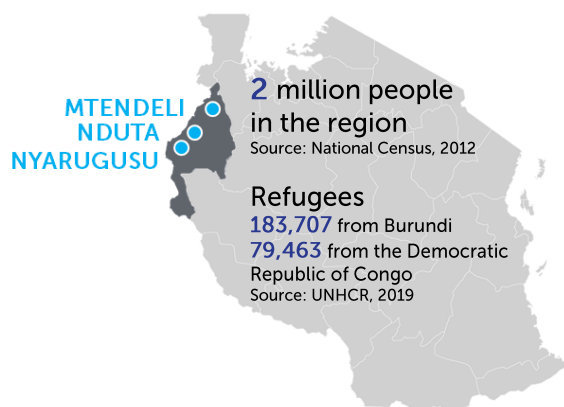


UNCDF TANZANIA



Strengthening Resilience Through Savings Groups

Between June and August 2019, UNCDF conducted a socio economic health assessment and gender assessment of the savings groups supported under the Kigoma Joint Programme in both refugee and host communities. The aim was to inform UNCDF programming towards youth and women's economic empowerment, and improved resilience and self-resilience of savings groups' members. The following are some of the findings and recommendations that emerged.



KIGOMA JOINT PROGRAMME

THEMES

Youth and Women's Economic Empowerment,
Agriculture

BENEFICIARIES

Refugees, Youth, Women, Farmers, Entrepreneurs

UNCDF TANZANIA IN NUMBERS

400+
savings
groups

11K
group
members

64%
female
members

TZS 400m
accumulated savings
(~USD 175,000)

TZS 340m
disbursed loans
(~USD 150,000)

AVENUES OF IMPACT

Loans provided over the course of a groups cycle and the savings accumulated at the end of a cycle, provide lump sums that allow members to either diversify their sources of income such as kitchen gardens, petty trading or livestock; or to strengthen existing income generating activities for example by purchasing farming inputs or products in bulk. Additionally, a case study on the closure of the common markets, in which refugees and host communities were able to trade with each other, showed that refugees used savings and loans from the groups to compensate for the imposed economic shock.



ASSET BUILDING

Allowing members to build assets through the provision of lump sums



COPING MECHANISMS

Strengthening resilience against economic shocks



COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

Creating a community that supports their members in need financially and socially

FUNCTIONALITY

More than 10,000 members of the host community and refugees' savings groups are actively partaking in informal group saving and lending. 91 percent of participants sampled have taken a loan, averaging TZS 88,000 (USD 38.2). While members of the host community often use these loans to diversify their sources of income, refugees tend to invest in their existing business activities. However, many groups still lack the cash to provide the groups with a sufficient pool of funds from which to offer loans to group members.

ISSUES

1. Some members may have to wait until they are able to take a loan.
2. Low levels of cash available to the group relative to outstanding loans can be dangerous in case of economic shocks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Include more information on the risk of providing loans and borrowing during training.
2. Encourage the group size between 15 and 30 members.

GOOD PRACTICES

More than 90 percent of the savings groups visited, spontaneously conducted group meetings regularly as per their training. Despite some noticeable progress, the gender gap in leadership roles persists within most savings groups. 83 percent of the savings groups were facilitated by a male chairperson and a male treasurer. Furthermore, in mixed groups, there is an unequal participation of women and men during savings group meetings. Female members are often afraid and reluctant to speak up and voice their concerns. Even in mixed groups that mostly have female members, women are less likely to substantively engage in group discussions. This could be attributed to socio-cultural norms, and to the fact that most incentive workers and village agents who support savings groups are male.

ISSUES

1. Leadership committees are often unrepresentative of the makeup of the group, with men overrepresented.
2. There is an obvious gender bias in the roles men and women take in the group, particularly with respect to senior leadership roles, which limits women's voice and ability to influence the functioning and direction of savings groups.
3. Some refugees are not always able to attend weekly group meetings due to the timing of camp food distribution. This leads to circumvention of group rules and opaque processes at meetings due to shares being bought by others for others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Disseminate a document summarizing savings group's good practices and encouraging female members to join the leadership committees.
2. Include more female incentive workers and village agents.
3. Provide gender mainstreaming trainings to incentive workers, implementing partner staff, and village agents to help raise awareness of the important role gender plays in the savings groups and build their capacity to promote gender equality.
4. Engender women's access to decision-making and leadership by designing and implementing women's leadership and development mentoring programmes that would train women leaders on savings groups operations.
5. Encourage and support female members to partake in leadership positions within their communities (e.g. community workers, incentive workers, village agents, etc.).



"I am the head of household and the provider of the family."

Before joining the Dushigirame savings group in Nduta refugee camp, the 32-year-old Naomi did not have any source of income and totally relied on food distribution from the World Food Programme. Thanks to the savings group, she opened a small tomato business, which has allowed her to diversify her household diet and feel economically independent.

"Before joining the savings group, I did not know how to manage money wisely."

Rosavia is 46 years old and a member of the Kujitegemea savings group. As a farmer, she operates her own vegetable business. After becoming a member of her savings group, she took out a loan of TZS 300,000 (around USD 130) to buy fertilizers to support agricultural production and a sewing machine. "Now I have more revenue from my farm business, and the income allows me to enjoy more food variety."



"I am more confident and can cover my own needs without having to kneel down to my husband and ask for assistance!"

Peragia is 45 years old and is a member of the Mshikamano savings group. Before joining, it was impossible for her to take out a loan from her community members unless she brought her husband. She would not ask for a loan eventually because she was worried that her husband would abuse her for having more money than him. After joining the savings group, she could buy shares and take out a loan easily without her husband having to know.



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