



BIO-FORTIFIED VALUE CHAINS FOR IMPROVED MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION

Burundi – Phase 2 | Impact Brief
(2021–2026)



About this report

This brief summarises the main findings of the mid-term review of the Bio-Fortified Value Chains for Improved Maternal and Child Nutrition in Burundi Phase Two (B4MCN2) project, implemented by World Vision International Burundi from 2021 to 2026. The evaluation was conducted by independent consulting firm Consultancy and Counselling Group from March to May 2024.

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Front cover photo:

Didacienne and her husband attended gender-inclusive financial literacy training, helping them to make financial decisions for their family together.



SUMMARY

Goal	To contribute towards enhanced and inclusive food and nutrition security for households, including the vulnerable (Batwa people, women-headed households and people living with disabilities)
Timeframe	2021-2026
Budget	US\$4,870,000
Target reach	66,849 people including Batwa (1%), women (54%), children (69%) and people with disability (0.7%)
Location	Six communes (Buhinyuza, Bwambarangwe, Gitaramuka, Gitobe, Ntega and Vumbi) in Muyinga, Karusi and Kirundo Provinces, Burundi

Overview:

Children under five in Burundi face some of the highest malnutrition rates worldwide, and close to two thirds of the population live on less than US\$2.15 a day.¹ World Vision's Bio-Fortified Value Chains for Improved Maternal and Child Nutrition in Burundi Phase Two (B4MCN2) project aims to sustainably enhance households' resilience through improving young children's nutrition and empowering women and other vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and the Batwa community. The project builds upon the lessons and achievements of its first phase of programming, which concluded in 2021.

An independent mid-term review was conducted in May 2024 to evaluate B4MCN2's progress and identify learnings and recommendations for the remaining project years.

Key findings included:

- **Food and nutrition security increased.** Four percent less households experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, shifting from 85 percent to 82 percent.
- **Dietary intake and care practices among women and children improved.** Ten percent more households were consuming nutrient-dense foods, and the proportion of infants under six months who were exclusively breastfed rose from 88 percent to 96 percent.
- **More food was produced** as households put agricultural training provided through the project into practice. **Seed distribution supported the growth of more diversified crops**, with 100 percent of surveyed households cultivating a range of nutrient-dense crops like fortified maize and beans.
- **Families earned more income and from a greater diversity of sources** through support from savings groups and cash transfers, helping to enhance their financial resilience. Women-headed households saw a 61 percent increase in income.
- **Positive changes in household dynamics and female leadership were observed.** Over half of women were involved in decisions about household income expenditure over the last three months, and women held the majority (57 percent) of leadership positions within savings groups.

Recommendations for future programming included:

- Strengthen behaviour change initiatives related to **hygiene and sanitation**.
- Encourage savings group members to **allocate their loans towards establishing income-generating activities** beyond meeting immediate food needs.
- **Expand and diversify livestock availability** and improve access to efficient farming tools.
- Actively engage with husbands, community members and local authorities to **promote more equitable gender and social norms**.

¹ Macro Poverty Outlook (2024). Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f5c5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf>



Louise (right) is visited at home by a B4MCN2 volunteer who is providing support with improved nutrition and health practices.

CONTEXT

Burundi is one of Africa's most densely populated countries – half of its population of approximately 13.2 million people are women and 42 percent are young people under 15.² The nation's poverty levels have stagnated in recent years with close to two thirds of the population living on less than US\$2.15 each day.³ The agricultural sector, which employs the vast majority of the population, struggles with low productivity due to deforestation, land degradation and prolonged conflict.⁴ Surging inflation driven by global crises has further fuelled the many challenges local families face.

Recent acute food insecurity analysis indicates that 41 percent of Burundi's population are under stress.⁵ For children, malnutrition is a significant and life-threatening concern – fifty-six percent of children under five in Burundi experience stunting, one of the highest malnutrition rates in the world.⁶ In nine out of Burundi's 18 provinces, including Kirundo, Muyinga, and Karusi, acute malnutrition levels are classified as medium (between five and nine percent)⁷ and access to basic drinking water, sanitation and hygiene remains limited.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Bio-fortified Value Chains for Improved Maternal and Child Nutrition in Burundi Phase Two (B4MCN2) project aims to help address the nutrition and livelihood challenges faced by vulnerable groups in the Muyinga, Karusi and Kirundo provinces. Beginning in 2021 and implemented by World Vision, this five-year project builds on the successes and learnings from the project's first phase (2017–2021) and addresses the identified gaps in food and nutrition insecurity. B4MCN2 is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

B4MCN2 supports women and children under five in adopting adequate dietary and hygiene practices, facilitates income-generating activities for vulnerable groups, and strengthens market linkages for bio-fortified crops. Additionally, it empowers women and people with disabilities through leadership roles and community engagement, aiming for sustainable and inclusive improvements in food security and nutrition.

