



FY13 FINAL RESULTS REPORT
RESILIENCE PLUS: A CLIMATE-FOCUSED RESPONSE TO THE
FOOD CRISIS IN NIGER

Development Objectives: Agriculture & Food and Nutrition

MAY 1, 2012 – APRIL 30, 2013

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SPONSORED BY THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT'S
OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA) & IMPLEMENTED BY
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF (LWR) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
UNION HADIN KAI

SUBMITTED BY:

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I. Executive Summary

With support from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), LWR and Union Hadin Kai worked to help ensure that the most vulnerable populations in Niger were more resilient to the 2011-12 food crisis and future food crises by responding to the immediate needs of over 79,000 people¹ in 60 villages of Niger's Tahoua region and helping to lay the groundwork for long-term food security. *Resilience Plus: A Climate-Focused Response to the Food Crisis in Niger* sought to provide immediate income for households affected by Niger's latest food crisis through cash-for-work (CFW) and high-quality, certified millet seed for the 2012 planting season; and promote resiliency to future crises through improved soil and water conservation and nutrition.

II. Reporting Methodology

This final project report was developed by compiling data and descriptions of project activities, outputs and outcomes from project records, progress reports and comparing baseline data with the cumulative results from the project's final external evaluation. Quarterly and annual reports were submitted to OFDA covering all periods of performance.

III. Accomplishments

Resilience Plus' two project Animators and Nutrition Advisor, other members of the project team, Hadin Kai leaders and local officials kicked-off the project by raising awareness of *Resilience Plus* project activities around CFW and nutrition promotion, in particular, in all four of the targeted project communes. These organized community meetings provided important opportunities to respond to community questions and concerns, as well as introduce project operations and strategies in a very open and transparent manner. An estimated 8,560 community members attended these awareness-raising community meetings.

The project purchased, transported and distributed 15 tons of certified, R1 HKP variety millet seed at thirty project sites. At each project site, a Seed Distribution Committee, trained by the project team during a one-day session on vulnerability assessment and distribution management, received and distributed the seeds to 3,000 vulnerable households. 78% of these households were female-headed, and all seed beneficiaries received 5kg of certified millet seed each - enough to plant an estimated .5 hectares of millet. Access to this seed contributed to increased food self-sufficiency from annual coverage of less than a month in 2011 to nearly three months in 2012².

Resilience Plus also contributed to enhancing more long-term local agricultural outcomes. 60 local producers (26 women and 34 men) were trained in improved agricultural techniques for food and cash crops, including saving seed for future planting. In addition, 220 people (110 women and 110 men) in 10 different villages were trained in post-harvest business management, associative life and institutional strengthening for farmers associations. These trainings equipped participants with an understanding of how to develop and implement statutes and by-laws for their organizations, the different organizational bodies of a cooperative, their roles and responsibilities, how to organize and run effective meetings, methods for organizational record keeping, developing cost projections and revenue forecasts, and how to implement farm and non-farm monitoring and evaluation plans and activities.

7,308 people (4,264 women and 3,044 men) earned a total of \$290,641 by participating in *Resilience Plus* CFW activities. As a result, beneficiaries purchased food and other much-needed household goods while reducing their dependence on asset sales and debt to meet their basic needs; according to the final external evaluation, 75% of CFW proceeds were directed to food purchase during the lean season. 72,407 additional individuals benefitted from CFW as a result of a household member's participation in the project activities.

CFW participants recovered 1,214 hectares (approximately 3,000 acres) of communal land by building soil and water conservation structures (half-moons, trenches, soil retaining walls and stone dams). This communal land was further protected by the planting of 275,125 mature tree saplings that were grown and maintained by *Resilience Plus'* trained tree nursery managers. These trees will play an important role in leveraging project gains in soil and water conservation by guarding against soil erosion and helping to control future flooding in the region.

