Learning from the Budikadidi Project in the DRC:

EXPLORING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INCENTIVE STRUCTURES

Context

Since 2017, a Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led consortium has implemented the USAID-funded Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA) in three health zones of the Kasaï Oriental Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Budikadidi (meaning "self-sufficiency" in Tshiluba) project works to sustainably improve household's nutrition, food security, and economic well-being. Reaching over 400,000 community members across 491 villages, Budikadidi approaches are implemented through the leadership of numerous community volunteers (see Annex 1 for a complete list).

CRS' Guide to Working with Volunteers confirms that "factors that motivate volunteers can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic factors include feelings of empathy, altruism, religious convictions, community norms, and family obligations. Volunteers might also be motivated by external factors like recognition by community members and authorities, ambitions to get job opportunities, material and financial rewards, and acquiring knowledge and skills." Incentives serve as a means of motivating volunteers and are typically categorized as monetary (cash) or non-monetary (in-kind, intangible, and work tools). Literature on Essential Volunteer Management asserts that motivating volunteers is not achieved by attempting to change volunteers or their needs, but through "creating a volunteer experience which allows an individual to meet his or her motivational needs in ways that are productive … and satisfying for the individual."

To motivate community volunteers, Budikadidi has promoted different incentive structures combining

Kasaï Oriental Province of DRC
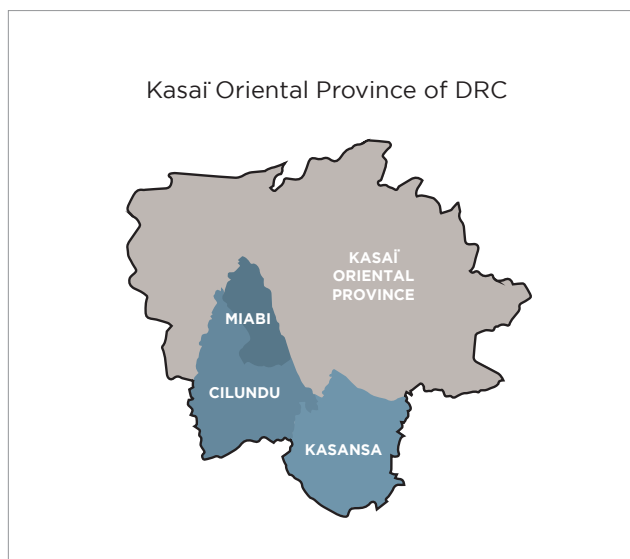
Budikadidi takes place in the Kasaï Oriental Province of the DRC, targeting communities in the Cilundu, Kasansa, and Miabi health zones.

both monetary and non-monetary incentives to varying degrees of effectiveness. Budikadidi's March 2020 internal midterm review revealed that despite the project's efforts to mobilize communities around the concept of self-sufficiency, volunteers often continued to expect Budikadidi to provide monetary incentives, perhaps due to precedents set within the humanitarian community or the intense time demands such roles required. As such, the midterm review promoted greater coherence in the application of incentives and revealed a need to better understand the project's approach to motivating volunteers.

Objective

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of Budikadidi incentive structures can inform future approaches to fairly motivate local volunteers and develop sustainable service delivery in local communities. As such, this study was designed to capture learning on the coherence, impact, and sustainability of Budikadidi incentive structures by responding to these questions:

- Which incentive structures are applied in motivating different community volunteers to perform their roles?

- Which structures successfully encourage motivation and why?

- Which incentive structures most contribute to sustaining community volunteers in their roles post-project?

- What variations exist in the application of incentive structures? Why, and what is the result? How can these variations be mitigated by multi-sectoral project teams?

Methodology

A desk review of key literature on volunteer management in the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector was conducted to map and categorize motivations, motivational needs, and examples of incentives. Participation rates drawn from the project database were complemented with staff interviews to create a comprehensive inventory of the incentive structures employed throughout the project lifetime (see a full list in Annex 1).

In May 2022, two sex-specific focus group discussions (FGD) with Budikadidi participants (not volunteers) and nine key informant interviews (KII) took place in each of the three project-targeted health zones—Cilundu, Kasansa, and Miabi. KIIs with volunteers included Lead Mothers and Community Action Committee (CAC) Focal Points (deemed successfully motivated by project leaders); Lead Farmers and Faithful House Facilitator Couples (profiles with considerable drop-out); and community leaders.

FOUNDATIONAL PURPOSE: EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES	PURPOSE 1: SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION	PURPOSE 2: INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
Literacy Facilitators	Lead Mothers	Savings and Internal Lending Community Field Agents
Community Assistants	Water Management Committee Leaders	Agricultural Focal Points
Religious Leaders	WASH Brigades	Lead Farmers
Traditional Leaders	Care Group Promoters	
Gender Focal Points	WASH Focal Points	
Youth Focal Points	Natural Leaders	
Governance Focal Points	Youth Mentors	
Faithful House Facilitator Couples		

Key results

Overview

Overall, Budikadidi community volunteers are motivated by different factors which can be categorized accordingly:

- **Feeling effective:** gaining increased knowledge, skills, and access to tools to perform well in volunteer role and witnessing societal behavioral change as a direct result of their technical expertise.