² World Bank (2023). *Burundi Country Overview*. Washington, DC: World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/burundi/overview>

³ Macro Poverty Outlook (2024). Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC: World Bank: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f6c5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf>

⁴ Oxfam (2011). *Investing in agriculture in Burundi*. Oxfam Research Reports: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/investing-agriculture-burundi>

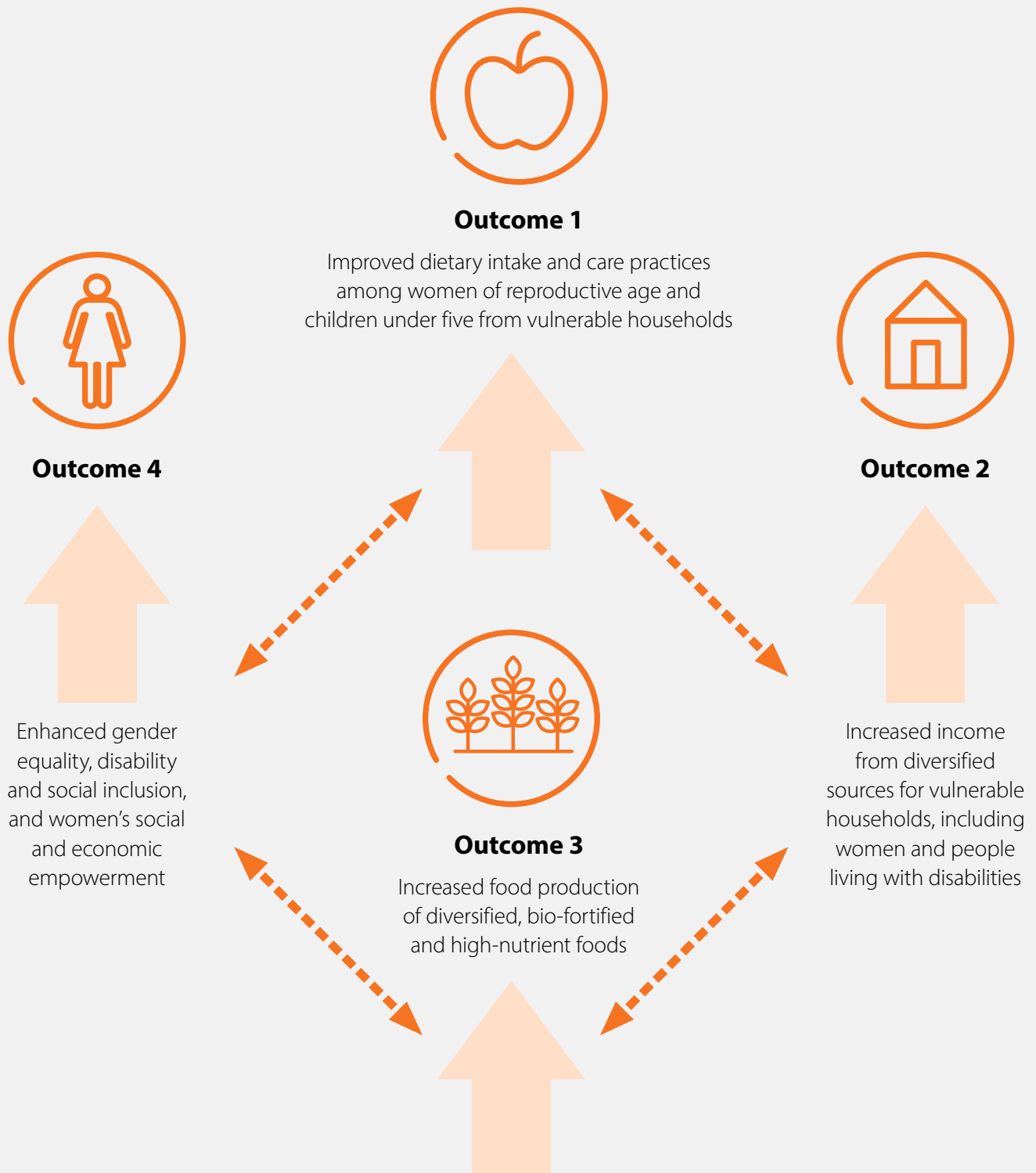
⁵ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). *Burundi: Acute Food Insecurity Situation April - May 2024*: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157088/?iso3=BDI>

