



Samaritan’s Purse

USAID/FFP/EFSP

Food Assistance to Build Resilience in Communities (FABRIC)

Republic of Niger

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Project Overview

Launched in September 2012, FABRIC is a one-year Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) under USAID’s Food for Peace (FFP) initiative, implemented in partnership with Samaritan’s Purse. This project is decreasing household vulnerability to food insecurity in four communes (Ayorou, Banibangou, Goroual, and Dingazi) in the northern Tillabéry Region of Niger, targeting 40 communities and 8,100 direct beneficiaries. Through Food for Work (FFW) activities, off-season gardening, nutrition and environmental awareness education, and water point installation and rehabilitation, households will have increased year-round availability of food and improved dietary diversity while building communities’ overall resilience.

Project Summary

Sector:

Food Security

Objective:

Decrease household vulnerability to food insecurity in 40 communities in the northern Tillabéry Region of Niger through increased year-round availability of food at the household level and improved dietary diversity

Number of Targeted Beneficiaries (Entire Project):

8,100 direct beneficiaries/participants; 30,600 total beneficiaries

Total FFW participants: 3,500
Total gardening direct beneficiaries: 4,600

Number of Beneficiaries Reached to Date:

7,581 direct beneficiaries/participants from 7,084¹ households; 83,591² total beneficiaries
Total FFW participants: 2,981 (364 female; 2,617 male)
Total gardening direct beneficiaries: 4,600 (3,607 female; 993 male)

Cost per Beneficiary to Date:

\$199 per direct beneficiary/participant
\$18³ per beneficiary

Accomplishments:

Food for Work activities began uniquely in the commune of Ayorou in December 2012, and continued throughout January and February 2013, with 992 participants. In March, FFW activities were launched in the remaining three communes (Banibangou, Dingazi, and Goroual), while they simultaneously continued in the commune of Ayorou. Of the 3,500 planned participants, 2,981 took part in FFW activities in the four communes this quarter⁴. This explains why only 494 ha of land (out of the 544 ha planned) were rehabilitated from January to March, and 425.058 MT of millet, beans, and oil was distributed (out of the 434 MT planned). Cumulatively, 46% of the total amount of project food commodities have been distributed, and 43% of the total targeted land has been restored through the construction of 280,479 demi lunes, 317 banquettes, and 114,689 zai holes⁵. Grass seed has begun to be collected locally, purchased, and sown in demi lunes and banquettes to stimulate grass growth. In preparation for the establishment of tree nurseries, all participants have been trained. A total of 952 FFW participants, mostly from the commune of Ayorou, have attended training sessions on all sustainable environment topics organized in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Agriculture.

Between January and March, 4,600 gardening participants tended vegetables at 20 garden sites. With technical support from Samaritan's Purse (SP), vegetables (potatoes, lettuce, bell peppers, tomatoes, onions, eggplant, cabbage, and okra) grew as expected, and the bulk of the produce was harvested by the end of March. Beneficiaries plan to consume the majority of vegetables harvested, and anticipate selling surplus produce. To protect crops against livestock and to promote future planting at the garden sites, 17 fences were constructed (construction is ongoing on the remaining three fences). Since January, gardening activities have been accompanied by nutrition education. To date, 3,264 of the 4,600 gardening participants have attended all nutrition awareness sessions, including cooking demonstrations and health and nutrition education. During this quarter, seven hand-augured boreholes were installed, accounting for seven of the 20 planned water points at garden sites. Additionally, construction has been in progress since

¹ 497 households are involved in both activities: gardening and FFW

² Total beneficiaries from 7,084 households with an average household size in the target communes of 11.8 from the baseline assessment; no duplication (Total targeted beneficiaries were calculated using the national average of seven members per household and assuming duplication of numerous households involved in both activities.)

³ Amount calculated using the total direct and indirect USAID cost share expenses through March 2013 (\$1,508,611.21) divided by the total number of beneficiaries reached to date (83,591)

⁴ For an explanation of this variation refer to the Issues-Concerns and Adaptations section.

⁵ These methods will increase water retention and collect organic matter, impacting crop and fodder yields.

February for hand-dug irrigation wells at four garden sites. Rehabilitation was completed this quarter on three of the five wells identified by the Ministry of Hydraulics and Environment as having high sanitary risk scores, and work is almost finished on the fourth well. After all 20 water point committees were formed in January, 15 training sessions were organized this quarter in cooperation with the Ministry of Hydraulics and Environment. Participants were trained on water point management as well as proper hygiene and sanitation techniques.