- **Feeling connected:** participating in networks created either by providing support to community members as required by volunteer role or by sharing the same purpose with other volunteers.

- **Feeling appreciated:** receiving appreciation for the role they play in the form of cash/stipends, recognition (certificates), increased visibility (t-shirts, fabric), or work tools that ease their role.

The Budikadidi incentive structures were predominately non-monetary in nature, relying on a mix of in-kind, intangible, and work tool incentives

to help volunteers feel effective, connected, and appreciated (not only by the project, but also by their communities). First, all Budikadidi community volunteers attended capacity building trainings, received equipment and supportive supervision, and occasionally had access to refresher trainings to reinforce knowledge and practices to perform their

> 66 *For the good of my community, with the knowledge the project has given me, I will continue. I can see the difference and the relief it brings my village. The knowledge the neighboring mothers have gained has reduced the cases of malnutrition in children and pregnant women. Increased breastfeeding and household cleanliness in my community are also my motivation"*
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> —LEAD MOTHER

role more effectively. In many cases, volunteers witnessed positive changes in their own households and across their communities due to their actions, incentivizing them to continue investing in their volunteer role.

The creation of networks amongst different volunteer profiles, particularly peer group meetings, served to drive mutual support and greater pride in their role. Additionally, the regular CAC and community meetings served as an avenue for multi-sectoral interactions between the various community volunteers, in which they highlight their activities and reinforce key behavior change messages with the wider community. These efforts for connectivity provided room for volunteers to build meaningful relationships, promote social cohesion, and show solidarity in times of need.

To enhance volunteers' sense of appreciation, Budikadidi also supported efforts to raise their visibility at the community level. In addition to distributing Budikadidi-specific visibility items such as t-shirts and fabric, the project also provided role-specific inputs such as kits, agricultural tools, cooking demonstration equipment, and bicycles. Those who received bicycles were also provided a monthly upkeep stipend of US$ 10 as a monetary incentive. Care Group Promoters are the only volunteers who experienced a monetary incentive increase (of US$ 10 to US$ 15 in their monthly bicycle upkeep stipend) in response to increased activity scope and geographic coverage.

Budikadidi-provided monetary incentives have typically been infrequent, one-off, or have stopped completely. Initially, per diem and transportation stipends were provided to cover costs associated with attending training sessions; however, this model was eventually phased out to emphasize self-sufficiency. In certain situations, strategies were developed to organize community payments for services, driven by the community's appreciation for the volunteer. For example, Budikadidi encouraged contracts detailing amounts paid by community members for Literacy Facilitators' services.

Some FGD participants, specifically the women of Miabi, were unaware of Budikadidi incentive structures, but they occasionally attempted to provide in-kind payment to volunteers to show their appreciation. Most participants, however, believed that all volunteers received monetary incentives from Budikadidi which partially explains initial willingness to serve as volunteers as well as community members' unwillingness to provide any form of payment for volunteer services. Overall, participants believe that volunteers are primarily motivated by the desire to feel effective in contributing to positive social, economic, and health changes in their communities.

Community members' perceptions were affirmed by volunteer key informants, 85% of whom confirmed their main motivation as the societal change they witness in their communities because of their work. The second most mentioned motivation for continuing in their role was the technical capacity and tools gained, enabling their success as volunteers. Community members affirmed this further, stating that the volunteers they find least effective are those lacking technical capacity.

Participation

Community volunteer participation rates offer additional insight into which incentive structures were most effective in meeting the needs of volunteers and supporting their retention. Staff ranked the various profiles from the most to least consistent participation in their volunteer-led activities, as presented below:

Most to least consistent volunteer participation

1. Traditional Leaders
2. SILC Field Agents
3. *CAC Focal Points*
4. Steering Committees
5. Care Group Promoters
6. Community Assistants
7. *Lead Mothers*
8. Water Management Committees
9. *Lead Farmers*
10. Religious Leaders
11. Literacy Facilitators
12. Youth Mentors
13. *Faithful House Facilitator Couples*
14. Natural Leaders

Many of the volunteer profiles that staff identified as having high participation rates received monetary, in-kind, or work tool incentives, notably, WMCs (free water); Care Group Promoters/SILC Field Agents

Students and volunteer literacy facilitators pose for a group photo outside the "Morning Star Literacy Center" in Bena Mukendi II village in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Kasai Oriental province. [Photo by ©Michael Castofas for CRS]

(bicycle/monthly stipend); Community Assistants (bicycle); and Lead Mothers (t-shirts/fabric/peer group meetings). These high participation rates may be attributed to the fact that the complementary incentive structures (including, but not limited to, in-kind goods) for these volunteer profiles met their needs of feeling effective, connected, and appreciated. While many top participating volunteers did receive monetary, in-kind, or work tool incentives, discussions with key informants and community members confirm that these incentives were not the main motivating factor for their retention.