⁶ USAID (2021). *Burundi: National Profile*: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/Burundi-Nutrition-Profile_1.pdf

⁷ Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi (ISTEEBU) and Burundi Ministry of Public Health (2017). *3rd Demographic and Health Survey in Burundi (EDSB-III)*: <https://www.unicef.org/esa/reports/third-demographic-and-health-survey-burundi>

THEORY OF CHANGE

Goal: To contribute towards enhanced and inclusive food and nutrition security for households, including the vulnerable (Batwa people, women-headed households and people living with disabilities) in the Muyinga, Karusi and Kirundo provinces of Burundi



CORE PROJECT MODELS AND APPROACHES

POSITIVE DEVIANCE HEARTH

Positive Deviance Hearth is a World Vision approach that focuses on the rehabilitation of mildly, moderately and severely underweight children aged six to 36 months. 'Positive deviance' means straying from the norm, but in a beneficial way. The program aims to rapidly restore the health of malnourished children identified within the target community, empower families to maintain this progress independently at home, and prevent future malnutrition by transforming community norms related to childcare, feeding practices and health-seeking behaviours.

MATERNAL, INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING

Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding (MIYCF) and Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) involve training community health workers and mother leaders in MIYCF promotion. Participants are equipped to use child anthropometric measures to conduct monthly GMP sessions using the digital application M-Health. These sessions aim to enhance caregiver awareness about child growth, improve feeding and caregiving practices, and boost demand for additional health services.

SAVINGS FOR TRANSFORMATION

World Vision's Savings for Transformation model builds resilience in vulnerable households by facilitating the creation of community savings groups. These groups enable members to save small amounts of money collectively and provide loans to one another for emergencies such as illness, educational expenses or income loss due to unexpected shocks.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

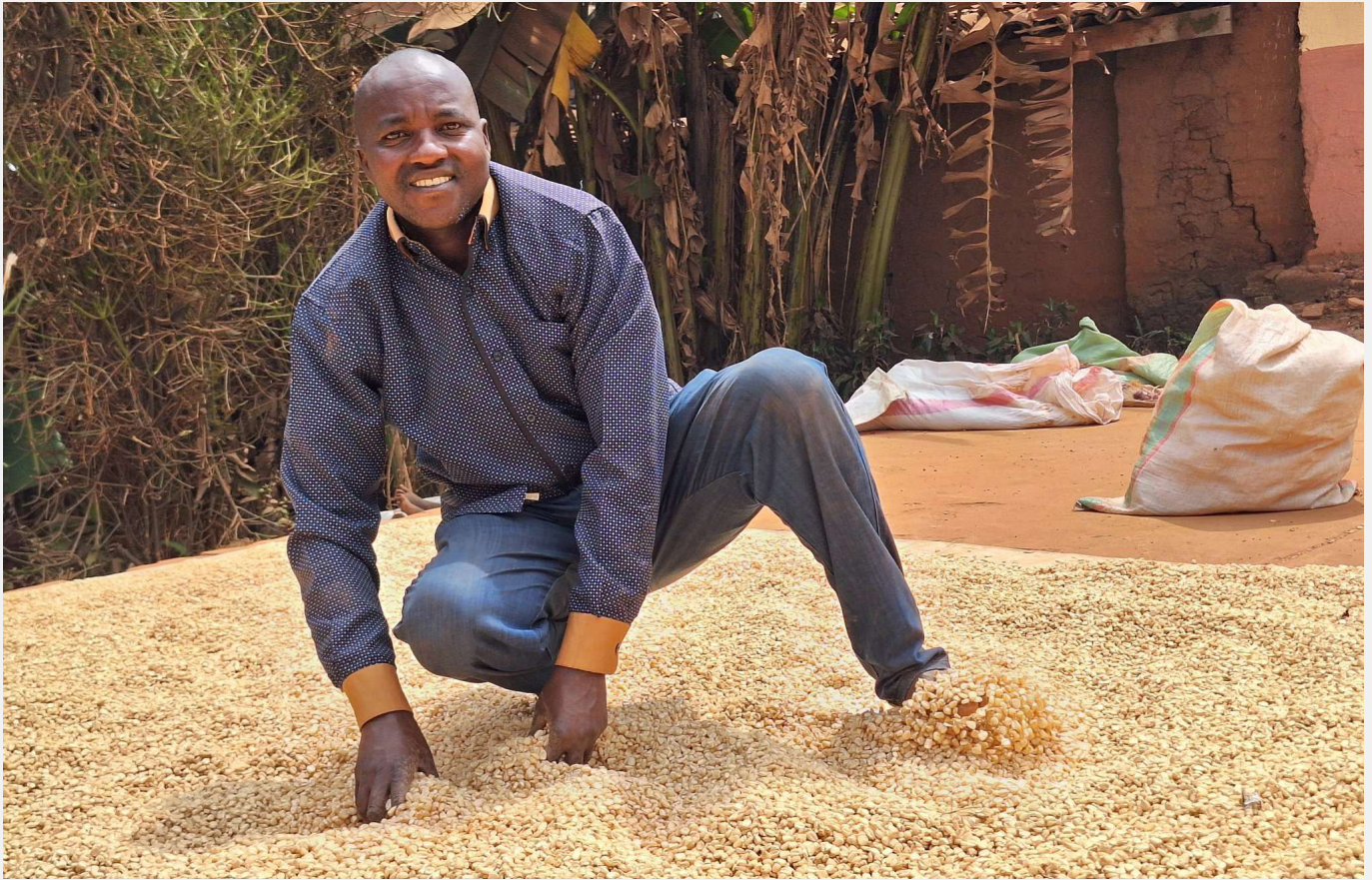
The Women's Economic Empowerment approach tackles gender disparities in household labour by encouraging women's participation in income-generating activities. It provides training and tools for vulnerable groups — including Batwa women, women-headed households, and women with disabilities — to improve productivity and ease their workload. Women are organised into associations and receive training in entrepreneurship, financial management and leadership to enhance their economic opportunities and market readiness.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING

