

**Taiz Emergency Food Program**

Funded by USAID/Food for Peace

**QUARTERLY REPORT for the period**

1 January – 31 March 2013

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**1. Program Overview**

The Taiz Emergency Food Program (TEFP) was initially designed to be implemented over a period of eleven months (1st April 2012- 29<sup>th</sup> February 2013) in four districts targeting 7,200 households. However, the project currently operates in the three districts of Al Mokha, Mawza and Dhubab after pulling out of Al Wazi'iyha district due to insecurity. With a three month no-cost extension approved in January 2013, the project will increase the number of beneficiaries from 7,200 households to 8,965 households and will run until end of May 2013. The project is providing eight months of food commodities to vulnerable households through a voucher system in the three districts. The three districts are amongst the areas identified as having high nutritional gaps as a result of the political and economic shocks in Yemen.

**Project Objectives and Results**

The main objective of the project is to increase food security for 8965 households (62,755 individuals) in Dhubab, Al Waziiyah, Al Mokha and Mawza Districts of Taiz Governorate, Yemen through eight months of targeted emergency food rations during the political transition

**The project has three main expected results:**

Result 1.1: 8,965 HHs identified that meet the vulnerability and food insecurity criteria

Result 1.2: 8,965 HHs redeem 8 months of commodity vouchers

Result 1.3 : 8,965 HHs have increased household food availability

**2. Performance Summary****Summary of Quarterly Progress Report****General overview**

-During this reporting period a number of key project activities were undertaken and significant progress made. Beneficiaries during this quarter received retroactive vouchers for the month of December 2012 and vouchers for the months of January, February and March 2013 respectively.

-The three month no-cost extension was approved by USAID/FFP during quarter three. The project continued hygiene promotion, this time extending the activities from distribution centers to the local communities. During the quarter, 150 volunteers were selected from various communities in the three districts and trained in basic nutrition and hygiene awareness. Monitoring data from the field indicates that 4,966 households have been reached with various messages in Mawza districts and two other sub-districts of Mokha. The main topics covered include breast feeding, complementary feeding, hand washing and personal hygiene, safe water, sanitation, etc

-The Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) research was conducted during the quarter. Data collected have been consolidated and submitted to the research consultant for analysis and report writing.

-At the same time, the TEF/FFP continued the monitoring of beneficiaries, vendors and market prices of commodities in the food basket. Household monitoring in the three districts indicated that the food commodities received through the project do not last up to 30 days for any households. The analysis from a household monitoring data collected in February 2013 for Dhubab and Mokha indicates that food last for more than 20 days for only 9% of beneficiaries; 16-20 days for 20% of beneficiaries; 11-15 days for 53% of beneficiaries ; and 5-10 days for 18% of beneficiaries.

-Analysis of market data collected for the four commodities indicates a continuous increase in the prices of wheat flour and kidney beans. Prices of goods and services continue to increase across Yemen since the political crisis in 2011. The price increase has an adverse impact on poor households' food security and livelihoods, leading the negative coping mechanism. Despite the environmental implication, sale of charcoal is the main source of income for the majority of vulnerable people in the three districts. However, fewer people access income from agriculture labor on onion farms, construction contracts, fishing, service work (mainly restaurant), remittance, and begging.

-A typical household produces 10 bags of charcoal per month with each bag sold at 600 YER throughout the nine months (215 YER is equivalent to 1 USD). In July 2012, a typical household needed to produce 8.75 bags of charcoal to purchase a sack of 50 Kg wheat flour. By March 2013, the Term of Trade (ToT) for Wheat flour has increased to 10.3 bags of charcoal for one sack of 50 kg wheat flour. A typical household needs 2.08 sacks of 50 Kg wheat flour to meet their monthly calorific needs but households are typically producing half the amount of charcoal required to purchase the required quantity of wheat flour. The TEF/FFP project is currently filling the food gap through the food commodity distribution. These households will face huge food gap when the TEF/FFP project phases out on May 31, 2013. They will need to produce twice what they are currently producing in charcoal to meet their caloric needs. This will result in further environmental degradation and cutting of more trees. Without a sustainable livelihoods intervention in these districts, the situation will perpetuate the cycle of poverty, leaving alone the impending prevalence of malnutrition as people will be unable to meet education, health, and food need of their households.

### **Results:**

#### **Result 1.1: 8,965 Households identified that meet the vulnerability and food insecurity criteria**

##### ***Activity 1.1: Identify and target vulnerable households based on established criteria***

No additional households were registered and included on the distribution list. However, during the quarter, 946 households from a total of 1587 households targeted for Dhubab District graduated from the program during the quarter. The remainder 641 households for Dhubab district will continue to receive vouchers up to end of the project. 5,992 households from Mawza and

Mokha districts are expected to graduate from the program when they receive food commodities for April 2013 distribution.