Of the KIIs conducted, CAC Focal Points were reported as having the highest participation rate. CAC Focal Points revealed being motivated by all three feelings—effectiveness, connection, and appreciation—due to the knowledge gained through trainings, the societal change they witnessed following their actions, and the community recognition they have earned as technical experts. Budikadidi project leads confirm that CAC Focal Points, due to their role in a well-established community structure that coordinates multi-sectoral activities, are often called upon by community leaders to present the various activities implemented in their communities and thus interact with government officials, donors, and NGOs in an official capacity. This prestige enjoyed by CAC Focal Points is also experienced by other highly motivated volunteers such as Steering Committee members with access to government authorities. This recognition and affiliation, coupled with the visible positive change their work has caused in their communities, is a source of pride that continues to motivate CAC Focal Points.

> " *Budikadidi's close-out will not erase us from our community. They have already taught us a lot so we will continue to implement activities, because it is our community, and not that of Budikadidi … and above all that, for us who are already known by the community it is a pleasure for me to do it, and so I need to do it well."*
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> **—CAC FOCAL POINT**

Like CAC Focal Points, Lead Mothers were ranked by project staff as having consistently high participation rates and themselves reported being motivated by all three factors—feeling effective, connected, and appreciated. The in-kind incentives they receive in the form of t-shirts and fabric serve to increase their visibility in their communities and makes them feel appreciated. One village chief

stated that the training and capacity building provided to Lead Mothers has given them the encouragement to engage in new and unfamiliar activities. Lead Mothers perceive themselves as community educators and are regularly motivated by having access to new lessons to share with neighborhood mothers every month, rather than repeating the same lesson over several months. When the Budikadidi team adapted their social and behavior strategy to narrow the focus from 24 messages to three, there was a negative impact on Lead Mother retention, underscoring their appetite for continuous personal growth and variety in their volunteer role. Participation and retention began to improve when new topics in COVID-19, malaria, and measles were introduced. Along with the support they provide to community mothers on the prevention of malnutrition, Lead Mothers have also organized Women's Day celebrations and created mini markets in some communities, emphasizing their desire to connect with their communities outside of Budikadidi-led activities. All FGD participants emphasized that Lead Mothers are highly motivated by their desire to serve their communities. Participants view Lead Mothers as kind, available, and equipped to educate the community in interesting ways, such as through songs. One community's male FGD expressed appreciation for home visits.

Lead Farmers, who project staff categorized as having average participation rates, stated that despite the increased skills they have obtained through Budikadidi participation, they do not have the opportunity to gain materially as community volunteers, and are therefore often engaged in other more lucrative activities. The skillset Lead Farmers are expected to cascade to others can be employed on their own farms (either to produce food for their family or for sale), so the opportunity cost of engaging as a Lead Farmer is quite visible. In some cases, however, the seeds provided to Lead Farmers for demonstration purposes are planted on community land, so they themselves do not profit from the harvest. On the other hand, the more technically skilled a Lead Farmer becomes due to programmatic participation, the more s/he can gain personally from that skill in time (unlike Lead Mothers and CAC Focal Points whose volunteer skillset is not practiced elsewhere for monetary gain and thus, they remain focused on the intrinsic value

> " *Budikadidi could subsidize us each season with seeds and market gardens, give us special fabrics to distinguish us from the others like the Lead Mothers."*
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> **—LEAD FARMER**

Monique Mujinga and her husband, Jean Kamamba Mbita - both Budikadidi volunteers in the Kasansa Health Zone in DRC's Kasai Orientale province – wear t-shirts provided to promote their leadership role. [Photo by ©Jennifer Lazuta for CRS]

of their efforts). Despite their access to technical training, recognition earned as technical experts, and the changes they can see in their communities, Lead Farmers are often distracted from the work they do as volunteers in favor of improving their own livelihoods. This highlights the fact that the needs of Lead Farmers are not being met (deterring a feeling of appreciation), which would encourage their continuous participation with the current incentive structure. Taking this challenge into account, project staff have begun strategizing on different models to support Lead Farmers in monetizing their skillset to ensure their retention while also fulfilling the volunteer role.

Lastly, there are several factors contributing to the relatively low participation rate of Faithful House Facilitator Couples. Some facilitators received bicycles during start-up to allow them to reach neighborhood couples more effectively, but this in-kind incentive did not reach all (particularly new) facilitators, which unmotivated those who

were excluded. Additionally, most Faithful House Facilitator Couples engage in multiple community volunteer roles (such as Community Assistants, Care Group Promoters, Lead Farmers, and Lead Mothers), some of which receive in-kind incentives or are deemed more important/appreciated (such as religious positions). Through participation in multiple roles, they are unable to fully commit as needed as Faithful House Facilitator Couples, which contributes to decreased effectiveness. Moreover, of the four volunteer profiles interviewed, Faithful House Facilitator Couples have the least interaction with community leaders. While village chiefs in all health zones stated that they hold regular meetings with various volunteer profiles to collaborate and strategize, none of them interacted substantially with Faithful House Facilitator Couples. This weak involvement in community-level decision-making contributes to poor feelings of connection and appreciation compared to other volunteer profiles, likely underscoring low participation and overall motivation.