Gender-inclusive financial literacy training (GIFT) supports couples in addressing gender power imbalances in financial decision making by providing equitable alternatives. Based on global best practices in financial literacy, behavioural economics and gender transformative programming, this approach integrates financial management and business training with gender equality concepts to enhance household resilience and child wellbeing.



Leoncie was one of the first parents to enroll her child in a community creche centre. Now, she can take part in agricultural activities knowing her child is safely cared for and provided with a nutritious meal.



Pierre's efforts to implement new farming techniques learned through B4MCN2 enabled him to become an authorised seed producer. "I am contributing to the availability of improved seeds in my community and beyond," he says.

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

In 2024, a mid-project evaluation was conducted by independent consulting firm Consultancy and Counselling Group from March to May. The review assessed the project's progress towards its goals, outcomes and supporting outputs, and associated learnings.

METHODOLOGY

The review employed a pre-post design without a control group to measure progress towards project outcomes in April 2024 against the findings from its baseline study in 2022 and its planned targets. Mixed methodologies were adopted using a quantitative household survey and qualitative methods. The review surveyed 1,015 households, including 150 people with disabilities and 100 Batwa people. A total of 17 focus group discussions and 15 key informant interviews were conducted, engaging smallholder farmers, caregivers, commune leaders, health workers, nutritionists, agronomists, women and people with disability group representatives and relevant program staff.

LIMITATIONS

Data collection for the baseline and mid-term studies occurred in different seasons – during harvest for the baseline and during the lean season for the mid-term review. Seasonal variation may have therefore influenced results as factors like food availability, income levels and household resources can vary significantly between these periods.

FINDINGS

PROJECT GOAL

Contribute towards enhanced and inclusive food and nutrition security for households, including the vulnerable (Batwa people, women-headed households and people living with disabilities) in the Muyinga, Karusi, and Kirundo provinces of Burundi

TABLE 1: Results for the B4MCN2 project’s goal-level indicators⁸

Indicator	Baseline Results	Mid-term results	Endline targets	Status
Households in moderate/severe food insecurity <i>Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)</i>	85.0%	81.5%	78.0%	On track
Households that are food secure <i>Using the Household Hunger Scale (HHS)</i>	58.0%	54.6%	62.0%	Not on track

The B4MCN2 project has made good progress towards enhancing food and nutrition security. The project significantly reduced the proportion of households experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity from 85 percent at baseline to 81.5 percent at mid-term. This decrease reflects the tangible impact of interventions, such as early seed distribution and improved farming techniques, which improved agricultural production. The percentage of food-secure households based on the Household Hunger Scale (HHS) decreased from 58 percent to 54.6 percent⁹, and severe hunger dropped from 11 percent to 7.5 percent. These improvements reflect the project’s effectiveness in mitigating severe food deprivation, particularly during lean seasons exacerbated by climate variability and economic challenges. Community stakeholders provided positive feedback, reporting the project’s pivotal role in improving local food security.

