report, the baseline and endline surveys were unreliable. Several baselines were carried out by a local consultancy firm (which was preferred) but they lacked quality ; the final report by an external consultancy firm was only completed in March 2013 (more than half way

through the project). The endline survey was carried out in the same villages as the baseline but probably did not revisit the same households, focusing more rigorously on vulnerable households according to Concern criteria. This has biased results and probably accounts for the number of indicators where the figures suggest a decline or negative impact from the project.

The logframe indicators are largely output focused and do not always represent the more important and interesting programme activities (as illustrated by the complementary nature of the Progress Towards Achieving Indicators table in Annexe 1 and the additional discussion points in this text). Some outcome indicators, such as the impact of increased income on school enrolment, or the impact of more diverse production on child development, would have been interesting.

A complaints mechanism (Programme Participant Protection) was operated by partners in all villages and no complaints were registered.

**Score for Effectiveness : 3.5/5**

### **5.3 Efficiency**

#### **Financial management and procurement**

The annual financial report to the EU Oct 2012 – Sept 2013 shows an expenditure of Euros 892,187 against a total eligible budget of Euros 1,091,743.

Of this expenditure Euros 546,818 was spent on implementation costs against an eligible budget of Euros 750,661.

The final 6 months expenditure has mostly been allocated to implementation costs, thus considering expenditure as a whole a greater proportion has been allocated to overheads and other services than was budgeted.

Financial management has been satisfactory despite the capacity limitations of partners. Start up and close out meetings were held and capital assets will be transferred at the end of the project as required.

The partners were trained in EU procurement regulations and have applied them. The major supplier of agricultural machinery in Sierra Leone, Wingin, was found to have poor quality products. A wise decision was taken to switch to other more local suppliers but this slowed down supply of cassava graters, for instance, until the final weeks of the project.

#### **Distribution of responsibilities**

BRACE II is a far reaching project with a wide range of activities extending to 91 villages across 6 chiefdoms, often with difficult access especially during the rainy season. Shortage of time during the evaluation limited the assessment of allocation of responsibilities amongst different Concern and partner staff to determine efficiency. However one feature did stand out. Out of 91 villages, 47 were in the most remote chiefdom, Malal Mara. This chiefdom received a full range of the project activities. Yet only one field agent was allocated to the chiefdom, just as was the case for the other chiefdoms. Another field agent with fewer yet highly dispersed villages in his chiefdom complained that he received the same fuel allowance as his colleagues and that it did not cover his movements adequately. The reasons for this uneven distribution of responsibilities, which must have impacted efficiency, are not known.

**Score for Efficiency : 3.5/5**

## 5.4 Impact

At the **micro**, or output level of the project, there has been good value for money, with those activities in which more money and effort have been invested such as input distribution and culverts, generally producing the strongest returns. All the planned activities have been carried out, at least to some extent.

At the **meso**, or outcome level of the project, Concern's HCUEP framework has been addressed in all aspects, though with an emphasis on some aspects more than others.

The strongest achievement has been in building the **assets and returns** of poor communities, and within them, particularly of vulnerable households. Communities and households have improved food production through higher rice yields, better seed storage, crop diversification, and using improved farming techniques. Greater access to income, and also greater emphasis on working in groups has enabled them to gain more control over essential factors of production such as seed and labour. Enhanced food production and greater access to income to purchase food has further assisted them to close (though not eliminate) the hunger gap. It is estimated from observation during the evaluation that less than 20% of the destitute have failed to reduce the hunger gap.

Evaluation respondents consistently cited the following uses of increased disposable income (frequently in this order of importance) – school fees, hire of labour, purchase of medicines, purchase of food, repayment of loans, house improvements, investment in small businesses<sup>9</sup>. All but the last can be classed as basic needs. Education should be free for some children (primary forms 1-6 and junior secondary education for girls) but 60% of teachers in Tonkolili District are volunteer teachers (being trained through a 3-year distance learning course) and not receiving government pay. Parents also make many other education payments such as school uniforms, extra tuition, clubs, school premises upkeep etc. Respondents frequently cited the annual cost of school fees (Le 200,000 = approx. \$50 for primary education) as an indication of the amount they needed to pay per child ; this has not been verified. Grandparents were particularly proud to cite their support for grandchildren's education.

Building **returns** on assets is still more of an expectation or potential than a reality in many cases. This is partly due to the late arrival of many of the value addition inputs in BRACE II, such as cassava graters and rice hullers. The greater visible achievement, which also has much potential to develop further, is the increase in community led informal savings and loan facilities, both those managed within farmers' groups (in both kind and cash) and those managed by VSLAs. Many respondents cited the welcome release from the burden of loans with high interest repayment rates<sup>10</sup>. There are signs that access to more affordable loans is already encouraging investment in more sustainable enterprises, though as yet largely at an individual level. The potential to access new and better markets through better understanding of different value chains (using the NRI research) is a project resource which has been little exploited to date.

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<sup>9</sup> Some of these feature in a list of 10 key household items : land, livestock, housing material, ownership of a radio, mobile phone, seeds and a motorbike (Tonkolili Integrated Programme Baseline Report, Concern, March 2013),

<sup>10</sup> 71.2% of survey respondents had taken on a new debt in the last 2 years (Tonkolili Integrated Programme Baseline Survey).

BRACE II has helped **reduced risk and vulnerability** in targeted communities and with targeted beneficiaries. The risk of destitution has been alleviated through improved assets and returns and/or through the existence of improved community led social protection. Social protection either takes the form of social funds accumulated and managed by groups and associations or by redistribution of, for example food, within the community. The risk of minor hazards such as injury from fire especially for vulnerable groups such as older women and children through fire, or carrying heavy loads, has been alleviated through the activity of CDMCs in the one case, and better accessibility to markets, in the other. However major risks such as bush fire and environmental degradation, have hardly been touched.

**Vulnerable groups**, such as female headed households and disabled headed households are included in productive and community activities to a greater extent than before. In some villages young people emerged during the evaluation as being amongst the more vulnerable. Young women had all the features commonly associated with their status. They are most likely to drop out of school and to have least productive assets apart from their labour, though they are responsible for many items of household expenditure. Young men have the asset of labour and mobility but their labour may well be exploited in industrial farming and mining enterprises, and they may well bear the burden of caring for vulnerable older family members. Most young men interviewed stressed that they were intent on managing their own farms, but it was clear that they needed to outsource their labour to other farms or to other livelihood opportunities on a fairly regular basis. If viable farming opportunities are not available to them on a longterm basis then the pattern of rural/urban migration is only likely to increase.

**Addressing inequality** is defined in the project summary (see Annexe 4) as unequal relationships between government and the population, or between duty bearers and rights holders. BRACE II has helped redefine these relationships as relationships of interdependency and collaboration through its involvement of multiple stakeholders in project activities, including local authorities and line ministries, through engaging local CSOs as implementing partners, through strengthening community groups and coordinating activities such as regular meetings of People's Forums and a Learning Alliance.

The institutional environment (that is local authority and CSO capacity) remains weak and Concern's impact in this area was compromised by the fact that the burden of delivering the other activities in the programme (many of which fell on the shoulders of the implementing CSOs) compromised Concern's ability to focus adequately on this component.

**Score for impact : 4/5**

## **5.5 Sustainability**

The most solid basis of BRACE II's achievement is in those areas which have consolidated the activities started in earlier projects. The burden of delivering these activities, which involve delivery of inputs, and associated trainings has meant that BRACE II has been unable to follow through certain activities (particularly on value addition, value chain analysis and other innovations, and capacity strengthening) to a sustainable conclusion. Trainings for youth in construction etc. carried out on the job have helped to diversify their livelihood options but may not be sustainable unless followed up with skills training in small business establishment.

Concern's Integrated Programme in Tonkolili District is an important instrument for sustainability. It is defined as 'sector programmes working together with the same target group in the same area in a coordinated manner' (internal powerpoint presentation). Thus the achievements of BRACE II, and the unfulfilled potential of certain activities will most likely be picked up in new cross sectoral programmes (such as the environment and gender projects currently starting up) as well as providing learning for existing programmes in the health and education sectors.

At community level a major social constraint is lack of trust. Overcoming this is not easy ; it requires continuous attention to reducing vulnerability through increasing assets, and strengthening the management of community organisations such as farmers' and women's groups, value addition tools and VSLAs. The same is true with regard to strengthening relationships between communities and local authorities. BRACE II has made an important start to establishing the foundation for trust building. Continued support for and engagement with the TDC is an important element for continuing this process.