The consensus amongst participants and staff was that Youth Club mentors, Literacy Facilitators, and Natural Leaders were the least motivated volunteers. Participants linked Youth Club mentors' lack of motivation to weak capacity building and irregular staff follow-up, suggesting that they did not feel effective in their role. Participants stated that mentors were uncertain of their responsibilities and increased training and monitoring would help solve this issue. Furthermore, mentor positions are often filled by final year students who often leave their communities to continue their education elsewhere, learn a trade, or get married, resulting in high dropout rates challenging the project to repeat orientation and training efforts. Compounded by a lack of communication from Field Agents articulating the benefits of this volunteer position, overall delays in implementation, and inadequate provisions of resources have all contributed to this demotivating feeling of ineffectiveness. In the case of Literacy Facilitators, the lack of teaching materials, training certificates, and monetary gain left them feeling unappreciated and were cited as reasons for their lack of motivation to continue in the role. Budikadidi staff confirmed that lack of training and staff engagement also led to natural leader ineffectiveness. This role was originally designed to promote behavior change by identifying early adopters and leveraging their example amongst their neighbors. However, the strategy to execute the role was not clearly defined for the volunteers, the role was not highly understood or visible within the communities, and no pathway was developed to support their transformation from early adopters to technical experts and leaders. Faced with early retention challenges, the volunteer profile was eventually phased out of the project.

Sustainability

Across FGDs and KIIs, SILC Field Agents were cited as highly likely to continue in their role post-Budikadidi, followed by Lead Mothers and CAC Focal Points. These community volunteer profiles also represent three of the project's four entry point activities, suggesting that early and prolonged engagement with and investment in volunteers encourages feelings of effectiveness and promotes sustainability. When determining which interventions would most effectively introduce Budikadidi programming to communities, entry point activities were selected based on the ease of

establishment and sustainability. The most critical needs of communities were also considered in order to gain initial buy-in. This consultative process and the longevity of these volunteer profiles has led to their recognition not only as technical experts, but also as champions of multi-sectoral behavioral change. Moreover, they represent volunteer profiles in which a key component of their work includes establishing and sustaining networks with their communities on a consistent and regular basis, more so than with other volunteer profiles.

Moreover, they also represent volunteer profiles whose mandate requires establishing a connection with the community members they work with and building trust. The fourth entry point activity was literacy programming led by Literacy Facilitators. Unlike the volunteers leading the above-mentioned entry point activities, Literacy Facilitators were viewed as the least motivated, and by extension, most unlikely to be sustained. Literacy manuals remained the same throughout the project and refresher trainings were infrequent, resulting in a monotony that demotivated Literacy Facilitators. They reported feeling effective in supporting their students to read and write, but overall, they felt unappreciated in the many instances where contracts were not finalized. Additionally, the lack of recognition through materials such as certificates, and the fact that most communities are often not willing to engage in payment for service contracts, is a threat to sustainability. More importantly, given the nature of the literacy activity's target audience—participants formally graduate out of a timebound activity and the population requiring basic literacy skills decreases over time—the need for this service decreases over time, especially because additional literacy services are not offered.

Some community members noted that Lead Mothers are likely to sustain their role because their contributions to health improvements are highly visible and valued. A study on the Care Group Model in Mozambique indicates that Budikadidi has a greater chance for sustainability provided that the model is tailored for and imbedded into government structures (strengthening connection), and there is a paid Care Group Promoter (strengthening appreciation).

Similarly, CAC focal point retention is anticipated because they are recognized, valued, and well-established in their communities. SILC Field Agents are seen as the most sustainable because they enjoy their work, they provide a valued service in the community, and uniquely, there is a pathway to earn an income once they become a certified SILC private service provider.

In fact, SILC provides a unique window into assessing sustainability as Field Agents are supported by the project in transitioning to becoming independent private service providers during the project lifetime as opposed to during project closure. As SILC Field Agents, they feel effective, connected, and appreciated, but their appreciation is driven by the anticipation of being paid for their services. Nonetheless, staff predict that only an estimated half of the SILC private service providers continue in this role today. This reduction is presumably linked to community hesitation to pay for SILC services.