“We have observed an improvement in food security in our community, thanks to the project’s support and distribution of seeds to households, which has alleviated hunger.”

– Interview with a local advisor in Kirundo Province

“B4MCN2 project is well regarded by both the administration and decentralised services, and beneficiaries acknowledge its positive impact on food security.”

– Female focus group respondent, Kirundo Province

However, disparities persist among household types and genders, with women-headed households and people with disabilities facing much higher levels of food insecurity and hunger, highlighting the need for strengthened targeted support and inclusive strategies. Additionally, challenges like delayed seed supplies and inadequate storage facilities remain, impacting the project’s effectiveness. Ongoing efforts scheduled for the remaining implementation years will aim to address these issues and enhance project outcomes, through infrastructure improvements and training participants in adaptive strategies.

⁸ Two other goal-level indicators, child anthropometric data on stunting and wasting, were not collected during the mid-term review.

⁹ This decline could be attributed to the timing of data collection between the baseline and mid-term review as the baseline occurred during the harvest period (June to July 2022) while the mid-term took place during the lean period (April 2024).

FINDINGS BY OUTCOME

OUTCOME ONE:

Improved dietary intake and care practices among women of reproductive age and children under five from vulnerable households

TABLE 2: Key mid-term results for Outcome 1

Indicator	Baseline Results	Mid-term results	Endline target	Status
Proportion of women meeting minimum dietary diversity (MDD-W)	15%	25%	36%	On track
Proportion of children aged six to 24 months meeting minimum dietary diversity	3%	11%	25%	On track
Proportion of infants exclusively breastfed for six months	88%	96%	98%	On track
Proportion of households consuming nutrient-dense foods	13%	23%	40%	On track
Percentage of children under five with diarrhoea (during the two weeks prior to the survey)	18%	18%	14%	Not on track

Mid-term results indicate that the B4MCN2 project has significantly improved dietary intake and care practices among women of reproductive age and children under five. The proportion of women meeting minimum dietary diversity increased from 15 percent to 25 percent and exclusive breastfeeding rates improved. Dietary diversity among children aged six to 24 months has also increased. This promising progress towards overall targets reflects the project's effective implementation of awareness campaigns and practical cooking demonstrations, which helped families understand the importance of diversified diets for healthy growth and development. This was reinforced during focus group discussions with women participants.

“The knowledge gained through Positive Deviance Hearth and cooking demonstrations has enabled us to learn about the food groups we should be eating, and the importance of eating vegetables and fruit. Before, I thought fruit was only for children. With the project, we’re trying to incorporate all the food groups into our diet as much as we can. The consumption of two food groups is relegated to the past.”

– Woman focus group participant, Kirundo Province

“Before the awareness-raising sessions, I didn’t know the benefits of breast milk or the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. Today, I do everything I can to breastfeed my child exclusively for the first six months, even if the quantity of breast milk diminishes over time.”

– Woman focus group participant, Muyinga Province

Results varied across provinces, with Karusi and Muyinga lagging in terms of ensuring dietary diversity among women and children. The prevalence of diarrhoea among children under five has remained unchanged at 18 percent, highlighting the need to strengthen hygiene practices and improve access to clean water and sanitation facilities in remaining project years. Household consumption of nutrient-dense foods grew from 13 percent to 23 percent, yet many households still prioritised selling these crops over consumption.

Key B4MCN2 activities: Making bio-fortified food more available and accessible for women and children under five



COMMUNITY CRÈCHES



SCHOOL CLUBS



POSITIVE DEVIANCE HEARTH



MOTHERS GROUPS

The B4MCN2 project is using a food-based approach to combat malnutrition. Since the project began, the following initiatives have greatly impacted the community’s nutrition and hygiene practices, leading to improved dietary outcomes by mid-term:

- **2,891 children (including 1,359 girls) have participated in 268 Positive Deviance Hearth sessions**, with 93 percent showing signs of recovery by gaining at least 400 grams in one month.
- **1,775 women with children under five** have taken part in cooking demonstrations to improve dietary intake and caregiving practices.
- **70 community crèche centres** have provided children with nutritious food, including bio-fortified porridge, high-iron beans and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes.
- **65 school nutrition clubs have formed**, educating 2,356 households about balanced diets using bio-fortified foods for young children and mothers.
- **39 theatre sessions reached 12,240 community members**, creatively promoting nutrition and care practices for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five.