**Score for sustainability : 3.5/5**

## **5.6 Value for Money**

**In summary,** high value for money has been achieved overall by BRACE II particularly in the high financial investment activities. Some lower financial investment, higher effort activities such as capacity strengthening were not always emphasised enough. This was also true of expert studies, particularly from NRI, which have not been capitalised on sufficiently during the course of the project.

## **6. Chapter Three: Case Studies**

### **6.1 Chairlady, on the road towards Masheku Lol village, Kunike Chiefdom**

The chairlady of the Farmers' Group at Masheku Lol village, Kunike chiefdom is on her way to the luma (periodic) market in Masingbi which she visits every Thursday. On the road we stop the vehicle in which she is travelling. She is taking a good quantity of palm oil, rice which she has dehusked by hand, dried pepper (which fetches the best price) and small quantities of groundnuts and beans to market. She has paid Le5000 one way for the shared taxi. Before Concern improved the road with 6-8 culverts she used to walk through the swamps and over makeshift palm trunk bridges with head loads. She has made a profit of Le 600,000 which she has used for medicine, to hire labour and to pay for school fees (5 of her 8 children are still at school). None of her children has worked in the mines. Her rice yields have improved through planting short duration rice (previously half a bushel of seed yielded 12 bushels, now 1 bushel of seed has yielded 30 bushels). She obtains seed through exchange with other farmers. She is not interested in the rice mill at Masingbi because at 18kms distance it is too far away. Her life has improved through better and more diverse production, better access to market where she can buy basic commodities, and also the Concern PHU which has reduced the amount she spends on medicine. She still has a hunger gap of 2-3 months during the rainy season.

### **6.2 Chairlady, CDMC, Nonkoba Village, Kunike chiefdom**

The widow of 3 years has 7 children including one deaf boy who is not at school. She is energetic and enterprising. She grows local rice in the swamp and harvested 10 bushels from 1 ¼ bushels planted. While her husband was alive they farmed on the upland as well as lowland and hired the labour they

needed. Her rice harvest is sufficient for 6-8 months consumption. She has inherited a significant asset, a small forest, from her parents. She lost the deeds during the war. She manages the forest well, dispersing quick growing seeds and harvesting forest products such as fuelwood, timber and cool water for the whole village. This year she has not planted groundnuts because she is building a new house. Through BRACE 2 she has received livestock and fishponds. The fishponds are well kept by herself and her children, she buys fish food such as rice bran, and harvests every 6 months. The income earned buys food for the hunger months and she takes fish to improve her own family's diet. She has transferred the fishpond management skills to others. She has not sent anything to market today but she is in touch with her relatives there by phone to obtain market price information.

The widow is chair of the CDMC which has 25 members dispersed among several villages. She patrols her village very morning to check on fire hazards. She understands the devastation caused by slash and burn practices.

### **6.3 VSLA meeting, Komrabai Junction, Kholifa Mabang chiefdom**

The evaluation team attended a regular weekly meeting of the VSLA. It has 30 members (9 of whom are vulnerable) who each pay Le 500 into the Social Fund and can then buy up to 5 shares @ Le 1000 per share. The VSLA started about a year ago and the social fund has a balance of Le 420,000 (approx \$100). The total capital is currently Le 2,010,500 (approx \$ 500). Members can take out loans according to their level of credit worthiness which is assessed by the other members. There are only two defaulters. The meeting was well organised by committee members, who apart from the Chairman and Chairlady, were young men from the community with some education. The 'box' has brought money into the community freed members from the grip of money lenders and encouraged young people not to go far from the village.

The following beneficiaries described the benefit of the VSLA to their household :

A middle aged woman who had received a social fund loan (no interest) to pay for funeral costs of a family member. She had also taken loans for petty trade and to hire labour for her groundnut plot. From her harvest she had kept 1.5 bags for consumption, sold 1 bag to pay back the loan, and made 2 bags profit to buy household goods.

A school girl who saved the profit from selling cakes in the market every Sunday (Le 60,000) to pay for extra tuition fees. Her ambition is to become a nurse

The girl's father who has a wife and 6 children, all at school. He has taken a loan to hire a tractor for his farm. He keeps part of the harvest for food and sells the rest to pay for school fees.

### **6.4 Farmer Field School Group, Massesebeh Village near Magburaka town, Kholifa Rowalla chiefdom**

The meeting took place in a community hall by the roadside , with about 25 members present. The group was established in 2010 and meets on Saturdays. A payment of Le 200 is made each week to the Social Fund and the group's assets are kept in the bank in Magburaka.

The group has learnt modern methods for cultivating sweet potatoes, vegetables (x3 harvests per year which helps to pay for school fees), cassava. Harvests for all crops have increased and are used for consumption and sale. A male member described his improved rice farming – instead of broadcasting seed he transplants seedlings from a nursery ; and at harvest time he threshes with his feet rather than with sticks to reduce spoilage. He has doubled his yield to 10 bushels per 1 bushel

planted. His improved seed came from MAFFS and he is now self-sufficient in seed. The group has made good profits from groundnuts which they sold to buyers who came to the community. They checked prices in Magburaka first. One young man takes groundnuts to the Luma market x2 per week and makes Le 3000 profit per basket.

The group ranks their crops as follows : rice, cassava (a crop with diverse uses), groundnuts which help during the hunger months, vegetables which sell all year round, sweet potatoes, maize. The group also learnt business planning skills and established a CDMC. All the members do some petty trading in the town and some go to the gold mines though they say the wages are small compared to farming. Some have returned from the mines sick.

The group members are ambassadors for other farmers and have trained adopter farmers from their own and other communities.

The chairlady's farm is on land begged from the village elders. She has 4 children in school and an elderly husband. 2 of her children help on the farm and she hires additional labour. She grows a variety of crops including oil palm. There is currently a problem with grasshoppers but she has been taught to clear the bush beside the field, check the farm regularly and use a net to catch them.

## **7. Chapter Four: Lessons Learnt, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Lessons Learnt**

BRACE II has learnt that labour mobility and the possibility of selling labour for short periods to industrial farms and the mining sector is likely to remain a livelihood strategy for young men.

BRACE II has confirmed that young women are amongst the most vulnerable in rural communities.

BRACE II has learnt that vulnerable households can be headed by strong and capable individuals who progress to sustainable livelihoods if given some initial support.

BRACE II has confirmed that rural communities are risk averse and also generally lack trust in their relatives, neighbours and leaders.

BRACE II has learnt that disaster risk reduction strategies that ignore major environmental features such as climate change or slash and burn land clearance practices will have limited impact.

BRACE II has confirmed that while partnership with local CSOs is the right thing to do it requires a significant investment in continuous capacity strengthening, a careful allocation of tasks and responsibilities, and a commitment to maintaining strong and open communication channels.

BRACE II has confirmed that institutional capacity strengthening is a key element of sustainability.

### **7.2 Conclusions**

BRACE II has been worthwhile and brought clear benefits to at least 5000 beneficiary households (taking into account the activities which benefited the general population, and benefit redistribution). This has included the most vulnerable. Food security and sustainable livelihoods have been brought closer to many households and many communities have come close to the threshold needed for making the bigger investments to access government schemes. BRACE II has been the launch pad for engaging in these more sustainable activities which include value addition and

marketing. The institutional environment (eg. ABCs) is faulty but the time may be right to challenge it.

To a large extent BRACE II has been a consolidation of the earlier projects BRACE I and EPRH and continued a 'transitional' style of programming – meaning a substantial reliance on inputs, together with training and group establishment. There have been some pilot innovations – NRI studies, VSLA, SRI but these are as yet underexploited. All the projects from BRACE I onwards have been built on a graduation model and the positive results indicate that it is now time to move on to a more developmental programming model with less reliance on inputs through grants and more emphasis on improving savings and loan facilities, business skills and group cohesion and management<sup>11</sup>. Creating and reinforcing linkages from community groups to local authorities and government schemes has been started but will need far greater attention in future. Community driven programming approaches may provide a good basis for a model which gives communities more choice and control over activities and strengthens all aspects of governance.