**Result 1.2: 8,965 households redeem 8 months of commodity vouchers**

**Activity 1.2: Establish commodity voucher mechanism**

In response to additional beneficiaries registered during last quarter, a total of 22,550 additional vouchers were printed during the quarter.

Meanwhile, four sets of voucher were distributed as follows:

*In this*

**Picture: Vendors bring food commodities to beneficiaries**



<b>Month</b>	<b>NO Households</b>	<b>Total beneficiaries</b>
December 2012	8,962	62,671
January 2013	8,953	62,671
February 2013	8,703	60,921
March 2013	8,007	56,049

The TEF/FFP project continues to implement food commodities distribution through a voucher mechanism after it was tested as a pilot in June 2012. The mechanism will remain in use up to the end of the project because it assures transparency and accountability.

**Activity 1.3: Implement commodity distribution to vulnerable households through voucher mechanism**

During this reporting quarter, four rounds of distributions were accomplished. The food commodities received per household per month included wheat flour (25kg); rice (7 kg); beans (24 cans of 410 grams); and vegetable oil (1.8 liters). The beans are produced and canned in Yemen while the wheat flour is milled and fortified in Yemen but the grains imported from the United States of America. All (100%) of 246 households covered during monitoring visits confirmed receipt of commodities specified by vouchers.

Both baseline data disaggregated by age and sex indicate that female headed households constitute a lower proportion of the populations in the three districts. Of the total 8,953 households benefiting from commodity distribution, 1180 households were headed by females and 7,773 headed by males.

Children under five within targeted households are reportedly benefiting from the food commodities. Children up to one year old mainly consume the rice and wheat flour palatably prepared by mothers. Children above one year old consume all the commodities along with the parents. *(See annex I for beneficiary tables)*

**Result 1.3: 8965 Households have increased household food availability**

The Local Regional Procurement Research was conducted during the quarter. The Research used the Coping Strategy Index (CSI) and the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) as tools for both the research and evaluation. The CSI and HFIAS data will be used as end line data to be compared with the baseline early conducted in 2012. When published the survey report will highlight the extent to which households have had increased access as a result of the TEFP/FFP project.

Focus group discussions held with community members during the LRP research indicated that the food security situation has greatly improved since TEFP/FFP commenced the food distribution in the districts. They said TEFP/FFP has increased their access to food. *“Even if I am not successful in getting contract, I know for sure that I will get food at the end of the month”*, said one participant of the FGD. The project has reduced numbers of children withdrawn from school and increased retention at school. The participants also mentioned that they have seen reduction in the prevalence of mal nutrition amongst children. *“If FFP had not been present in our community, the malnutrition rate would have been so high”* said one community leader. According to the beneficiaries, the intervention has promoted dietary diversification at household level. For some households, savings from cash previously directed to purchasing staple is now used to purchase milk, sugar and vegetables for household consumption. Similarly, some households are also using this cash savings to meet medical, education, and other needs for their households.

**Activity 1.4: Monitor market impact in origin and distribution markets**

The FFP project collected market prices for the four commodities in the food basket. The data collection took place in the three districts (terminal market) and Taiz (supply source) (*Please see annex II for market survey summary*)

**Activity 1.5: Monitor and document local food procurement approaches**

The TEFP/FFP vendor team carries out regular monitoring of exchange of vouchers for food commodities between beneficiaries and vendors. Irregularities in the exchange process have been very low. However, the contract for one vendor was cancelled after the team discovered he has exchanged vouchers in his community at a price stipulated for other communities.

**Coordination**

At the national level, Mercy Corps is represented at the Food Security and Agriculture Meetings regularly held in Sana’a. Mercy Corps also submits regular monthly reports to the Food Security and Agriculture sector and participates in food security sector planning meetings. Mercy Corps is also a member of cash/market based programming (CTP) forum held in Sana’a each month. At Taiz, Mercy Corps is a member of the nutrition and health cluster. Additionally, a coordination mechanism exists between UNICEF, WFP and Mercy Corps to promote complementarities and avoid duplication of activities.

**Challenges and Lessons Learned**

Challenges for the team were easing out as the team gains more confidence, acceptance, and cooperation from the communities. The project during the period did not experience any serious challenges, except that beneficiaries have continually appealed for the extension of the project.

**Conclusion:**

The TEFP/FFP project has not only increased people’s security to food but also to basic services. Households are directing cash to basic services since they are no longer purchasing most of their food. According to children and parents, students are no longer withdrawn from school to work for money or food. Households feel secure because their men are not leaving them alone to travel for

weeks in search for jobs. However, as the project gradually phases out some vulnerable households might be compelled to revert to negative coping strategies.