> 66 *We will continue to play our role, we already started without money, and it is not when the Budikadidi project closes its doors that we will start earning money, because we do it for the interest of our community. It's only the desire to see the neighboring mothers practice all the knowledge we have provided them that motivates me."*
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> **—LEAD MOTHER**

When exploring community willingness to pay for services, nearly all Kasansa-based FGD participants said they were willing to pay, either in money ranging from 40-2000 CDF (US$ 0.02- 1.00)/month or in-kind (including seeds, corn, manioc, and small livestock). In Cilundu, all but one participant was willing to pay either when services are rendered or on a monthly basis. In Miabi, male FGD participants stated their unwillingness to pay for services, explaining that they believed it was the project's responsibility to support volunteers in earning income elsewhere so they could continue to provide free services. On the other hand, all female FGD participants were willing to pay for services, particularly in-kind following the harvest season. Overall, participants unwilling to pay for services cited a lack of means to do so or a belief that the service should be free.

Visibility also emerged as a critical factor for the sustainability of volunteer roles, as stated by both participants and project staff. One village chief expressed that visibility is more important than monetary incentives for sustaining community members in volunteer roles because it makes it clear who is in what role when visitors come to their villages, driving highly valued recognition, and by extension, appreciation. Another chief stated that Lead Mothers were the most distinguished community volunteer profile due to being identifiable with Budikadidi-branded t-shirts. In fact, the average duration Lead Mothers interviewed for this study had spent in their role was 4.8 years, a successful retention rate that is foundational to post-project sustainability. Natural Leaders' lack of visibility was identified as a demotivating factor leading to their phase out during the project lifetime, underscoring the importance of visibility to sustaining volunteers.

Lastly, Lead Mothers have built a network and organized themselves into a community structure, meeting monthly for mutual technical and social support. Participants noted that this structure (like that of CACs) will enhance the likelihood that community volunteers continue following project closure as they can hold each other accountable, provide encouragement, and participate in brainstorming additional solutions for their community without project support.

Inequality and Challenges

While Budikadidi employed diverse incentive structures and strove for volunteers to become motivated by feelings of connection, effectiveness, and appreciation, inequalities and challenges emerged, particularly with initiatives geared towards enhancing appreciation as they did not fully meet volunteers' needs. For example, Lead Farmers received seeds but did not directly profit from them and felt they needed agricultural tools to fulfill their role. On the other hand, Care Group Promoters received bicycles and were able to profit from a monthly stipend that even increased over time. WMCs access a percentage of community payments while water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) brigades receive no monetary incentive nor certification to drive recognition. These variations are widely known amongst the volunteers, some of whom alluded to resentment.

> 66 *Not all the volunteers are motivated in the same way, and that is the primary problem. The initial message the project gives to all volunteers of the project is important."*
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> **—CAC FOCAL POINT**

On one hand, some volunteers are jealous of the visibility Lead Mothers have gained by receiving t-shirts and fabric. On the other hand, Lead Mothers expressed jealousy of other volunteers receiving more durable materials, such as bicycles and seeds, which have the potential to benefit them economically. However, because the primary motivational factor incentivizing volunteers is the

> 66 *To avoid creating conflict and frustration amongst all volunteers, they should be equally motivated to work and there will be no reason to stop"*
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> —VILLAGE CHIEF

positive effect their work has on their community, all key informants confirmed that they would continue in their role despite incentive variations.

At times, incentive structures have contributed to tensions between volunteers and the community members they serve. For example, there are instances of community members refusing to engage with Lead Mothers due to resentment at not receiving the visibility goods Lead Mothers receive as volunteers while they struggle to meet their basic needs. Budikadidi attempted to mitigate this tension by inviting community leaders to clarify the reason why Lead Mothers received incentives. This was difficult, particularly in communities that lack social cohesion. Even in cases where volunteers have not received in-kind incentives, communities have incorrectly assumed their dynamism is driven by material gain and resented the volunteers as a result, likely degrading their optimal impact. In another example, WMCs are supposed to hold general assemblies to engage the community in the decision-making process. In communities where these assemblies do not take place, tension between WMC leaders and water users is common as the community lacks insight into how the water fees are used, causing fear of corruption and reduced willingness to pay. This case highlights the importance of transparency regarding incentive structures amongst volunteers and the communities they serve.

In terms of time commitment, volunteer roles with the lowest and highest demands appear to be some of the least motivated (including Faithful House Facilitator Couples at one hour per week and Lead Farmers at eight hours per week). Meanwhile, volunteers who are highly motivated and perceived as most likely to continue post-project—CAC Focal Points, SILC Field Agents, and Lead Mothers—are all engaged for an average of four hours per week. These results may point to the importance of

striking a balance between two extremes, either engaging volunteers too infrequently that their role is not prioritized or well respected, or placing too high a demand on volunteers who face competing priorities for their limited time. This time analysis (see Annex B) again points to inconsistency in incentive structure application, as monetary incentives do not correlate with time demands. For example, while Community Assistants and Lead Farmers both experience the highest weekly time demands, Community Assistants receive bicycles to compensate for their time loss while Lead Farmers do not receive any monetary or substantial in-kind benefits. Moreover, time commitments are impacted by the tendencies of volunteers to engage in other volunteer roles or Budikadidi activities. For example, some Lead Mothers are active participants in or leaders of SILC groups and POs through which they have gained technical and managerial training as well as various kits to launch different income-generating activities. These benefits, while positively impacting their ability to improve their livelihoods, were observed as resulting in less time invested in the Lead Mother, including reducing meetings from weekly to monthly. While volunteer roles and the time they demand may naturally fluctuate over time, this must be actively monitored