A small percentage of vulnerable households continue to need social protection. This was provided in BRACE II through redistribution and also the social funds built in to many of the farming group savings practices, and the VSLA system. Young men and women emerged as social groups requiring special attention, because of their vulnerability to external opportunities which may not be favourable to sustainable rural livelihoods in the case of young men ; and their low social status and vulnerability to abuse in the case of young women. The need for behaviour changes amongst the whole population across a wide spectrum of areas of life from attitudes to the environment to HIV prevention is still urgent. BRACE II has encouraged greater inclusion within communities but this will be threatened unless new styles of leadership are fostered with the aim of improving trust between women and men and within the community as a whole.

Malal Mara chiefdom was included amongst project chiefdoms for the first time and has benefited from the project in the same way as the other locations. The evaluation visit was too short to ascertain how far the villages in Malal Mara have moved towards food security and are ready to embrace commercialisation as is the case with other chiefdoms. Future programming should make sure to differentiate the needs of Mala Mara chiefdom in particular.

The major innovation of BRACE II was engaging local partners for implementation. BRACE I had used them as service providers. But their capacity was weak and slowed implementation. BRACE II was an ambitious programme, with many components and a large no of communities. It had strong backstopping but needed more proactive management to overcome these weaknesses.

The Learning Alliance is a valuable platform and all means should be used to continue it. There are many important issues for continued LA advocacy such as land and the environment, exploitation of labour, ABCs.

### 7.3 Recommendations

- The pilot conducted on SRI and other similar innovations should be the focus of productive activities in a future programme.
- Explore a model for financing IVS development which would be suitable for women and enable them to take advantage of labour reductions, and vegetable and groundnut growing during the dry season.

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<sup>11</sup> It is understood that Concern is using this model in Burundi.

- A comprehensive ecology friendly approach including attention to climate change and watershed management must be urgently adopted. NRI may be able to provide expert advice or recommend another suitable collaborative partner.
- Community driven approaches which encourage ownership and sustainability have been used by NACSA and NGOs such as IRC. PACT has a useful leaflet on Community Contracting.
- BRACE II results in Mala Mara chiefdom need particular examination to determine which households are ready to graduate to a more developmental model.
- The value addition and value chain analysis and marketing reports produced by NRI have many valuable recommendations to guide future programming. Making market linkages is just one of these.
- Examine social units of management to ascertain how they might constrain innovation in value addition and marketing.
- BRACE II has much data from monitoring reports to plough back into NRI for their analysis. (This was also recommended in BRACE I.)
- Build on VSLAs by encouraging succession models which foster trust and good management. The Area Coordinator has good experience to draw on from other countries and plans to pilot two different approaches with stronger groups in 2014.
- Focus on institutional strengthening. Assist farmers' groups to move on to becoming FBOs, and perhaps in future cooperatives.
- Reassess vulnerable households in the light of BRACE II findings so as to more accurately determine social protection needs. A survey of this nature would also help to establish whether farmers' reluctance to innovate is based on vulnerability or a more general risk aversion.
- Follow up the recommendation of Paul Wagstaff to study USAID's Nutrition Impact Assessment Tool. This may be relevant in the context of the new environment programme which promotes sustainable nutrition.
- Use the model of BRACE II farmers' groups to conduct advocacy to bring ABC services down to farmers. The Binkolo Growth Centre might have some experience to share. Engage the TDC as an ally in this through the Learning Alliance.
- Follow up the lessons regarding partnership and try to build the necessary safeguards even further into the early phases of projects. Start up and close out meetings are a useful tool for this.
- Use every means to continue the dialogue and advocacy on issues which is facilitated by the Learning Alliance and People's Forums.
- Continue and reinforce the Tonkolili Integrated Programme model – developing cross-sectoral outcome indicators where possible.
- It is too late to rectify the BRACE II baseline and endline surveys but lessons have been learnt for application in future projects.

## Annexe 1

### Progress towards achieving indicators

N.B baseline and endline figures were used as a guide during field visits, but are unreliable (see discussion under Efficiency section 5.3).

Programme outcome	Indicator	Baseline/endline (draft to be corrected)	Evaluation finding
To contribute significantly to the realisation of food security for 5,000 vulnerable h/h in Tonkolili District by the end of the project by	1. At least 80% of the target group have sufficient food reserves to reduce their hunger period by two months from the baseline by the end of the project through increased agricultural production.	Critical food shortage 3.2 months/4.8 months.	There are several variables involved in assessing the hunger gap eg. : are respondents referring to a rice gap only ? ; what do food reserves refer to ? ; is the hunger gap determined by no of meals eaten per day ? The majority finding, taking into account the variables, is that most community members have reduced the hunger gap by 1-3 months in the course of the project (thereby correcting the endline data). While rice production may have increased in most areas, the more significant reason for the reduction is diversification of cropping and sale of produce to buy rice. The majority of respondents still report a hunger gap of 1-4 months (from 5 – 7 months before). Certain vulnerable h/h (especially elderly widows) may have been unable to close the gap and to still be reliant on food purchase or donation. This number is less than 20% of the total population.
building on on-going rehabilitation and development initiatives.	2. At least 50% of targeted h/h demonstrate improved dietary diversity in their food consumption patterns.	Average h/h diversity consumption score 7.6/6.9 (out of a possible total score of 12).	Consumption diversity was reasonably good at the beginning of the project and seems not to have changed considerably according to surveys. The majority of respondents reported that they kept back a part (often about a third) of their production of crops such as cassava, groundnuts, pepper and vegetables for consumption. Farmers also grow palm oil, maize, sweet potatoes and sorghum on their upland farms and their liking for diversity (for consumption as well as sale) is a disincentive to some to develop IVS and move off the uplands.
<b>Result 1 :</b> Enhanced food production levels for poor households through	3. 79% of targeted farmers (60% of which will be women members) can purchase or retain from own seed at	- Farmers retaining or saving rice seed from last harvest 39.2%/34.5%, (39.9%/34.8% m/h/h and 36.4%/32.9% f/h/h). - Those who retained or	Many farmers have stored seed from the last harvest and a proportion are self-sufficient in seed. Others are able to purchase the additional seed they require and many farmers are planting at least 2 bushels of rice. A relatively small number of vulnerable (and mostly female-headed) households do not have seed for planting. The majority of farmers targeted (73.7% Seed loan recovery assessment) received an improved seed rice loan in 2011 and paid it back to their seed management

improved farming techniques and	least 2 bushels of improved rice seed by the end of the project.	purchased 69.6%/at least 2 bushels 52.95%, (69.7%/46.25% f/h/h, 69.5%/54.5% m/h/h). - Those who saved at least 2 bushels improved rice seed 3.84%/12.75%, (4.4%/13.05% m/h/h, 1.32%/11.25% f/h/h). - (endline only : those who retained or purchased at least 2 bushels improved variety rice 18.83% (16.25% f/h/h, 19.42% m/h/h).	committee. This seed continues to revolve. However only a minority of farmers overall have access to at least 2 bushels of improved rice seed.
improved nutrition.	4. 70% of targeted farmers have increased harvested crop yield per acre for rice by 25% (to 6 bushels per acre) by the end of the project.	Average rice yield per acre 4.7/2.75 bushels.	All farmers reported a rice yield of more than 6 bushels/acre (invalidating the endline result). One farmer reported 17 bushels per acre using improved rice seed in swamps. Improved farming techniques such as planting seedlings individually (as opposed to broadcasting seed) and harvesting early have contributed to this result. Farmers reported higher yields from IVS than upland farms.
	5. 25% increase in number of h/h from the baseline mechanically processing either rice or cassava in the target areas by the end of the project.	- Respondents using rice milling machine 14.8%/22.6%, (14.1%/22.3% men, 18.2%/23.8% women). - Respondents using cassava processing machine 2.2%/5.2%, (2.6%/5.2% m/h/h, 0%/5% f/h/h).	The project has procured and installed 15 cassava processing machines and 2 rice milling machines in target villages. However the installation is only just being completed in all the villages (and not all villages have been trained in the maintenance and management of the cassava machines yet). The indications from those villages who have begun to use the machines are that households are already finding better opportunities for selling their higher value produce, though perhaps this is still largely within the immediate village environment. A far higher result remains a potential rather than a reality at the end of the project.