Christine, a nurturing care group volunteer, shares child nutrition and health messages with mothers in her neighbourhood.

OUTCOME TWO:

Increased income from diversified sources for vulnerable households including women and people living with disabilities

TABLE 3: Key mid-term results for Outcome 2

Indicator	Mid-term results	Endline targets	Status
Cumulative savings by the savings groups (USD)	\$16,245	\$32,000	On track
Proportion of families with increased income	32%	52%	On track

B4MCN2 participants have diversified their income sources and improved their financial resilience through savings and credit associations, income-generating activities and targeted cash transfers. Overall, 32 percent of households reported increased income at mid-term, with crop sales (45 percent), casual labour (17 percent) and livestock sales (17 percent) as their primary income sources. **Notably, women-headed households (61 percent) demonstrated higher income growth compared to male-headed households (39 percent).**

“We are currently observing the positive effects of the project on beneficiaries, with the credits received helping to alleviate the effects of the hunger gap in households that are members of these [savings] associations”.

– Key informant interview respondent, Kirundo Province

Increased income was reported to result from several factors generated by the project. Firstly, **the establishment of 387 savings groups** enabled households to access credit and develop small-scale income-generating activities. This helped to diversify their income and improve their resilience to various shocks. Despite government restrictions imposed on savings and loan associations in December 2023, 219 established groups were able to collectively save USD 16,245. Of these groups, 85 percent accessed loans totalling USD 15,378, which were used for purchasing essential school materials for their children, starting small businesses and buying livestock.

“With the credit I received, I was able to buy goats, which not only constitutes circulating capital, but also provided me with manure to fertilise my farm. When a financial emergency arises, I no longer take out loans from neighbours, but instead resort to my goats, which I sell to cover my needs.”

– Woman focus group participant, Muyinga Province

“Since I became a member of the savings and credit association, I am respected in the household and in those around me, thanks to the credits I received I contribute to the family needs, especially buying clothes for my children. In addition, I bought rabbits which are in the process of multiplying.”

– Woman focus group participant, Kirundo Province

A second factor found to increase household income was the sale of maize and vine cuttings, demonstrating the successful adoption of agricultural techniques promoted through the project. Continued adherence to these practices, alongside favourable climatic conditions, is anticipated to sustain income growth for these families. Lastly, direct cash transfers supported 698 households under the project’s Ultra Poor Graduation scheme. These households each received a small sum of money to help cover essential expenses, including food and basic needs.

OUTCOME THREE:

Increased food production of diversified, bio-fortified and high-nutrient foods

TABLE 4: Key mid-term results for Outcome 3

Indicator	Baseline results	Mid-term results	Endline targets	Status
Proportion of households with diversified food crops, including nutrient-dense target crops	84%	100%	100%	Already achieved
Proportion of farmer groups with improved practices	32%	57%	76%	On track

The project has made very encouraging progress in promoting diversified and nutrient-dense food production among households. **All surveyed households reported growing diversified crops** – including nutrient-rich varieties like fortified maize, beans and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes – up from 84 percent at baseline. B4MCN2 supported **9,525 smallholder farmers and 54 seed producers** to improve crop production and income, selling 8.5 tonnes of maize (US\$10,659), 542,520 orange-fleshed sweet potato cuttings (US\$14,840) and 19.62 tonnes of high-iron beans (US\$29,230).

Additionally, 57 percent of farmer groups adopted modern cultivation techniques, compared to 32 percent previously. Key techniques such as sowing in rows (58 percent), application of animal manure (57 percent), compost (42 percent) and using chemical fertilisers (42 percent) were widely embraced among participants. Other techniques, such as mulching and using rope and sticks for climbing beans, remained less commonly adopted due to practical challenges. This uptake was attributed to several project interventions, including efforts to raise awareness about the benefits of crop diversification, the distribution of nutrient-dense seeds like orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, and the facilitation of linkages between participants and seed producers to boost the availability and adoption of new crop varieties.

