



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

FY13 ANNUAL REPORT

RESILIENCE PLUS: BOLSTERING RECOVERY FROM NIGER'S FOOD CRISIS

MARCH 8 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

(AID-OFDA-G-13-00034)

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:

ORTENCIA ARELLANO, LWR AFRICA GRANTS MANAGER

DECEMBER 18, 2013

I. Executive Summary

With support from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Union Hadin Kai are working to ensure the poorest households in Tahoua, Niger, recover from the 2012 food crisis and are more resilient to climate shocks. To achieve this goal, *Resilience Plus: Bolstering Recovery from Niger's Food Crisis* is helping vulnerable people bridge unmet food needs and rehabilitate land assets through cash-for-work (CFW), provision of high-quality, certified millet and cowpea seed for the 2013 planting season, and training in improved agricultural production and livestock fattening. In addition, *Bolstering Recovery* is designed to ensure long term project sustainability by empowering and strengthening Hadin Kai to provide quality services to the Union's 7,801 members, build sustainable systems for increasing agricultural productivity and grow rural incomes through its cooperative structure.

II. Accomplishments

Designed to leverage existing local capital for improved socioeconomic outcomes, *Bolstering Recovery* kicked off in 2013 by mobilizing the support and participation of local authorities and targeted beneficiaries. More than 20 traditional, administrative and religious officials publicly pledged their commitment to supporting the goals and objectives of the project at its official launch in May. In addition, approximately 33,687 community members were introduced to *Bolstering Recovery* at the project's community launch and community mobilization and project awareness raising campaigns conducted by the project team, Union Hadin Kai and local officials throughout the project zone.

During the project's initial kick-off phase, the *Bolstering Recovery* project team also worked closely with the targeted local population to identify project sites to benefit from project interventions. Hadin Kai and local communities ultimately recommended 20 along the Adouna Valley. The Regional Director for the Department of Rural Engineering validated each site, which was subsequently submitted to administrative authorities for their approval. The Household Economic Approach (HEA), also consultative and community-based in nature, was also utilized by the project team in order to identify the communities' most vulnerable members eligible to benefit from the project's planned distribution of certified millet and cowpeas seed and CFW programming.

A total of 5,081 people (3,219 females, 1,862 male), each representing unique households, participated in *Bolstering Recovery* CFW programming at 20 project sites in 2013. Under the direction of project trained CFW management committees and project animators, CFW participants earned \$155,511 (73,986,900 FCFA) in exchange for recovering 556 hectares (1,374 acres) of communal land by constructing soil and water conservation structures. As a result, CFW participants were enabled to purchase food and other much-needed household goods while reducing their dependence on asset sales and debt to meet their basic needs. 54,432 individuals benefitted from CFW as a result of a household member's participation in the project activities.

20 tree nursery managers, (7 women and 13 men), identified and trained by the Environmental Department and supported by the project, raised 133,668 mature tree saplings. Community volunteers replanted these saplings on recovered community land to boost soil and water conservation. These trees will play an important role in guarding against soil erosion and will help mitigate future flooding. In complement to reforestation efforts on recovered community land, 431 hectares (1,065 acres) were also sown with grass seed.

2,000 vulnerable heads of household received 10 kg of R1 HKP millet as well as 5 kg of cowpeas seed. 57% of these beneficiary households were female-headed. 90 of these recipients, (56 men, 34 women), selected based upon their motivation and willingness to train others, also participated in a practical, field-based training of trainers, where they were equipped with knowledge and skills for improved agricultural techniques for food crops. These volunteer trainers will reach 2,000 producers (including approximately 1,000 women) through outreach and technical support to those in their communities over the remainder of project.

Similarly, 150 women were identified and trained as community livestock outreach volunteers. Participants learned how to maintain the health of their small ruminants, the importance of vaccinations and guarding against animal epidemics, best feeding practices and how to maintain hygienic animal enclosures. As a result of this training, it is expected that livestock outreach volunteers will be well placed to provide technical support to others within their communities who depend upon livestock fattening as a key livelihoods strategy.

The project's 2013 achievements are detailed in Appendix A: Activities and Results.

III. Project Difficulties/Constraints and Proposed Solutions

The project's 2013 activities have largely been implemented as planned. The project did note a slight delay in the construction of soil and water conservation structures and related activities; however this was in the interest of ensuring a thorough, transparent and participative identification process of project beneficiaries. The project is on track to realize its key indicators and anticipated intermediary results.

IV. Project Collaboration and Partnerships

Bolstering Recovery emphasizes maximizing the use of available resources for improved socioeconomic outcomes through complementary support to existing community structures and initiatives. Accordingly, the project has established important relationships with the local Rural Engineering, Livestock, Agricultural and Environmental Departments. Union Hadin Kai maintains formal agreements with these government agencies which outline the nature and expectations around their collaboration. For example, these partnership agreements highlight local agencies' role in training local communities and in monitoring communities' execution of these activities. In addition to giving local actors a stake in the project's success, this approach also enables these agencies to extend their reach deeper into the communities in which they work.

In addition to these formal project partnerships, the Project Coordinator participates in monthly Tahoua Food Security Cluster meetings. This forum is spearheaded by the Secretary General of the regional government and is attended by local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as other 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 meetings is for local actors to share information and experiences for more effective humanitarian interventions. This forum has also proved to be an important opportunity to harmonize planning and operational strategies as well as avoid duplication.