		- Respondents using either cassava processing machine or rice milling machine 16%/26.36%, (17.11%/26.25% f/h/h, 15.84%/26.38% m/h/h).	
	6. At least 50% of targeted h/h demonstrate proper understanding of the benefits of a balanced diet.	Respondents able to mention 4/5 food groups that make up a balanced diet 33.1%/30.59%, (28.9%/26.25% f/h/h, 34.02%/31.6% m/h/h).	This finding somewhat contradicts the earlier finding (indicator 2) regarding knowledge of and use of a variety of food groups. Respondents volunteered the information that pregnant and lactating mothers as well as children need a good diet, citing eating eggs (a traditionally taboo food) in particular. It was also suggested that these groups eat first, after the senior male, though this was not verified.
	7. % increase in number of animal ownership at the h/h level.	- Respondents owning one or more sheep or goats 57.6%/42.1%, (53.9%/33.8% f/h/h, 58.4%/44.1% m/h/h). - Respondents owning 2 or more chickens, ducks or guinea fowls 79.6%/67.1%, (85.5%/55.1% f/h/h, 85.5%/69.1% m/h/h).	In the target group 71% women and 29% men received small livestock. The results were however poor with only 14.3% fertility amongst the animals and 66.7% death from disease. The recipients did what they could to treat the sick animals – about 50% using local herbs, and 50% receiving help from MAFFS/paravets. MAFFs services were described as inadequate, and the paravets trained (36 in Kunike chiefdom and 20 in Malal Mara chiefdom) were hampered by a wide area to cover. Reasons put forward for the poor results included : procurement from distant locations and free range husbandry. One report suggested ducks might be a more viable alternative in future as they are resistant to disease, but beneficiaries views on this option were not sought. There are lessons here for Concern and partners.
<b>Result 2 :</b> Increased access to market and income generation through value addition, and	8. At least 80% of the Small Enterprise and Business Groups formed have started generating profit.	- Membership of business enterprise group 48.8%/91.77%. - Business Enterprise groups making a profit 32.3%/77.4%. - Average income gained by business enterprise groups Le 334,924/Le 700,653. - Average income gained by group members Le	The increase in small business groups is a reflection of the increases in household and group income (and the increase in group agricultural production). Many groups are using capital gained to make loans, and individuals and groups are demonstrating entrepreneurship in investing even very small amounts of loan capital in small scale business activities, often retailing consumer and household items. The modest income gained by group members (Le 42,872 = approx \$10) may refer to income gained per business transaction ; while the frequency of business transactions will vary from community to community. Many beneficiaries are using income to pay for labour on their fields, or if they have more income, to hire tractors (Le 300,000/8 hours).

		19,014/Le 42,872.	
use of market information.	9. % of targeted h/h make informed decisions in relation to the purchasing/selling of agricultural inputs and products.	Respondents having prior information on the price of goods before making a decision to buy or sell agricultural inputs and products to or from a customer 65.1%/79.8%, (61.8%/85.9% f/h/h, 65.8%/78.4% m/h/h).	Respondents do have good access to prices via the radio or by phoning relatives and other contacts. However they are still hampered from selling at higher prices by the need for 'quick' money. Respondents reported 'giving away' raw cassava to traders at the farmgate. Other respondents mentioned the value of prior information to avoid being cheated by relatives or traders in urban centres to whom they entrust their goods.
	10. 50% of targeted beneficiaries selling their agricultural produce into the market with prior knowledge of price to be received.	Prior information about market prices before taking agricultural produce to a particular market 63.1%/69.6%, (64.8%/69.3% m/h/h, 55.3%/71.2% f/h/h).	As for Indicator 9. A woman trader in Masingbi market, Yoni Chiefdom reported buying palm oil at 65,000Le/gallon, checking the price before heading to market (70,000Le per gallon) only to find that the price had dropped down to 65,000Le by the time she arrived. Traders with very small profit margins are still very vulnerable to volatile market prices.
	11. 20% of targeted beneficiaries from the baseline selling produce to new markets that they had never sold to before the intervention.	Respondents going to a new market they have not been to before to sell their agricultural produce 82.7% m/h/h know of new markets/ 6.1% m/h/h have been to a new market, 17.3% f/h/h know of new markets/6.2% f/h/h have been to a new market.	Luma or periodic markets are accessed directly by farmers and they have not increased in number during the project period. However more farmers have access to these markets as a result of improved roads (culverts constructed by the project). Some beneficiaries with enough capital or good contacts to reach Freetown may have accessed this market. Improved roads has increased the number of traders reaching villages and this has increased opportunities for farmgate sales for a good number of beneficiaries.
	12. % increase in the number of h/h that are using saving practices.	- Respondents using formal or informal savings institutions 43.78%/50.8%, (42.28%/52.2% m/h/h, 48.06%/45% f/h/h). - Formal savings	34 VSLA have been established by the project and 18 are performing above expectations (Annual report Oct 12 – Sept 13). The VSLA visited were well run and generating both social funds which are being used to meet a variety of needs without charging interest (including surprisingly a roofing upgrade in Madusia village, Yoni chiefdom), and also loans for members. Several villages reported having 'waiting lists' of new members. Apparently they are held back from starting new

		institutions 9.1%/1.18% (8.8%/1.16% m/h/h, 10.4%/1.25% f/h/h). - Informal savings institutions 41.1%/49.65%.	groups less by lack of technical skills than by insufficient trust in potential leadership for new groups. The Concern Area Coordinator has good experience of models used in other countries which would overcome this barrier.
<b>Result 3 :</b> Reduced vulnerability of individuals and communities to natural and human-made hazards	13. At least 40% of targeted h/h (50% of which female headed) have diversified their sources of livelihoods by the end of 2013.	Respondents with 3 or more sources of income from sales 19.38%/25.18%, (17.89%/25.5% m/h/h, 26.32%/23.37% f/h/h).	Diversification is a crucial strategy for achieving food security and this indicator would benefit from further study. Field visits suggested that over the period (since 2007) that Concern has been carrying out FIM projects in Tonkolili District the introduction of a number of crop varieties (cassava, groundnuts, maize, sweet potatoes, vegetables) has enabled beneficiaries to diversify their crop production and sale. The results of crop ranking with groups in 2 villages confirmed the value of introducing groundnuts during BRACE II (groundnuts coming second in importance after rice in many places because of the high prices it fetches ; with cassava coming third because the prices are lower despite it being a more versatile crop in terms of value addition).
through improved understanding of and preparation for	14. At least 20% of targeted beneficiaries adopt and utilize eco-stoves in their h/h.	Respondents using the eco-stove 5.3%/8.7%, (5.6%/8.4% m/h/h, 3.9%/10% f/h/h).	25 beneficiaries in Yoni and Malal Mara chiefdoms were trained in eco-stove production, and 10 beneficiaries from Kunike and Kunike Barina received refresher training. These volunteers were supposed to manufacture stoves for sale and train others. Very little sale has taken place (though this was less of a priority) but the knowledge has been passed on in some cases. Those who use eco-stoves report that they use up to 2/3 less fuel. The drawbacks appear to be their weight which precludes their being transported to farm kitchens where cooking takes place during the growing seasons, and their fragility (they are made of dried clay). Other stronger models exist in the market, but those used in the project are cost-free.
disasters and diversification of livelihood sources.	15. 70% of School Green Clubs in targeted schools have initiated a school project that demonstrates their understanding of environment issues.	School Green Clubs existing in 3/6 chiefdoms 34/35.	The School Green Club which was visited in Binkolo village, Mala Mara chiefdom had a thriving pepper nursery and an enthusiastic membership. The children understood the value of composting and treeplanting for shade (though their treeplanting had failed), but no other environmental understanding was evident.
	16. % of h/h that	Food budgeting to enable	Some women do certainly conduct food budgeting and have changed their practice,

	conduct food budgeting throughout the year.	year long food availability 35.6%/21.2%, (34.2%/16.2% f/h/h, 36.2%/22.3% m/h/h).	but it is not known whether this was an element of trainings delivered to beneficiaries and farming groups.
<b>Result 4 :</b> Strengthened district and community level democracy by providing support to the	17. At least 50% of targeted groups are guided by their bylaws with regard to election of office bearers.	- Membership of farming or business groups 48.3%/91.8%. - Farming/business groups having bylaws 43.8%/99.5%. - Groups implementing bylaws 40.4%/91.3%.	Committees have been established to manage each farming group and asset (such as cassava grating machine, power tiller, fish ponds). Community Disaster Management Committees have also been set up for clusters of villages, mainly focusing on fire hazard management through the establishment of fire belts around villages and regular patrols. All these committees will require capacity strengthening to be sustainable.
Tonkolili District Council (TDC)and empowering the communities and civil society groups.	18. Number of issues taken up/addressed by the Rural District Council and Government department which were raised at people's forum.	5 main issues raised by people's forums with District Councils/(not part of endline survey).	The quarterly People's Forums have brought duty bearers (the TDC and ward councillors) to the people and given the people a voice. The 5 issues reported in the baseline : tax payment, selection of Ward Development Committees, transparency and accountability in the use of council funds, sharing of information, roles and responsibilities of district councillors and parliamentarians appear to have been raised and the public is better informed, yet dissatisfied with performance. Promises made, such as for tractorisation and inputs such as fertiliser and seed have not been followed through by the relevant Ministries (MAFFS). At least some villages have chased with letters to the TDC. One community (Makorje Kabia in Kholifa Rowalla chieftdom) reported raising the issue of community benefits expected from the Magbass Sugar Complex company as part of their cooperate social responsibility. The community chased their Councillors but there is no result to date.
	19. At least 50% of farming organisations are members of national level networks by the end of the project.	25/65 farmers organisations registered with National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone (NAFFSL)/(not part of endline survey).	This does not appear to have been a priority activity though some groups may have registered.
	20. At least 6 agri-business networks or	MAFFS extension staff and partners have trained 6	There are 17 ABCs in Tonkolili District and varying accounts of how many are functional (6 according to the TDC and one according to the Chairman of Mafunday