> 66 *The Care Group Promoters and Community Assistants receive monthly stipends to repair their bicycles, while the Faithful House Facilitator Couples don't get anything, and we are the foundation of everything. Care Group Promoters and Community Assistants are there because they have peaceful homes, all the volunteers come from these homes, but the people that help to keep these homes together are forgotten"*
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> —FAITHFUL HOUSE FACILITATOR

to ensure the shift is driven by efficiency gained over time and not reduced volunteer motivation.

Employing unharmonized incentive structures has also aggravated gender inequalities. The SILC field agent and Lead Farmer volunteer positions yield skillsets with pathways to generate income; however, these roles are predominantly filled by men who already enjoy greater access to and control over resources. Conversely, the Lead Mother volunteer opportunity has little to no impact on the livelihood options available to women. Female volunteers of all profiles face greater time demands than their male counterparts due to the reproductive labor for which they are responsible

A group of Lead Mothers within CRS' Budikadidi project in the Kasansa Health Zone in the DRC's Kasai Orientale province. Lead Mothers are volunteers who are trained within Care Groups on best nutritional and health practices for pregnant and nursing women, and children under the age of five, and then tasked with passing on their knowledge to others in the community.

Photo by ©Jennifer Lazuta for CRS

at home, including cooking, cleaning, and childcare. Additionally, incentives impact men and women differently and have the potential to exacerbate inequality. For example, bicycles have been distributed to various volunteers. For men, bicycles have been used within and beyond their volunteer role, enhancing other livelihood commitments. On the other hand, participants provided anecdotes of women paying drivers to accompany them on the bicycle as gender norms preclude them from riding the bicycle themselves, thereby reducing the funds they control and the scope of the benefit this incentive is intended to provide.

Instances of inequality within the same community volunteer profile were also noted across the project lifetime as incentive budget lines were not designed to address turnover. Initial cohorts of Lead Mothers and Faithful House Facilitator Couples received in-kind incentives which were unavailable to replacements once a certain degree of natural turnover occurred during the multi-year project. While this inconsistency occurred only in these two profiles and impacted few volunteers, the situation was noted by both staff and volunteers, underscoring the resentment and demotivation that mismanaging incentives can cause.

Discussion

These results highlight that Budikadidi has successfully motivated volunteers in many profiles through non-monetary incentives with the potential to sustain their services post-project, particularly when they find motivation in all three categories—feeling effective, appreciated, and connected. Incoherence in the application of various incentive structures, however, has caused tension, which is a critical finding as social cohesion in the conflict-affected communities served by Budikadidi is essential for sustaining community-led efforts to combat post-project malnutrition. This study underscores the complexity of employing an effective and equitable incentive system within multi-sectoral projects.

> 66 *It is preferable that Budikadidi adds a certificate tracing our journey from the beginning of our activity as Lead Mothers up to the point we are at today because we have received so many trainings and tools in several areas, but unfortunately, this is not evident due to a lack of documentation coming from the project attesting to this"*
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> **—LEAD MOTHER**

Challenges in executing different incentive models negatively impacted programming and the motivation of associated volunteers. For example, permagarden programming was originally launched with the plan to pay Lead Farmers who supported the development of a certain number of gardens. Project staff quickly learned that this approach to expedite scaling of the activity reduced overall quality and the model was eliminated. This shift in approach then contributed to Lead Farmers' already waning motivation in their role.

In recognition of these challenges, project staff expressed the need for a global, multi-sectoral incentive system intentionally designed and methodically implemented to motivate volunteers more equitably regardless of sector or profile. This coordination effort must be extended to external actors as well. For example, some Budikadidi Lead Mothers abandoned this volunteer role to take up a similar position in a different project which provided monetary incentives. While greater collaboration between Budikadidi and other projects progressed, these anecdotes underscore the potential consequences of unharmonized incentive structures, not only within multi-sectoral projects but also across projects in the same geographic zone.

To support early and intentional planning, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration to design holistic, equitable, and sustainable incentive structures:

1. Human-centric and participatory incentive structure design: During project start-up or the RFSA Refinement Period, teams should facilitate community-led discussions to understand the potential intrinsic and extrinsic incentives for each volunteer role and leverage any volunteer practices that may already exist in the community. Teams should reflect on what communities are willing to provide, what volunteers seek to receive, and reach consensus on how best to motivate the entire cohort of volunteers. This consultative process will lay a foundation for greater transparency within communities about the incentives volunteers receive and establish early expectations regarding community-paid services across the project lifetime. Community-validated incentive structures should be monitored and reviewed annually to account for shifting dynamics and needs.