In addition to the Hadin Kai project team, 120 *relais* (volunteer educators) from all four of the project communes were trained to provide hygiene and nutritional health education to others. *Relais* promoted healthful household living by raising awareness in their communities about the importance of exclusively breast feeding children aged less than six months, how to effectively compliment child nutrition for children aged more than six months, the signs and consequences of malnutrition, the nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women, good hygiene practices and how to prevent malaria. Tahoua and Keita-based radio stations reinforced *relais'* awareness-raising efforts by broadcasting messages related to these essential family practices, nutritional recipes from locally available foods and the importance of everyone's participation in positive household health practices between December 2012 and February 2013.

¹ 79,715 total beneficiaries from activities under Objectives 1 and 2; includes 7,578 men, 24,919 women, 19,710 boys and 27,508 girls; none of these were internally displaced.

² Data from the baseline survey and the final external evaluation.

This multifaceted approach to hygiene and nutritional health education ensured more than 37,000 individuals benefitted from this awareness-raising information over the life of the project. In addition, approximately 879 women have benefitted from home visits, during which they were trained in essential family practices and the preparation of different nutritional recipes for their children. These interventions contributed to a 78% average increase in beneficiary communities' knowledge of nutrition education topics.³

All planned project indicators were met or exceeded. Additional details on project activities conducted between May 1, 2012 and April 30, 2013 can be found in *Appendix A (Activities and Results)*.

IV. Project Difficulties/Constraints and Proposed Solutions

At the start of the project, Hadin Kai suffered a seven-week delay in receiving project funds due to a problem with the transfer to the local branch of the bank. As a result, some project activities were adjusted or delayed, but all were able to be completed as planned. During this time, the Hadin Kai project team successfully negotiated with the project's certified millet seed supplier that an advance payment not be made. As a result, the seeds were able to be secured, transported and distributed to vulnerable households in time for the planting season.

In addition to the delay in receipt of project funds, the major difficulty encountered during the implementation of CFW activities was the inaccessibility of some project sites once the rainy season started. Villages that compose project sites on one side of the Adouna Valley are often inaccessible for two to three weeks due to flooding. For this reason, fourteen of the project sites, (two sites in the commune of Keita, three in the commune of Kalfou, six in the commune of Tamaské and three in the commune of Bambaye), were paid every other two or three weeks. In the event that the project team was not able to reach the sites in question, a call was placed to the village chiefs as well as the president of the management committees so as to inform them and that the message was shared with the beneficiary populations. During the course of the project, however, village chiefs quickly assumed a more proactive role and began alerting the project team first of the accessibility or inaccessibility of their sites.

LWR's partner, Hadin Kai, did not incur more than \$300,000 in expenditures in either of the fiscal years during the implementation of *Resilience Plus*. As a result, the budgeted final project audit was not conducted and the project budget for direct costs was underspent by \$6,414.88. On July 23, 2013, LWR submitted a request to OFDA for approval to shift these underspent direct projects costs to LWR's indirect project budget. LWR's approved final FY12 Negotiated Indirect Cost Recovery Agreement (NICRA) is higher than LWR's budgeted project rate and the agency expects that its final FY13 NICRA rate will also be adjusted further upward from that provisionally approved rate.

V. Project Collaboration and Partnerships

A Hadin Kai delegation, composed of the Project Coordinator, the Finance Officer and Animators held a meeting on May 5, 2012 with the mayors of Tamaské and Keita communes. The objective of this meeting was to share the project goal, objectives and activities with these important local stakeholders. During the course of this meeting, both mayors validated Hadin Kai's selection of sites for the project and pledged their support to the implementation of the project and the advancement of its goals.

Hadin Kai also successfully negotiated an agreement with the Environmental Department outlining the roles and responsibilities of the latter in monitoring land restoration activities and cultivation and planting of trees.

Hadin Kai's Project Coordinator regularly and actively participated in all of the weekly Tahoua Food Security Cluster meetings during the project period. This forum is spearheaded by the Secretary General of the regional government and is attended by local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations operating in the region. Currently Concern, Qatar Charity, the Red Cross, World Vision, Action against Hunger, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Program (WFP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regularly participate. The purpose of the Food Security Cluster's weekly meetings is for local actors to share information and experiences for more effective humanitarian interventions. This forum proved to be an important opportunity to harmonize planning and operational strategies and avoid duplication.