	<p>ABCs trained and supported on business management are maintaining minutes, stock and financial records by 2013.</p>	<p>ABCs in leadership/organisational development, business management and record keeping/ABCs need more training/ (not part of endline survey).</p>	<p>ABC, outside Mile 91 urban centre). The Mafunday ABC has a membership of 4 FBOs with 25 members each, all of them within a 4 mile radius of the centre. The FBOs grow rice, cassava, maize and groundnuts which they process for sale at the centre. The centre also provides services to farmers and traders. Young FBO members operate the machines, and also hire out their labour. There do not seem to be many customers and the Chairman complains of high maintenance costs and lack of commitment by MAFFS eg. to supply a power tiller which would generate income. The Chairman would like to have a video facility as a further IGA for the centre. The ABC has become a cooperative and he maintains that it is transparent and accountable, however it has not as yet attracted any funding.</p> <p>The ABCs are a cornerstone of the government's Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP) but controversial. The general opinion amongst Concern staff is that they are either badly managed or monopolised by individual/political interests. Their repositioning means that in most cases they are too distant from project villages to be useful. The majority of farming group members have not heard of them and BRACE II has organised X farmers visits to ABCs to improve their knowledge.</p> <p>Former Concern staff Tayo Alabi carried out a study on the ABCs for Concern. The BRACE team's conclusion was that it would be worthwhile organising visits by farming groups to the ABCs to extend knowledge (6 visits took place) but not provide any further support.</p>
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## Annexe 2

Dates (March 2014)	Time	Planned activity	Responsible
Sun 9 <sup>th</sup>		Arrival in Freetown	Mathias
Mon 10 <sup>th</sup>	8:30 – 9:00a.m	Meeting with CD in Freetown	CD Fiona Mclysaght
	9:00 – 11:00a.m	Discuss with Concern's National FIM Coordinator in Freetown	Ruth Davies
	11:30 – 1:00p.m	Meeting with Finance team in Freetown	Partnership Accountant and Country Finance Controller Susan Carr
	1:00 – 1:40p.m	LUNCH	Ruth
	1:40 – 2:00p.m	Travel to MAFFS Office in Freetown	Mathias
	2:00 – 3:30p.m	Meeting with MAFFS Officials in Freetown	Ruth
	3:50 – 4:50 p.m.	Meeting with Programme Quality, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator	Zenebe Mekonnen
Tue 11 <sup>th</sup>	8:00a.m – 11:00a.m	Travel to Tonkolili (Magburaka)	Ruth, Bockarie & Mathias
	11:10 – 11:40a.m	Meet with Concern's Area Coordinator	Dennis Yankson
	11:40 – 11:50a.m	Travel to MAFFS Office in Magburaka	Bockarie
	11:50a.m – 12:50p.m	Meeting with MAFFS Officials	Dennis

	12:50 – 1:00p.m	Travel to Tonkolili District Council (TDC) Office in Magburaka	Bockarie
	1:00 – 2:00p.m	Meeting with TDC Officials	Dennis
	2:30 – 3:00p.m	Travel to MADAM Office (Makeni)	Bockarie
	3:00 – 4:00p.m	Meeting with MADAM (BRACE II Team)	Dennis
	4:00 – 4:30p.m	Travel to GbonFA Office (Magburaka)	Bockarie
	4:30 – 5:30p.m	Meeting with GbonFA (BRACE II Team) James (Director), Francis (Finance Officer), Prince (Programmes)	Dennis
	5:30 – 5:40a.m	Travel to Concern Office	Bockarie
	5:40 – 6:40p.m	Discuss with BRACE II team members (Concern)	Dennis
Weds 12 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 9:30a.m	<b>Field day 1: Kunike Barina Chiefdom</b> Travel to Malenkay	Bockarie
	9:30 – 11:00a.m	Discuss with Inland Valley Swamp development beneficiaries in Malenkay village	Emmanuel (MADAM) & Michael (Concern)
	11:00 – 1130 am	<b>Travel to Mapamurie</b>	Bockarie
	11:30 – 12:30 am	Meet with farming group (mixed group) in Mapamurie village and discuss with members on value addition initiatives	Emmanuel MADAM) & Michael (Concern)
	12:30 – 1:30p.m	Travel back to Magburaka	Bockarie
	1:30-2:00	Travel to MADAM	Emmanuel MADAM) &

			Michael (Concern)
	2:00-2:30	Meeting with MADAM Director, Senior Finance Officer, Programmes Director, Programmes Officer	
	2:30-3:00	Travel to CWW	
	3:30 – 4:00p.m	Meeting with Learning Alliance members in Magburaka	
	4:20- 5:10	Meeting with BRACE 2 CWW team	
	5:30- 6:00	Meeting with Area Coordinator	Bockarie
Thurs 13 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 9:30a.m	<b>Field day 2: Kunike Chiefdom</b> Travel to Patefu Kanafutha village	Bockarie
	9:30 – 11:00a.m	Visit culverts construction site (Patefu Kanafutha – Magbonka feeder road improvement) and discuss with beneficiaries	Bob (MADAM) & Michael and Billy (Concern)
	11:00 – 12:00 p.m	<b>Travel to Nonkoba village</b>	Bockarie
	12:00 – 1:30 p.m	Visit fish pond construction site at Nonkoba village and discuss with beneficiaries	Bob (MADAM) & Michael and Billy (Concern)
	1:30 – 2:30 p.m	<b>Travel to Masheku Lol village</b>	Bockarie
	2:30 – -4:00 pm	Meet with livestock beneficiaries in Masheku Lol	Ramatu
	4:00 – 5:00	Travel to Masingbi Town	Bockarie
	5:00 – 5:40	Visit Periodic Market in Masingbi & discuss with traders	Ramatu

	5:40 – 6:40p.m	Travel back to Magburaka	Bockarie
Fri 14 <sup>th</sup>	8:30a.m – 10:30a.m	<b>Field day 3: Kholifa Mabang Chiefdom</b> Travel to Mawarr village	Bockarie
	10:30a.m – 12:00p.m	Meet with Farmer Field School members in Mawarr village	Michael (MADAM) & Michael (Concern)
	12:00 – 1:30p.m	<b>Travel to Komrabai Junction</b>	Bockarie
	1:30p.m – 3:00p.m	Discuss with Village Savings & Loans Association members in Komrabai Junction	Michael (MADAM) & Michael (Concern)
	3:00 – 4:00p.m	Travel back to Magburaka	Bockarie
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup>	8:30 – 9:30a.m	<b>Field day 4: Kholifa Rowalla Chiefdom</b> Travel to Makorie Kabia village	Bockarie
	11:00a.m – 12:00p.m	Meet with farming group (mixed group) in Makorie Kabia village	Prince (GbonFA) & Dennis (Concern)
	11:00a.m – 12:00p.m	<b>Travel to Massesebeh village</b>	Bockarie
	12:00 – 1:30p.m	Meet with Farmer Field School members in Massesebeh village	Prince (GbonFA) & Dennis (Concern)
	1:30 – 2:00p.m	Travel to Magburaka	Bockarie
Sun 16 <sup>th</sup>			
Mon 17 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 10:00a.m	<b>Field day 5: Yoni Chiefdom</b>	Mohamed (GbonFA) & Melvin