2. Transparency: During early sensitization efforts that communicate project goals and activities to targeted communities, the team should collaborate with local leaders to ensure that all community members are aware of the various volunteer

roles, the services they provide, and the incentive structures employed by the project. The process should be transparent, inclusive, and geared towards reducing resentment and jealousy between community members and volunteers. Materials, such as branded t-shirts, should be provided to help designate the different volunteer profiles, bolstering early recognition and motivation. Likewise, sensitization amongst the volunteers themselves is critical during their orientation period to gain early understanding of how non-monetary incentives—particularly training and technical inputs such as manuals and certificates—will benefit them in the long-term.

3. Equity and do no harm: Incentive structures should be carefully designed to ensure one group is not favored over another nor are existing inequalities (sex, age, ethnicity, other) exacerbated either amongst different types of volunteers or between volunteers and the community members they serve. The selection of incentive structures should be thoroughly mapped across multi-sectoral projects, preventing application of differing models by each sector. These considerations, along with a systematic approach to the processing of monetary and in-kind incentives, can positively influence community buy-in by ensuring the project does not contribute to existing tensions. While volunteer needs may vary across sectors and change over time rendering coherence difficult, a commitment to collaboration and integration across sectors will aid in mitigating these challenges. Gathering feedback from volunteers and assessing their motivation levels should be regularly incorporated into existing MEAL efforts.

4. Volunteer management database: To enhance transparency in community volunteer management, maintaining a simple database from project start-up forward could offer the information needed for the project team to refine its incentive structures. Such a database would enable: i) tracking of incentive structures for equity assurance; ii) monitoring of volunteers to encourage one role per person, both to strengthen the service provided under each role and provide volunteer opportunities to a wider percentage of the community; and iii) simple assessment of volunteer achievements to identify "star" volunteers who can serve to evaluate or train other volunteers in their cohort and contribute to the project's capacity strengthening efforts. To support handover processes and sustainability, this database should either align with existing government systems or early collaboration with the relevant government body should focus on co-developing a system that tracks recruitment, training, and supervision, while developing strategies for retention. When possible, volunteer exit interviews should be conducted to gain understanding of why they are leaving the project as well as periodic interviews with current

volunteers to gather information on what keeps them motivated and the challenges they face to improve the volunteer management database.

5. Income generation: Assessment findings should be used to design and pilot pay-for-service models that balance communities' lack of resources with volunteers' desire to generate income. Teams may specifically explore expansion of the SILC private service provider model which does not require communities to pay initially but carefully establishes this expectation for the future, both once communities have met their immediate needs and recognized the value of the service. Considerations for marginalized communities (based on gender, economic or disability status, or other factors) should be carefully mapped, including who is willing to pay versus who has access/power to pay, as well as who will be paid, as it may exclude them from accessing the service and result in further marginalization.

6. Synergy: As part of the proposal design phase, CRS should conduct an assessment which identifies the various development projects operating in the same geographic zone, the incentive structures they may offer, and relevant government policy to ensure that the proposal budget reflects the conditions on the ground. During the Refinement Period, project leaders should collaborate internally and externally to avoid disparities within the incentive structures by developing an approach that considers the complexity of incentive structures. This will allow for greater coherence and inform the feasibility of selected incentives, such as market-based models.

7. Time demand analysis: Consideration of community members' time should be a core focus of the incentive structure design process. Employing a time calculator to understand the availability of various profiles in the community will help the team assess the opportunity cost associated with serving as a volunteer and impact on individuals' livelihoods. While programmatic focus on self-reliance and sustainability drives the importance of non-monetary incentives, the time certain roles demand should be carefully balanced in consideration of the volunteers' household needs and responsibilities. Per industry standard, volunteers should be expected to provide no more than six hours per week of their time (one hour per day except Sunday).

8. Design for sustainability: Incentive structures designed at project start-up and adapted over time should serve as a key factor in project exit strategies and handover plans. Not only should incentive structures align with any relevant government policies, but early linkages between volunteers and government structures or relevant private sector actors will help sustain technical support and supervision to maintain motivation post-project. The project can leverage recognition

and linkages to leaders as a key motivation for community members by carefully considering which roles are formally engaged for input in community decision-making structures. Moreover, CRS has observed that volunteers often resign after two years of service, necessitating a plan that reflects the evolving nature of volunteers' experience so that their needs can be adequately met and they can remain motivated. Where possible, involving community members in the selection of volunteers could increase their willingness to sustain volunteers while making them accountable to the community.