The Coordinator also participates in regular meetings with other humanitarian agencies at the Tahoua Prefectural Office. These recurring meetings provide the chance for agencies to brief the District Commissioner, local mayors, departmental directors of state services and other government officials on the progress of their activities.

V. Success Story : Improving Local Livelihoods through Soil and Water Conservation



Abdou Dan Ladi is well acquainted with the hardships seasonal migration brings to local communities in Tahoua. "These days our children are obliged to migrate, often even to countries that are experiencing war or conflict, just to help those of us here in the village [to survive]," he says. Aged 61 and married, Abdou is the head of a thirteen person household in Awanchala, a village that is part of Bambeye Commune in the Tahoua Region of Niger. Abdou, like most in his home region, is a subsistence farmer in a rural economy reliant on agriculture. Ongoing challenges including poor soil and water retention and limited knowledge and application of improved farming practices among local farmers was recently exacerbated by the 2012 Sahelian food crisis. These factors together have resulted in low cereal production yields and continued to frustrate local efforts to cultivate off-season crops. Cultivation of off-season crops is an important income-generating opportunity in rural communities like Abdou's, and coincides with the lean season, when male community members tend to migrate for lack of alternative local livelihoods options.

With support from OFDA, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Union Hadin Kai are working to ensure that households like Abdou's recover from the 2012 food crisis and are more resilient to future climate shocks. This initiative, entitled *Resilience Plus: Bolstering Recovery from Niger's Food Crisis*, is helping vulnerable people bridge unmet food needs by providing high-quality, certified millet and cowpeas seed for the 2013 planting season and rehabilitating land assets through cash-for-work (CFW) in twenty sites of community-held land in Niger's Tahoua region. Project beneficiaries are paid 1,300 FCFA per day for their work and even more importantly, learn soil and water conservation techniques that can also be applied to their own fields to boost their harvests - despite changing rainfall and weather patterns. In addition, *Bolstering Recovery* is providing training in improved agricultural production and livestock fattening.

To promote project sustainability, this initiative is also designed to strengthen Hadin Kai's capacity to provide quality services to the Union's 7,801 members, build sustainable systems for increasing agricultural productivity and grow rural incomes through its cooperative structure.

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. Abdou explains, "Wages earned through cash-for-work have really helped the community withstand the hungry season. But we, the older villagers, are particularly proud since [CFW programming] has reignited hope among us that one day our valley and grazing land will be recovered - enabling everyone to cultivate in the off-season [and diminish the need for household members to migrate]."

VI. Activities Planned for the Fourth Project Quarter (FY14)

- Train members of farmers associations in associative life
- Train Union Hadin Kai leaders in business analysis and marketing
- Monitoring of crop yields, particularly among farmers having benefited from certified millet seed
- Distribution of low-cost household storage materials

Appendix A: Activities and Results

Sector:	<i>Agriculture and Food Security</i>			
Objective:	<i>Help bridge unmet food needs for the most vulnerable households and protect and rehabilitate community land assets</i>			
Activity	Indicator	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
<i>Communal land has conservation structures in place to improve soil and water retention</i>	<i>Amount of money distributed to cash for work beneficiaries</i>	<i>\$149,500</i>	<i>\$155,511</i>	<i>54 men and 46 women (all 18 or more years of age) were trained in soil and water conservation. Direct participants in CFW: 3,219 Women; 1,862 Men Total beneficiaries of CFW: 19,327 Women; 20,816 Girls; 4,499 Men; 14,871 Boys. This activity is completed.</i>
	<i>Number of trees planted</i>	<i>125,000 trees</i>	<i>133,668 trees</i>	<i>20 tree nursery managers (7 women and 13 men) have been trained and 133,668 saplings have been planted on recovered communal lands. This activity is complete.</i>

<i>Most vulnerable households access quality certified millet and cowpeas seeds and low-cost storage materials</i>	<i>(Projected) 3 months increase in food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed systems/agricultural inputs for beneficiary families</i>	<i>(Projected) increase of 4 months</i>		
	<i>Number of people benefiting from seed systems/agricultural input activities</i>	<i>2,000 people</i>	<i>2,000 people</i>	<i>1,131 female heads of households and 869 male heads of households benefited from certified millet and cowpeas seed distributions. This activity is complete.</i>
<i>Men and women producers have improved knowledge and skills on improved agricultural production and storage techniques for food crops</i>	<i>Number of people trained in improved agricultural techniques</i>	<i>90 people trained as volunteer trainers; 2,000 people sensitized on techniques</i>	<i>90 people trained as volunteer trainers</i>	<i>90 individuals, (56 men and 34 women) have been trained as volunteer trainers. Farmer sensitization on improved agricultural production and storage techniques for food crops will be carried out in subsequent reporting periods.</i>

<i>Women agro-pastoralists have improved knowledge and skills on care and fattening of small ruminants for sale</i>	<i>Number of women trained in small animal fattening</i>	<i>150 women</i>	<i>150 women</i>	<i>150 women were trained in maintaining the health of their small ruminants, the importance of vaccinations and guarding against animal epidemics, best feeding practices and how to maintain hygienic animal enclosures. This activity is complete.</i>
<i>Farmers organizations are strengthened in governance and marketing</i>	<i>Number of people trained in governance</i>	<i>160 people</i>		<i>Planned for implementation in FY14.</i>
	<i>Number of people trained in marketing</i>	<i>40 people</i>		<i>Planned for implementation in FY14.</i>