Hadin Kai's Project Coordinator also regularly participated in meetings with other humanitarian agencies at the prefectural office of Tahoua. These recurrent meetings provided the chance for agencies to brief the District Commissioner, local mayors, departmental directors of decentralized state services and other government officials on the progress of their activities.

³ Final external project evaluation

VI. Success Story : Looking to a Greener, More Resilient Future

Increasingly common bouts of unpredictable rainfall and drought, as well as human and climate-induced desertification in Niger's Tahoua region are just a few indicative examples of the challenges the changing Sahelian landscape and its people face. Aboubacar Nassirou is the chief of Talakia village, located in Tahoua. Aboubar is married and is the head of a fourteen-person household. He, like most in the region, is highly dependent on an agro-pastoralist lifestyle, and thus finds himself increasingly vulnerable to the volatile nature of Niger's fast-changing environmental conditions.

Even in years of good rainfall and more plentiful harvests, it is not uncommon for families to still experience a "hungry season," so when food provisions from previous harvests are low or have been completely exhausted, the neediest households in Aboubacar's village tend to assume debt in order to purchase necessary foodstuffs until their next harvest. In 2012, the situation became even more severe as a result of the food crisis that millions across the Sahel were forced to face. Subsistence farmers and their households were plunged deeper into a continuous cycle of acquiring and repaying debt, instead of finding themselves in a position to effectively store surplus portions of their harvest to remain self-sufficient.

With support from OFDA, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Union Hadin Kai worked together to address the 2012 food crisis and build local household resilience by assisting families like Aboubacar's and others in his village through cash-for-work, providing high-quality, certified millet seed for the 2012 planting season to vulnerable households and helping to improve soil and water conservation and nutrition in four communes in Tahoua. LWR and Hadin Kai targeted thirty sites of community-held land in the Tahoua region for soil and water conservation improvements. In order to protect 1,200 hectares (2,965 acres) of land, local villagers were employed by the *Resilience Plus* project to construct soil and water conservation structures designed to minimize erosion and facilitate regeneration of the land. Project beneficiaries were paid 1,000 FCFA per day for their work and even more importantly, learned soil and water conservation techniques that can also be applied to their own fields to boost their harvests - despite changing rainfall and weather patterns.



*Recovered land in
Niger's Adouna Valley*

This approach has proven to be highly successful in assisting hungry families to access cash to meet their immediate food and household needs, protecting them from the necessity to incur debt, and helping to assure improved food security for vulnerable families in the future. Recovered communal lands also promise greener pastures for village livestock, soil conservation through reforestation, and a source of fodder, gum arabic and local trees and plants with healing properties for local villagers. Aboubacar attests, "This [project] inspired us to recover the land in the [Adouna] valley, which is degraded as a result of silting, and ensure we leave our future generations with valley slopes and a plateau green with trees and grass."