Gender analysis revealed that **women-headed households have made more progress in adopting promoted crops**. For example, 50 percent of women-headed households grow iron-fortified beans compared to 42 percent of male-headed households. However, social disparities were found to persist among Batwa people and people with disabilities who had the lowest rates of adoption of these practices.

OUTCOME FOUR:

Enhanced gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and women's social and economic empowerment

TABLE 5: Key mid-term results for Outcome 4

Indicator	Baseline results	Mid-term results	Endline targets	Status
Proportion of community members that report practices which violate the rights of women, such as gender-based violence	57%	66%	78%	On track
Proportion of women who report being involved in decisions on how to spend their income in the last three months		54%	63%	On track
Percentage of households with equitable decision making in the domestic sphere	N/A	Low: 79% Med: 3% High: 19%	Low: 69% Med: 4% High: 28%	N/A
Percentage of households with equitable decision making in the productive sphere		Low: 74% Med: 46% High: 22%	Low: 64% Med: 6% High: 32%	

At mid-term, the project was found to be progressing well in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Addressing the specific needs of Batwa and people with disabilities will require further targeted support to achieve the project's broader social inclusion goals.

The review identified that collaborative decision making related to both home and livelihoods increased. Men and women were more commonly making these decisions together, helping to increase women's participation in spending decisions and amplify their voices and agency. Women-headed households showed the highest involvement rates, indicating that household structure influences decision-making dynamics.

Leadership roles in community organisations saw significant female participation, with women comprising 57 percent of leadership roles in savings groups, 72 percent in community crèches, and 24 percent in farmer groups. During interviews and focus groups, participants reported a primary driver of women's empowerment to be increased awareness and training on the importance of gender quality and preventing gender-based violence. Batwa women and women with disabilities reported low involvement rates compared to the average, indicating ongoing barriers to equal economic participation.

Efforts to raise awareness about gender-based violence have led to an expected rise in reported incidents, with 66 percent of surveyed households reported practices which violate the rights of women compared to 57 percent at baseline. This increase reflects improved reporting mechanisms and greater willingness to seek help, although qualitative evidence suggests that fear of reprisals and stigma still hindered full transparency.

Feedback from focus group discussions indicated that the project has positively impacted domestic decision making.

"Thanks to the project, our living conditions have improved. My husband and I now make domestic decisions together, especially regarding the management of family assets."

– Woman focus group participant, Gitega province



Agnes oversees one of the community crèche centres established through B4MCN2. Here, children have a safe place to play and nutritious food to eat while their parents work.

AGNES' STORY

SUPPORTING PARENTS THROUGH COMMUNITY CRÈCHE CENTRES

In Kirundo Province, mother of two Agnes oversees a community crèche centre established through World Vision's B4MCN2 project. With ages ranging from six months to four years old, 25 children now attend the centre where they can play, sing and eat nutritious food in a safe environment.

“Before the creation of this crèche in our community, many children were neglected because they were left alone...or looked after by their older brothers or sisters when their parents went to the fields to work,” explains Agnes. “Many children were malnourished and often fell ill.”

The B4MCN2 project responded to this need by supporting the local community to start their own childcare centre. Agnes and other carers were provided with training and equipment, including mats, plates, cups, spoons and nutrient-rich foods and seeds.

“At the beginning, every parent would have to bring a contribution in terms of the food to be cooked in the daycare, which was hard for many families. Some parents

would even prefer that their children abandon these nurseries because of the inability to bring contributions. Thanks to the 50 kilograms of seeds for bio-fortified beans that the project gave us, we were able to harvest up to 298 kilograms. That production is currently used to feed the children in the daycare and now the parents don't have to worry about what the children consume in the daycare,” says Agnes.

“There is a big difference between children who attend the crèche and others who do not. Apart from the food that the children receive, they are also taught good manners that children should adopt, how they behave in front of other children and adults. Our wish is that these nurseries should be established in all communities on other hills that do not have them.”

Thanks to Agnes and other crèche carers, parents are at ease when they go to work knowing their children are safe and well looked after.

SUSTAINABILITY

Despite the ongoing external challenges posed by climate change and limited seed availability, the project has built a robust foundation for continued progress and resilience in the targeted communities. The project's capacity-building initiatives have empowered participants with skills in agriculture, environmental protection and managing savings groups. Participants have already started reinvesting this knowledge, and the establishment of local seed producers will help to ensure long-term seed availability.