Annexes

A. Budikadidi Community Volunteer Incentives Inventory

VOLUNTEER	#	INCENTIVE STRUCTURE	STATUS AS OF MAY 2022	KEY CONSIDERATIONS
Foundational Purpose				
Literacy Facilitators	950	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. In some cases, monetary incentives either in cash or in-kind exchanges such as seeds or vegetables.	~69% active	Payment for services is typically decided between the Literacy Facilitator and community members, encouraging sustainability, but is not always guaranteed. Cases of mismanagement and lack of materials, certificates, continuous capacity building opportunities and adequate monetary incentives decrease participation. They do not participate in substantial network meetings and receive less recognition in their community than other volunteer profiles.
Community Assistants	228	Received bicycles + $10/month for maintenance. Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. Did receive hats and t-shirts at one point.	~80% active	Anticipated sustainability driven by community recognition and the capacity building, tools, and guides they have received.
Religious Leaders	363	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. Did receive hats and t-shirts at one point.	~70% active	Respected and recognized before the project. Several trained leaders relocated to other areas resulting in delays in the development and implementation of action plans.
Traditional Leaders	633	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. Did receive hats and t-shirts at one point.	~100% active	Respected and recognized before the project. They were not considered during initial trainings, and consequently were not as integrated into project activities as other volunteer profiles.
CAC Gender/ Youth/ Governance Focal Points	491	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. Did receive hats and t-shirts at one point.	~90% active	Low turnover overall linked to possibility of interacting with government officials as well as community recognition.
Steering Committee	491	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition.	~90% active	Low turnover overall linked to possibility of interacting with government officials as well as community recognition.
Faithful House Facilitator Couples	1,473 couples	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. Some received bicycles, hats, and t-shirts at one point.	~40% active	Disparity in incentives—not all received bicycles. Often involved in other community volunteer roles in which they receive monetary incentives. Level of social recognition not as extensive as other volunteer profiles. Not organized into formal groups and there is a lack of continuous capacity building.

Purpose 1				
Lead Mothers	5,000+	Capacity building, supportive, supervision, peer group meetings, tools, guides, social recognition. Received fabric in 2018 & t-shirts in 2022, otherwise motivated through community recognition.	~80% are active	Monthly network meetings provide structure & encouragement; lack of financial input leads to feeling undervalued and community members questioning their motives.
Water Management Committee (WMC) Leaders	1,218	Community recognition, percentage of amount paid to access water.	~60% active: spring source ~99% active pump	Water pump WMC structure (communities pay via scheme they determined) motivates committee leaders' engagement. Pump WMCs are open four hours/day, every day while spring sources have open access.
WASH Brigades	134	~50% received sanitation kits, otherwise motivated through community recognition.	N/A as new to role	New structure that will benefit from regular network meetings like lead mothers.
Care Group Promoters	89	Received bicycles + $15/month for maintenance as well as t-shirts, pens, notebooks, registers, tools, and manuals.	~85% active	Monthly stipend increased from $10 to $15 when scope expanded; despite consistent incentives, anticipated sustainability driven by community recognition.
CAC WASH Focal Points	491	Training/capacity building and community recognition.	~90% active	Low turnover overall linked to possibility of interacting with government officials as well as community recognition.
Natural Leaders	1,022	Community recognition alone.	No longer active (role cancelled)	Lack of visibility in role and programmatic follow-up led to this position ending as the individuals received project inputs, but community cascade did not occur.
Youth Mentors	76	Capacity building, tools, guides, social recognition. Did receive hats, t-shirts at one point, and radios as a group.	~67% active	High turnover and irregular participation as youth often leave to go to university, move to another city for work, or get married and no longer have time to participate.
Purpose 2				
SILC Field Agents	249	Received bicycles + $10/month for maintenance.	100% active	SILC Field Agents transform from volunteers to private service providers where community pays for services. About 50% of the private service providers are no longer active as they could not maintain their businesses.
Agricultural Focal Points	491	Training/capacity building and community recognition.	~90% active	Low turnover overall linked to possibility of interacting with government officials as well as community recognition.
Lead Farmers	1,649	Training/capacity building, technical expertise, and community recognition.	~70% active	Able to gain additional technical skills, but prioritize income-generating activities. Participation dependent on opportunity to transform into service providers.

B. Weekly Time Commitment (from lowest to highest) vs. Participation Rates

ROLE	HOURS/WEEK	PARTICIPATION RATES	ANALYSIS
Steering Committee	0.25	90%	Some of the lowest participation rates are amongst those least engaged on a weekly basis, perhaps noting that regular engagement (investment) drives greater participation.
Care Group Promoters	1	83%	
Faithful House Facilitator Couples	1	48%	
Water Management Committee Leaders	2	80%	
Literacy Facilitators	2.25	69%	
Youth Mentors	2.5	67%	
SILC Field Agents (with avg of 3 groups)	3	100%	The most consistently engaged volunteers are those serving three or four hours per week, perhaps noting a "sweet spot" of high engagement without too much time demand.
Lead Mothers	4	80%	
CAC Gender/Youth/ Governance Focal Points	4	93%	
CAC WASH Focal Points	4	93%	
CAC Agriculture Focal Points	4	93%	
Community Assistants	7	80%	The position with the highest time demand carries a lower participation rate, perhaps signaling a threshold by which too much demand becomes a deterrent to participation.
Lead Farmers	8	70%	