Sector:		Agriculture and Food Security			
Objective 1:		Provide households with immediate access to cash through cash-for-work to meet short term food security needs and protect and rehabilitate land assets			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
Provide certified millet seed for planting to vulnerable families	(Projected) increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed systems/agricultural inputs for beneficiaries (Indicator1)	The average number of days of food self-sufficiency based on 2011 harvests ranged from 2-22 days among farmers surveyed in the project zone.	(Projected) increase of 2 months	1.7-2.9 months increase	<p>According to a post-harvest assessment with a random sample of beneficiaries, 1.25kgs of cereal is needed per person per day to assure their food security. Since the average household size of those interviewed was 5.5 people, an estimated 6.87kgs of cereal is needed to satisfy their household food needs. With a 325kg average increase in millet production as a result of the project's assistance, beneficiary households were enabled to assure their own food self-sufficiency for 47.3 additional days (or 1 month and 17 days). This is significantly higher than the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s estimate of 250kg/person/year (or 0.68kg per person per day); using the FAO estimate, these same 5.5-member households' daily needs are estimated 3.74 kg and this millet production will therefore cover 86.9 days (or approximately 2.9 months).</p> <p>The final external evaluation estimated that the average number of months of food self-sufficiency was a 3- month increase. Note, however, that these reported gains vary from one site to another and are influenced by evaluating 2012 agricultural production levels against those of 2011, when many producers lost 100% of their harvests due to drought. For example, when comparing only these two years, two sites registered 200 and 260 days of self-sufficiency respectively, while a third registered merely 25 days more.</p>
	Number of people benefiting from seed systems/agricultural inputs (Indicator 2)	5% of the individuals surveyed had saved seed for planting in 2012.	600 people	3,000 households (78% headed by women) and 24,774 individuals (62.5% women and girls) received certified seed	2,337 female-headed households and 663 male-headed households benefited from R1 certified HKP millet seed, reaching 24,774 community members (15,493 women and girls and 9,281 men and boys). According to a post-harvest assessment with a random sample of beneficiaries, this contributed to production of between 125kg and 600kg of millet in 2012. 100% of the sampled beneficiaries affirmed their intention to save a portion of this millet as seed for planting in 2013.

<p><i>Train partner staff and community members in soil and water conservation</i></p>	<p><i>Number of people trained in soil and water conservation (Indicator 3)</i></p>	<p><i>126 of the 1,102 individuals surveyed (11%) reported mastery of soil and water conservation techniques prior to the start of the project.</i></p>	<p><i>100 people</i></p>	<p><i>100 individuals trained (25% women)</i></p>	<p><i>75 men and 25 women (all 18 or more years of age) were trained in soil and water conservation. These trained CFW management committee members, and 50 committee members trained through a previous LWR-supported project (150 members in total, including 50 women), sensitized and provided technical support on soil and water conservation techniques to 7,308 CFW participants. A facilitator-led self-evaluation exercise at the conclusion of this training revealed that 84% of trainees (84 individuals) professed a “good” understanding of the topics presented—defined as understanding 100% of the main topics addressed during the course of the training, including: soil and water conservation techniques, the organization of soil and water conservation work and a comprehensive understanding of the project goals and strategies. 16% of the trainees (16 individuals) professed a “moderate” grasp of the topics presented – defined as understanding at least 80% of the topics.</i></p>
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Sector:		Agriculture and Food Security			
Objective 1:		Provide households with immediate access to cash through cash-for-work to meet short term food security needs and protect and rehabilitate land assets			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
Mobilize community leaders	Number of community mobilization sessions	0	4 (at least one per commune)	4 communes and 30 project sites sensitized	The project team, Hadin Kai leaders and local officials worked to raise awareness of Resilience Plus project activities around CFW and nutrition promotion, in particular, in all four of the target communes during the project's second quarter. Awareness-raising community meetings provided important opportunities to respond to community questions and concerns, as well as introduced project operations and strategies in a very open and transparent manner. An estimated 8,560 community members attended these awareness-raising meetings.
Construct soil and water conservation structures and riverbank protection	Amount of money distributed to cash for work beneficiaries Indicator 4)	25% of individuals surveyed (at 2 of the 6 sites surveyed) reported previously benefitting from CFW programming.	\$289,417	\$290,641 distributed	Beneficiaries earned \$290,641 for construction of soil and water conservation structures. Each CFW participant earned 1,000 FCFA (approximately \$2) per day. Focus group discussions and the final external evaluation revealed that CFW programming has had a considerable positive impact on local communities. CFW beneficiaries reported using 75% of their earnings for food and the remaining 25% for a variety of expenses, including children's clothing, health care related costs and for transportation expenses.
	Number of cash-for-work beneficiaries		32,800 women; 32,000 men	52,427 Women & Girls; 27,288 Men & Boys	Of the 7,308 <u>direct participants</u> in CFW activities, all of them were adults between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five (4,264 women and 3,044 men), but these participants and their 72,407 household members all benefitted from the activity, reaching 79,715 beneficiaries in total.
	Number of hectares rehabilitated	0	approximately 1,200 hectares	1,214 hectares	CFW participants recovered 1,214 hectares (3,000 acres) of communal land through soil and water conservation interventions. These included: 81,545 demi-lunes, 127,335 trenches, 11,731 stone dams and construction of 152,163 meters of stone walls. The Regional Office for Rural Engineering collaborated with the project by providing oversight and monitoring of these efforts. Each project site was visited by a Rural Engineering Technician at least once a week to ensure compliance with quality assurance standards and norms that govern soil and conservation efforts.