The project's participatory approach, involving local populations in all phases — from planning to evaluation — has helped to ensure that actions are based on real community needs. This involvement prepares families to manage and sustain initiatives after the project ends. Additionally, the active participation of decentralised government departments and administrative authorities in implementing activities supports the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The cross-cutting themes of gender equality, disability and social inclusion have been integrated throughout the project. **Gender equality has been prioritised through the project's focus on the empowerment of women and children, recognising them as particularly vulnerable during food crises.**

At mid-term, women held the majority of leadership positions in savings associations and as committee members for community crèche centres. Additionally, 91 of the 382 farmer groups were led by women and all 65 school nutrition clubs were co-led by one girl and one boy. The establishment of community crèches has been a pivotal intervention for safeguarding children's rights and allowing mothers to contribute economically without worrying about their children's safety.

To encourage **disability inclusion**, the project ensured that individuals with disabilities can participate in and benefit from project support. As an example, 60 people with disabilities (including 30 women) were provided with sewing machines and skills training, enabling them to become sewing entrepreneurs and work towards establishing a small business. After completing training, participants will be provided with materials and equipment to support the launch of their own income-generating activities.

In terms of social inclusion, **B4MCN2 prioritised supporting the Batwa people**, an ethnic minority in Burundi. Recognising their status as a marginalised and vulnerable community, the project extended financial aid to assist 189 Batwa households in achieving economic recovery and resilience during the lean season. Additionally, 18 Batwa individuals, including eight women, acquired skills in cook stove production through training programs conducted in the communes of Bwambarangwe, Vumbi and Gitaramuka.

ENVIRONMENT

The project has addressed environmental issues by distributing seedlings, promoting agroforestry and encouraging sustainable forest management practices among the target communities. These efforts have increased vegetation cover, helped combat erosion and improved household nutritional status. Training in environmental protection and resource management has further built the capacity of participating communities, with ongoing supervision and support from the Burundian Office for the Environmental Protection.

CONCLUSION

The mid-term review found that the B4MCN2 project is making steady progress in improving the target families' food and nutrition security, and these promising results are expected to continue over the next two years of implementation. Significant progress has been made in improving dietary practices among women and children under five, driven by initiatives such as Nurturing Care Groups and Positive Deviance Hearth sessions. Financial access and income diversification have been strengthened through the Ultra Poor Graduation and Savings for Transformation models, enabling participants to start small businesses and enhance resilience.

Food production diversity has also improved, with all surveyed participants now cultivating nutrient-dense crops, thanks to the project's seed distribution and support in facilitating linkages between farmers and seed producers. Gender equality and women's empowerment have advanced, marked by a shift towards joint management of family assets and more inclusive decision making. However, disparities persist among women-headed households, the Batwa community, and people with disabilities, highlighting the need for more targeted support to achieve broader social inclusion and sustain these gains across all outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Outcome 1: Improved dietary intake and care practices among women of reproductive age and children under five from vulnerable households

- Increase targeted efforts to address gender and provincial disparities. Focus on behaviour change communication regarding nutrition practices among women and children in Karusi and Muyinga, where dietary diversity lags.
- Strengthen behaviour change initiatives related to hygiene and sanitation. Launch awareness campaigns advocating for improved latrine construction to reduce childhood diarrhoea.

Outcome 2: Increased income from diversified sources for vulnerable households including women and people living with disabilities

- Support participants to develop other income-generating activities that can complement their agricultural earnings and help provide a steady source of capital and food for the household.
- Encourage savings group members to allocate their loans towards establishing income-generating activities beyond meeting immediate food needs, as observed in current practices.

Outcome 3: Increased food production of diversified, bio-fortified and high-nutrient foods

- Expand and diversify livestock availability, focusing on enhancing the production of small and medium livestock like chickens, rabbits and goats that contribute to household consumption of animal-source foods.
- Improve access to efficient farming tools, including climbing bean stakes and shovels, through partnerships with agricultural input suppliers or existing farmer cooperatives.

Outcome 4: Enhanced gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and women's social and economic empowerment

- Actively engage with husbands, community members and local authorities to promote more equitable gender and social norms.
- Facilitate discussions on masculinity and involve male champions in advocating for gender-transformative activities. Encourage men to abandon behaviours that contribute to conflict, such as excessive drinking, concubinage and unilateral control of family assets.

World Vision

Jacqueline is passionate about implementing improved techniques to improve soil fertility and increase agricultural production. "Thanks to project support, we produced fruit seedlings which will contribute to improving the health of our children," she says.

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THIS MEANS THE WORLD

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