		Travel to Yoni Bana Village	(Concern)
	10:00 – 11:30a.m	Meet with Women's group in Yoni Bana village	Mohamed (GbonFA) & (Concern)
	11:30a.m – 12:00p.m	<b>Travel to Mile 91</b>	Bockarie
	12:00 – 1:00p.m	Visit Radio Gbafth FM 91.0 in Mile 91 and discuss with officials on Market information dissemination	Mohamed (GbonFA) & Melvin (Concern)
	1:00 – 2:00p.m	<b>Travel to Madusia village</b>	Bockarie
	2:00 – 3:30p.m	Visit farming group (mixed group) in Madusia village	Mohamed (GbonFA) & Melvin (Concern)
	3:30 – 5:00p.m	Travel back to Magburaka	Bockarie
Tue 18 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 10:30a.m	<b>Field day 6: Malal Mara Chiefdom</b> Travel to Binkolo village	Bockarie
	10:30a.m – 11:30a.m	Visit fish pond construction site and schools Green Club in Binkolo village and discuss with beneficiaries	Sulaiman (GbonFA) & Michael (Concern)
	11:30a.m – 12:30p.m	<b>Travel to Masuba village</b>	Bockarie
	12:30 – 2:00p.m	Discuss with farming group (mixed group) in Masuba village on Functional Adult literacy	Sulaiman (GbonFA) & Michael (Concern)
	2:00 – 2:30p.m	<b>Travel to Ropolon village</b>	Bockarie

	2:30 – 3:30p.m	Visit Seed store, schools in Ropolon village and discuss with beneficiaries including Eco stoves	Sulaiman (GbonFA) & Michael (Concern)
	3:30 – 5:00	Travel back to Magburaka	Bockarie
	5:20-7:00	General debriefing with BRACE 2 team, National FIM Coordinator and Area Coordinator	BRACE 2 Partners & Staff,
Wed 19 <sup>th</sup>	7a.m – 11a.m	Travel to Freetown	Ruth, Bockarie & Mathias
	11-12.30	Debriefing with Michelle Wilson, Assistant Country Director Programmes	

## Annexe 3

### Additional persons met

No	Names		Organisation/ Institution	Designation	Location
1/2	Hanneke Lam, Richard Lamboll		Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich		Chatham, UK
3	Tayo Alibi		Former FIM Coordinator	Consultant	Freetown
4/5	Sidney Mohamed Kamara, BJ Bangura		MAFFS	Head National Agricultural Coordination Unit, Director Extension Services	Freetown
6/7	Sesay, Arthur ?		Tonkolili District Council	Chair, Planning and Development Officer	Magburaka
8	Aroun Rashid Kamara	MAFFS Officers	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Agricultural Officer	Magburaka
9	Emmanuel Ballah Marah		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Crops Officer	
10	Leslie. J. Greywoode		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Extension Officer	
11	Alpha. U. Leigh		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Forestry Officer	
12	Ahmed. A. Kanu		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Livestock Officer	
13	Brima . A. Sesay		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Agric. Engineer	
14	Lahai. P. J. Dumbuya		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)	District Crop Protection Officer	
15	Adama Sam		Learning Alliance Members	Community Based Training Programme (COBTRIP)	Finance Officer

16	Alusine Bangura		Tonkolili District Disabled Association( TDDA)	Chairman	
17	Henry. M. Massaqui		Ministry Of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affair	Social Worker	
18	Abdul Samad Kamara		Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR)	Project Manager	
19	Mohamed. L. Kamara		Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS)	Programme Admin	
20	Sheriff Parker		Community Initiatives for Development Association ( CIDA)	Director	
21				Chairlady and Market Women	Magbonka Village
22	Marie Sankoh			Chairlady	Nonkoba Village
23	Sheku Tholley Abdul Fornah			Okada rider	Masheku Lol
24	Amidu Kanu				Maworr Village
25	Samuel Kalakoh Kadiatu Thullah Hassan Sesay			Teacher Head Woman Head Man	Komrabai Junction
26	Mohamed Kargbo				Massessbeh Village



### Terms of Reference

#### **Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) II End of Project Evaluation**

April 2011 – March 2014

##### **1. Overview**

Concern Worldwide in Sierra Leone in partnership with: Mankind Activities for Development Accreditation Movement (MADAM), Gbonkolenken Farmers Association (GbonFA) and the University of Greenwich – Natural Resources Institute (NRI) is implementing a three year Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) II project since April 2011. The Project is funded by European Union and covers 6 Chiefdoms of Tonkolili District in Sierra Leone namely: Kunike, Kunike Barina, Kholifa Mabang, Kholifa Rowalla, Malal Mara and Yoni. The project is due to end March 2014.

##### **2. Context**

Tonkolili district was particularly seriously affected by the civil war in Sierra Leone which lasted for 11 years (1991 – 2002) because it was the stronghold of the rebel group whose leader originated from Tonkolili District. Although the security situation improved in 2002, the protracted period of conflict, wide scale displacement and residence in camps had profound social, political and economic consequences.

The poor security situation limited development. Physical assets and infrastructure, already underdeveloped pre-war, were severely looted and destroyed, subsistence agriculture which is the mainstay of the both the economy and food security was significantly disrupted with livestock killed homes and farms destroyed. Low agricultural productivity, limited access to seeds, tools, land, markets and limited options for income generation for households traps many communities in a perpetual cycle of poverty.

The gender inequality faced by women and girls is manifested in limited access to and control over resources. HIV rates are increasing in urban centres and communities neighbouring the settlements of armed forces and the large sugarcane plantation in Magbass. The social impact of the war continues to manifest itself in: transactional sex commonly with male motorbike taxi drivers (Honda boys); alcohol abuse, limited income generating opportunities, breakdown of community structures, poor hygiene and nutrition, limited access to health care and information, and high rate of teenage

pregnancies. All these have strong correlation with HIV infection and the large number of reported cases of sexual and gender based violence.

### **3. Project Background**

Concern has been implementing food security and livelihood projects in Tonkolili District since 2007. It started with Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) I (2007 – 2010) then Enhancing Productivity and Resilience of Households (EPRH) (2010 – 2011) and now Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) II all funded by EU. These projects principally addressed the problem of hunger and household level income for meeting the immediate needs of education for the children, health and building increasing returns on assets.

BRACE II project is building on the structures and achievements of the previous EC funded projects implemented by Concern Worldwide in Tonkolili district. The overall objective is to support the consolidation of ongoing rehabilitation and development initiatives and contribute to the realization of food security for poor households in Tonkolili District in Northern Province of Sierra Leone. It focuses on reducing hunger and poverty along with diversifying market options and access through value addition, particularly of small scale farmers. It also emphasises the building of partnerships at community, district and national levels. All of these are in line with the national drive for food security and poverty alleviation as articulated in the Government of Sierra Leone's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for 2008-2012, entitled the 'Agenda for Change', as well as the National Sustainable Agricultural Development Plan (NSADP) 2010-2030 and the new Smallholder Commercialization Programme driven by the Government of Sierra Leone.

BRACE II project is implemented in Kunike, Kunike Barina, Kholifa Mabang, Kholifa Rowalla, Malal Mara and Yoni Chiefdoms in Tonkolili district. The project targets 5,000 households comprising female-headed households, households with orphans, physically challenged persons, terminally ill persons, and pregnant and lactating mothers. The project also targets community farming groups to expand on their food production and income levels in the target areas. The project was implemented by Concern Worldwide (the contracted authority) with Mankind Activities for Development Accreditation Movement (MADAM) and Gbonkolenken Farmers Association (GbonFA) as local partners and Natural Resource Institute, University of Greenwich – UK as a collaboration partner to the project. There is strong collaboration with the devolved government line Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Tonkolili District Council (TDC) and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project.

A summary of the project is provided in (annex 1).

### **4. Rationale**

The 2014 end of project evaluation is necessary to assess the projects performance against the DAC evaluation criteria and to demonstrate the projects results to the donor, partners and project

beneficiaries for accountability purposes. This evaluation will also assess the project commitment and strength of 'Value for Money' in all its operations i.e. in line with the DAC evaluation criteria assessing the appropriate, timely, efficient and effective use of funds and impacts realised. The evaluation take place within the context of continuing donor, government and civil society poverty reduction programing in Tonkolili and will contribute to the body of knowledge of effective poverty reduction programing in the Northern Province context.

#### 5. Internal Capacity Building

Internal capacity building of staff is one of the central tools Concern Worldwide is using to enhance operations and strategic objectives and this is expected to be among the major tasks of the Evaluation i.e. the consultant Evaluator should consider to work closely with a member of the project team and thus enhancing the capacity of that staff.