Sector:		<i>Agriculture and Food Security</i>			
Objective 1:		<i>Provide households with immediate access to cash through cash-for-work to meet short term food security needs and protect and rehabilitate land assets</i>			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
<i>Plant trees</i>	<i>Number of trees planted (Indicator 5)</i>	0	270,000 trees	275,125 trees	<i>97% of all the seedlings raised by 40 trained tree nursery, managers (28 women and 12 men), were successfully replanted on recovered communal land by voluntary community labor. Tree species included Acacia Senegal, Acacia Seyal, Acacia Nilotica and Bauhinia Rufescens. Each species was validated by the Environmental Department and is valued for adaptability to Tahoua's geo-climatic zone and their various uses by the local population and their livestock. Tree seedling losses (3%) typically occurred during their transport to the intended site of their planting. Hadin Kai maintains an agreement with the Environmental Department to provide ongoing monitoring of Resilience Plus' reforestation efforts and many communities developed systems to protect these lands from grazing until the seedlings reach maturity.</i>
<i>Train producers on improved agricultural techniques for food and cash crops</i>	<i>Number of people trained in improved agricultural techniques (Indicator 6)</i>	<i>Among the 1,102 individuals surveyed, 60 (5%) 34 (3%) had participated in one or more training opportunity on improved agriculture techniques.</i>	60 people	60 people (43% women)	<i>34 men and 26 women (all 18 or more years of age) were trained in improved agricultural techniques. Training participants learned how to create and maintain a vegetable nursery, including best planting, transplanting and irrigation practices, techniques for testing the germination of potatoes, as well as methods for improved onion, cabbage, garlic, tomato and sweet potato production. Thanks to project savings during the implementation of the first training, project Animators were able to lead refresher trainings for participants in March 2013 to boost trainee confidence and assimilation of improved agricultural techniques. Anecdotal evidence suggests that participants' review of key concepts and techniques presented in the Department of Agriculture's initial training proved to be helpful in facilitating trainees' improved understanding and application of skills learned.</i>

<p><i>Train producers in post-harvest business management, institutional strengthening for farmers associations and marketing</i></p>	<p><i>Number of people trained in farm management (Indicator 7)</i></p>	<p><i>Among the 1,102 individuals surveyed, none had received training on farm management.</i></p>	<p><i>160 people</i></p>	<p><i>220 people</i></p>	<p><i>110 men and 110 women (all 18 or more years of age) were trained in post-harvest business management and institutional strengthening for farmers associations. Trainees learned how to develop and implement statutes and by-laws for their organizations, the different organizational bodies of a cooperative, their roles and responsibilities, how to organize and run effective meetings, methods for organizational record keeping, developing cost projections and revenue forecasts, and how to implement farm and non-farm monitoring and evaluation plans and activities. Participants in this training were nominated by their respective villages during village-wide assemblies based on certain eligibility criteria. Participants were required to be a member/advisor of the organizational leadership or of an active farmer's organization, have skills in facilitation and animation to train others and be permanently based in the village.</i></p>
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Sector:	<i>Nutrition</i>				
Objective 2:	<i>Leaders have improved knowledge and skills to promote behavior change for optimal nutrition behaviors in their communities</i>				
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
<p><i>Behavior change communication</i></p>	<p><i>Number of beneficiaries receiving nutritional education (Indicator 1)</i></p>	<p><i>1% of women surveyed previously benefitted from formal nutritional education.</i></p>	<p><i>600 people</i></p>	<p><i>879 people (100% women)</i></p>	<p><i>879 women benefited from home visits by project relais, during which women were trained in essential family practices, such as the importance of exclusively breast feeding children aged less than six months, how to effectively complement child nutrition for children aged more than six months, the signs and consequences of malnutrition, the nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women, good hygiene practices, how to prevent malaria and the preparation of different nutritional recipes for their children. Project records indicate that volunteer relais also responded to 214 individual requests for assistance or guidance, suggesting that relais have come to be recognized by their communities for their expertise in hygiene and nutritional health matters.</i></p>

	<p>Percent change in practice and/or knowledge pertaining to nutrition education topics (Indicator 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1% of men and 1% of women (0% of girls and boys) surveyed had prior knowledge on exclusive breastfeeding for children <6 months. • 1% of men, 1% of women, 1% of girls and 0% of boys surveyed had prior knowledge on balanced and adequate nutrition. • 1% of women surveyed reported knowledge on food safety. • 1% of men, 9% of women 0% of girls and 1% of boys surveyed had prior knowledge on when and where to seek medical care. 	<p>50% increase in knowledge</p>	<p>78% increase in knowledge</p>	<p>The project's final external evaluation indicates that on average, targeted beneficiaries' have increased their knowledge pertaining to various topics in nutrition education by 78%, with generally greater knowledge by women and girls. 115 individuals were surveyed on their nutritional knowledge of four key topics (the same as those surveyed during the baseline), including the importance of women exclusively breast feeding children aged less than six months, how to effectively complement child nutrition for children aged more than six months, good hygiene practices and the importance of as well as when to seek medical care at community health centers.</p> <p>The results of this survey on nutritional knowledge are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusive breastfeeding: 88% of women, 43% of men, 96% of girls and 67% of boys • Adequate nutrition: 95% of women, 77% of men, 80% of girls and 60% of boys • Hygiene and food safety: 90% of women, 94% of men, 92% of girls and 87% of boys • Care-seeking: 83% of women, 77% of men, 68% of girls and 47% of boys
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Sector:		<i>Nutrition</i>			
Objective 2:		<i>Leaders have improved knowledge and skills to promote behavior change for optimal nutrition behaviors in their communities</i>			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
<i>Disseminate messages through IEC campaign materials</i>	<i>Number of participants reached by sensitization activities (radio emissions, posters and other materials)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>30,000 participants</i>	<i>At least 37,231 people (2,478 men and boys and 34,753 women and girls)</i>	<i>Relais and project staff conducted community outreach using flipcharts on nutrition and essential family practices (sourced from a nutrition promotion project by Helen Keller International, PLAN International and the Ministry of Health), reaching 37,231 people. Utilizing multiple approaches, Resilience Plus sought to reach both women and men with this important information. From December 5, 2012 to February 28, 2013, Keita's local radio station as well as Saraounia Radio, located in Tahoua, broadcasted messages on hygiene and nutrition to further extend the reach of these messages. The messages developed and diffused throughout the project zone in various local languages, consisted of three components: essential family practices, explanations of nutritional recipes based on local products and the importance of everyone's participation in the health management of their households. Each radio station broadcasted three messages per day during habitual times of rest for the local population – 9:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.</i>
<i>Training in behavior change communication techniques and nutrition</i>	<i>Number of providers (health care and/or community volunteers) trained in the provision of nutrition education (Indicator 3)</i>	<i>Aside from health care workers, baseline research indicates that no other community volunteers or leaders have been trained in the provision of nutrition education</i>	<i>120 women trained</i>	<i>120 women trained as relais/volunteer educators</i>	<i>120 women, representing all four of the project communes, were nominated during community meetings as volunteers to be trained in the provision of hygiene and nutritional health education to others. These relais were trained in behavior change communication techniques and essential family practices by the project Nutrition Advisor. These relais conducted sensitization sessions and home visits on nutrition (see Objective 2, Indicator 1, above)</i>