#### 6. Scope and specific tasks

The end of project evaluation will describe project progress against the DAC evaluation criteria described below. The consultant should ensure that point under each heading is addressed and linked to the three concept of Value for Money which include: Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness (see annex 3)

No	DAC Criteria	Specific tasks for the consultant
1	Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and evaluate the relevance of the goals and objectives laid out in the project document</li> <li>• Assess the appropriateness of project interventions in relation to target beneficiaries needs and priorities</li> <li>• Review the appropriateness of the programme in terms of its design and approaches with respect to Concern policy, strategy and programming documents</li> </ul>
2	Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the effectiveness of the project in attaining its purpose including an analysis of promoting and hindering factors</li> <li>• Assess progress made towards achieving the project purpose, and the overall key outcomes and/or impact of project activities linked to each output or expected result area measures according to the indicators in the log frame</li> <li>• Assess the inputs value and compare to the rates of returns and outcomes achieved as specified in the project log frame(VFM)</li> <li>• Assess Tonkolili District Council organisational capacity progress by reviewing progress in TDC management capacity, Learning Alliance, People's Forum TDC sub committees such as MAFFS and Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and MAFFS ABC networks</li> <li>• Assess the extent to which the poor community are participating and actively engaging in government development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes on issues that affect their livelihoods.</li> <li>• Comment on the effectiveness of partnership in the implementation of the project</li> <li>• Assess the quality of M&amp;E systems that allow periodic reflection</li> </ul>

		<p><i>and adjustment of activities if needed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How have programme interventions been redirected in response to results of learning and studies as well as routine monitoring and evaluation?</i></li> <li>• <i>Assess the effectiveness of reducing inequalities including by gender and against people living with HIV and AIDS</i></li> <li>• <i>Assess the effectiveness of reducing vulnerability to natural and man-made hazards</i></li> </ul>
3	Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review the management structure of the project and its effectiveness in its routine management of the project</i></li> <li>• <i>Examine the efficiency of the project implementation modalities with to ensuring accountability – to partners, to beneficiaries, procurement/tendering for works, technical oversight by district bodies etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>Review the efficiency of the partnerships in reaching the project outcomes</i></li> </ul>
4	Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Provide an assessment of what has changed so far (Outcomes and impact both positive and negative at micro, meso and macro levels) as a result of the project intervention, based on program indicators</i></li> <li>• <i>Assess whether funds are used appropriately in an effective and timely manner and whether they have an impact on the communities BRACE 2 was targeting.(VFM)</i></li> <li>• <i>Review progress in strengthening consolidating development intervention of beneficiaries of BRACE I and EPRH</i></li> <li>• <i>Assess the extent to which the extreme poor have benefited from the project</i></li> <li>• <i>Assess the extent to which gender relations have been influenced or have been affected by the project</i></li> </ul>
5	Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In relation to the points above, can the project design and progress to date be seen as creating change that will be self-sustaining beyond the life of this project?</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify key lessons learned in relation to Sustainability and recommendations to actors in Food Income and Agriculture sector</i></li> <li>• <i>Assess the impact of the achievements towards the sustainability path of the project in terms of improved capacity of TDC</i></li> </ul>
6	Value for Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Economy: This criterion defines the procurement regulations, considering market competition with best price and goods delivering. With the evaluation process, this section should specifically look at the procurement and financial management system used for securing project inputs i.e. for both services and materials inputs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Efficiency: Its explains the ratio of inputs to outputs which means measuring the economic efficiency using prices to compare two or more methods of producing the same output (Cost Effectiveness Analysis).</i></li> <li>• <i>Effectiveness: This measures the outcomes versus the costs of inputs i.e. costing the inputs and giving a value to the outcome to compare the rates of return ((social) cost benefit analysis)</i></li> </ul>

**7. Methodology: The Consultant is expected to work with an identified member of the team for capacity building enhancement. Thus the following methodology should be considered to achieve the evaluation process:**

- Conduct a desk review of available documents including; project proposal, original and amended log frame, project budget, partner budgets, , BRACE II Interim Reports, baseline line survey, end line survey, post-harvest survey reports, EU monitoring visit reports, Concern Advisor visit reports, partner progress reports, Concern Worldwide Strategic Plan (2008-2012), Concern Worldwide Food Income and Markets strategy, TDC development plan, Government's Smaller Holder Commercialisation Plan, and the National Sustainable Agricultural Development Plan (NSADP) 2010-2030.
- Develop an itinerary, lead and coordinate field visits in Tonkolili and in Freetown
- Field visits to interview target beneficiaries, ensuring that a wide variety of beneficiary opinions and views are included and disaggregated wherever possible (male/female, old/young, disabled, elderly, chronically sick)
- Interviews with project implementing partners; MADAM & GbonFA, Concern FIM team in Tonkolili, Concern Senior Program Staff in Freetown (interviews to also include discussions/spot checks on major procurements made by partners and adherence to 'Value for Money')
- Liaise with logistics and finance in Tonkolili and Freetown to evaluate adherence to 'Value for Money'
- Interviews with Tonkolili District Council, Chiefdom authorities, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries.
- Develop and implement data collection tools to gather information on qualitative indicators not covered in the end line evaluation.

**8. Expected Outputs**

- 1) At the end of the field work, an initial feedback and debrief sessions with project team in Tonkolili and Concern Freetown Office with Senior Program and Management team.
- 2) A detailed written end of project evaluation report (in English, maximum 25 pages without annexes) submitted in both electronic and hard copy following the format outlined in (annex 2), that includes; executive summary, introduction, methodology and analysis. The report should also include at least two case studies which illustrate the impact of the project and also recommendations for future interventions. The report should commend on whether recommendations made by mid-term reviews/ visits were relevant and the level to which they were implemented.
- 3) Feedback from Concern Worldwide on initial draft, with any changes to be incorporated to produce the final report.

**9. Line of Communication**

The Evaluator will report to the FIM Coordinator and liaise closely with the Assistant Country Director Programs and Area Coordinator in Tonkolili.

**10. Time Frame**

The proposed timeframe is to begin field work mid February 2014. The report must be submitted by 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

### **11. Qualification of the evaluation team**

The team leader must hold at least master degree relevant to project activities (Agriculture, Development Studies, and Business Administration with a project management bias). And the team leader must have experience on project evaluations, reviews of donor funded projects preferably in Food Income and Markets sector.

### **12. Fees/Costs**

The total cost will be decided based on the expression of interest submitted by the evaluators

### **13. Reporting format**

The report must be written in English Language based on the structure specified in (Annex 2, and 4). without annexes. The main report should not be more than 25 pages.

### **14. Application process**

Following release of this Terms of Reference to pre-selected potential consultants on 20<sup>th</sup> January, an expression of interest is required on or before 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The expression of interest should be limited to 1-2 pages and should include:

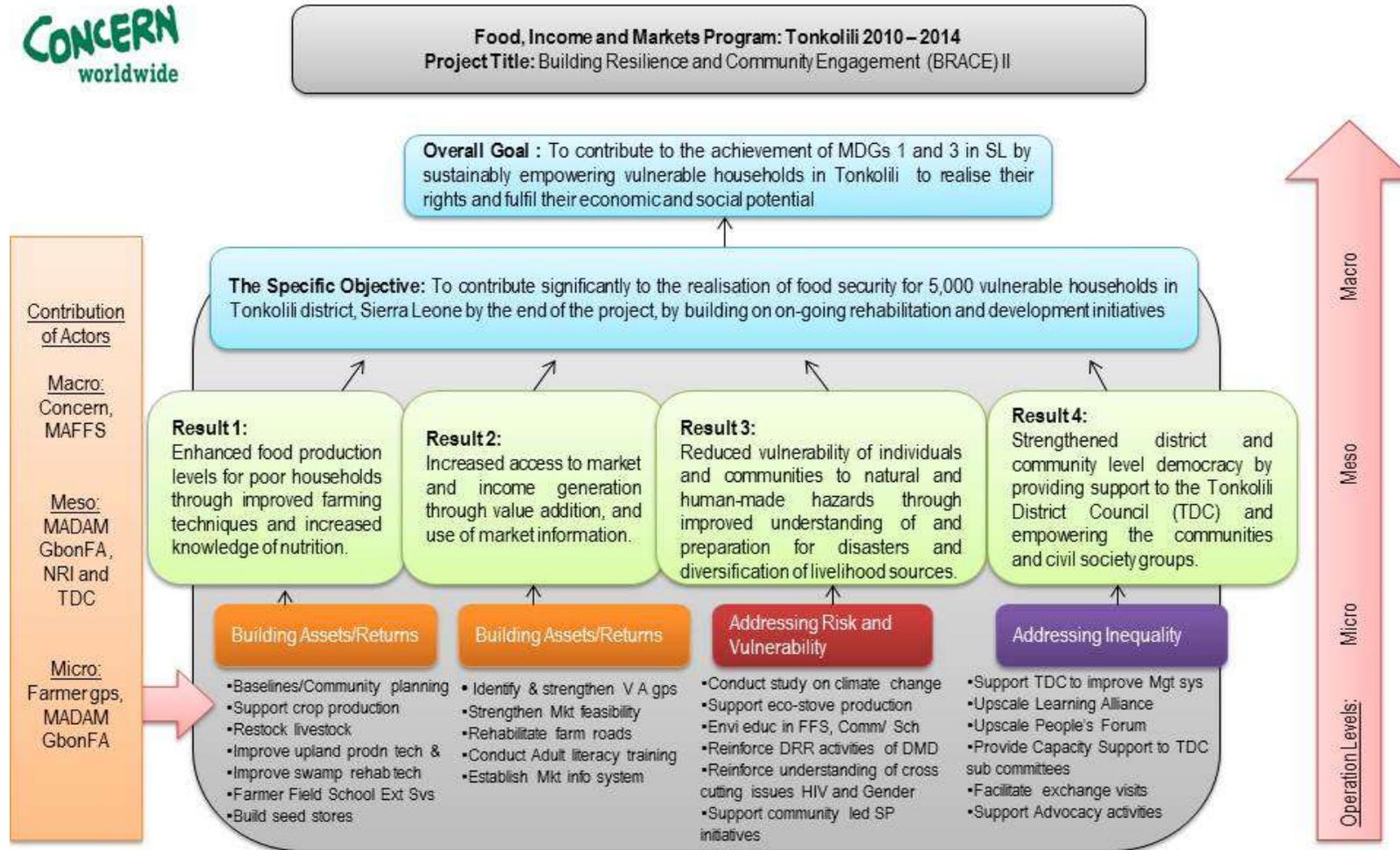
- Response to the Terms of Reference, outlining your proposed methodology and duration
- Your availability and daily rate

In addition, please send a sample of a previous evaluation/similar piece of writing by you and your curriculum vitae.

Please submit documents to [roisin.gallagher@concern.net](mailto:roisin.gallagher@concern.net) and [ruth.davies@concern.net](mailto:ruth.davies@concern.net) no later than 23:59 on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> January.

**Attachment:** Building Resilience and Community Engagement (BRACE) II project proposal

## Annex 1: BRACE II Project Summary



*By Chris Charles Oyua Area Coordinator*

## Annex 2: Outline – Format for the end of Project Evaluation Report

### Project Data

#### 1. Contractual information

Budget Line(s)	
Grant Contract No.	
Implementing agency	
Project title	
Project location	
Project duration	
Project start date	
Original contract end date	
Project extension (months)	
Project suspension (months)	
Actual contract end date	
Names of Evaluator(s)	
Date of Evaluation	
Date of Evaluation report	

#### 2. Financial information

Overall project budget	Amount
EC funds contracted	Amount

EC funds disbursed:	Initial payment	Amount	Date:
	Intermediate payment	Amount	Date:
	Final payment	Amount	Date:
Expenditure incurred by project at evaluation date		Amount	Date:

### 3. Executive summary (maximum 3 pages):

It is suggested that a synopsis of the following are included in the executive summary: successes, challenges, insights and key findings and summary of recommendations

### 4. Chapter one: Introduction

- Background, outline purpose and scope of the evaluation and construct a table listing the location, timeframe, higher objective and a synopsis of the project. Comment on the context of the evaluation objectives, team composition, methodology and processes.
- Limitations and constraints encountered,
- Brief narrative history/overview of the project review

### 5. Chapter two: Findings and Analysis

The report should describe all findings and analysis under the headings of DAC evaluation criteria and address the specific questions in section 3 specific tasks. The consultant is also expected to give a ranking on a scale of 1 (completed missed) to 5 (perfection) for each of the DAC criteria based on the evidence will be presented and own interpretation of this.

Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country development framework, District development priorities, Concern and partners' policies
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance
Efficiency	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) are converted to results
Impact	Based on the original Log Frame Indicators, positive and negative, primary and secondary long term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Sustainability	The continuation of benefits from development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flow over time.
Value for Money	Optimal use of resources to achieve the intended results. It is important to note that 'Value for Money' is not the same as achieving the 'lowest cost' therefore what should be considered for this evaluation is focusing on outcome maximisation as spelt out in the project log frame

The specific issues of targeting, participation, capacity building and cross cutting themes (Gender, equality, partnership, rights based approach, Program Participant Protection, HIV and AIDS, Disaster Risk Reduction and Advocacy) should be viably addressed in different sections as appropriate and assessed to what extend and how successfully they were implemented by the project

#### **6. Chapter Three: Case Studies**

At least two case studies in different components of the project

#### **7. Chapter Four: Lessons Learnt, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Recommendations should be as realistic, operational and pragmatic as possible and should be targeted towards individuals or departments. A clear distinction between the three components should be clearly made.

#### **Interpretation of the DAC criteria in view of this project evaluation:**

##### **Relevance:**

Relevance means the extent to which the project conforms to the needs and priorities of Concern's target beneficiaries (the extreme poor), and the policies of Concern Worldwide, Concern Worldwide in Sierra Leone and Partners. Relevance implies a consistent fit with priorities of the principle stakeholders and the beneficiaries. With respect to this Concern Worldwide Sierra Leone attests to the strategic importance of working with and through partners as well as developing appropriate linkages. The issue of relevance should also extend to commenting on the project fit with Country and organisational strategic plan, Concern's Food Income and Markets strategy as well as Concern's Understanding of Extreme Poverty. The importance of context and adapting to changes in context and how the project dealt with it should also be dealt with. In this section, appropriateness in technical and managerial terms should be assessed.

**Effectiveness:**

Effectiveness is a measure (both in qualitative and quantitative terms) of the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives, taking their relative importance into account. The analysis should consider each expected result area separately, and make a comparison between the commitments made in the proposal; the situation at the start of the action, the indicators of change defined in the log frame and the current situation. Measuring effectiveness involves taking the perspectives of the beneficiaries of the project into account. This section should review the issues of project planning and monitoring. More specifically the evaluation should examine whether there was sufficient, reliable, verifiable and accessible information that was used in decision making during project implementation; whether standards of best practice in the sector were met; whether the quality of monitoring reports were satisfactory.

**Efficiency:**

Efficiency is comparing the output against inputs. It illustrates the relationship between means and ends. The underlying question to ask when looking at efficiency is: to what extent can the costs of the project be justified by its results, taking into account alternatives. An important aspect of this is the scale achieved for the resources utilised.

**Impact:**

The term impact describes the totality of the effects of the project, positive and negative, intended and unintended. Specific consideration should be given to beneficiaries' view on the impact of the project including to what extent the project contributed to changes in their lives. As with effectiveness, changes can be measured against PRA data that describes the situation before the project took place.

**Sustainability and Replication**

The term sustainability describes the extent to which the positive effects of the project continue after the external assistance has come to an end. Here, the issue of replicating what farmers learnt in groups into their individual farm, adoption of technologies, ownership, management, sustainability and financial viability should be addressed. This section should also review the available sustainability options developed and comment on the adequacy of these.

**Value for Money**

It is important to note that 'Value for money' is not the same as achieving the 'lowest cost' therefore what should be considered for this evaluation is focusing on outcomes maximization for the community as spelt out on the project log frame;

- Evidence of monitoring activities of the project that tracked and economically converted inputs into outputs in the most cost effective way, eventually leading to the outcomes required. This entails constant cost benefit analysis (or put simply, the need to know what is going in to an activity so we can assess whether what is coming out makes sense).
- Appropriate use of the project funds in a manner that is timely, efficient and effective and whether they have an impact on the intended target communities.
- BRACE 2 project budget design, its link to activities in the log frame and how these contribute to achieving the ultimate impact of the programme, i.e. Identifying the project direction towards impact pathway / theory of change.
- The project accounting system and its allocation of personnel, partners cost and administrative costs across the activities