Issues, Concerns and Adaptations:

Although insecurity in neighboring Mali has posed a potential threat to FABRIC activities, no negative effect has been observed due to fighting or refugees. During the selection process for FFW participants, it was difficult to find enough women to respect the planned gender ratio of 1,400 men and 2,100 women due to the harshness of the work required and the lack of caretakers to watch babies. Thus, actual targeted FFW participants include 2,617 men and 883 women.

According to the original schedule, women targeted for FFW tree nursery activities would have worked from March to May; thus, all FFW activities would be completed in May. However, tree nurseries must be timely planted, so that transplantation can take place when the soil is wet enough after a good rain. Since consistent rains are not predicted before July, it was decided to reschedule the tree nursery activities to April through June (three months are required for tree growth before transplantation). Thus, only 2,981 FFW participants worked in March instead of 3,500. (Instead of working in March, most of the 640 woman targeted for tree nursery activities will work in June.) In order to successfully meet tree transplantation requirements, all 3,500 FFW participants will be engaged in July to transplant the seedlings. In case there is not enough food remaining from previous distributions to compensate participants for their work in July, a couple work days will be “saved” in April or May to be used in July.

The installation of garden fencing started late and took longer than expected due to the remoteness of the garden sites, simultaneous work at 20 different sites, and negligence on the part of certain suppliers. To combat this challenge, beneficiaries constructed traditional fences around the garden sites. Similarly, delays were experienced in the installation of water points at garden sites. Thus, beneficiaries used the distributed motor pumps to pull water from the Niger River, ponds, boreholes, and the three rehabilitated wells to water the crops. These strategies helped minimize negative effects that could have been caused by project delays. (The only negative incident that occurred was when camels caused destruction in one garden while the fencing was under construction.)

Performance Indicators

The following tables show cumulative activity and results indicators compared to planned, baseline, and target data. Most activity indicators were measured through monthly project, field, and distribution reports, while the results listed were collected through post-distribution monitoring. Results not measured this quarter will be collected through mid-term and final evaluations.

Results showed that even though the lean season has begun, significantly fewer beneficiaries are experiencing moderate or severe hunger and resorting to coping mechanisms, due to the increased availability of food commodities provided through FABRIC.

FABRIC Activity Monitoring Table								
Strategic Objective	Intermediate Results	Activity Indicators		Current Quarter	Cumulative to Date	Total Target	Comments	
<i>Increased year-round availability of food at the HH level</i>	Increased availability of food for beneficiary HHs	# of MT of commodities purchased & distributed	Planned	434	499.1	1,107	Most FFW tree nursery participants didn't work in March because tree nursery activities were rescheduled. 640 of the assumed 3,500 participants will work on tree nurseries; tree transplantation holes that were dug counted as work but did not add to the amount of land rehabilitated.	
			Actual	425.058	509.387	509.387		
			% achievement to date	98%	102%	46%		
		# ha of land rehabilitated through FFW	Planned	544	635.01	1,360		
			Actual	494	590	590		
			% achievement to date	91%	93%	43%		
	Increased local food production from gardening	# of beneficiaries receiving seeds, tools, & inputs	Planned	0	4600	4,600		
			Actual	0	4600	4600		
			% achievement to date	N/A	100%	100%		
		# of garden water sources established	Planned	0	20	20		
			Actual	7	7	7		
			% achievement to date	700%	35%	35%		
	Increased knowledge of sustainable environmental practices	# of FFW participants attending sessions on all training topics	Planned	992	992	3,500		
			Actual	952	952	952		
			% achievement to date	96%	96%	27%		
<i>Improved dietary diversity</i>	Rehabilitated wells are functioning and well maintained	# of wells rehabilitated	Planned	3	5	5		
			Actual	3	3	3		
			% achievement to date	100%	60%	60%		
		# of water point committee training sessions	Planned	5	10	10		Trainings were held for each village with a new water point instead of 2 trainings only for rehabilitated wells
			Actual	15	15	15		
			% achievement to date	300%	150%	150%		
	Increased knowledge of HH nutrition practices; increase in HHs consuming vegetables	# of gardening participants attending sessions on all nutrition topics	Planned	4,600	4,600	4,600		
			Actual	3,264	3,264	3,264		
			% achievement to date	71%	71%	71%		

FABRIC Results Monitoring Table					
Result	Indicator	Baseline Data	Target	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter
Immediate Results (IR)					

IR 1.1: Increased availability of food commodities to beneficiary HHs	# of HH receiving food from FFW distributions	N/A	3,500	980	2,981
Strategic Objectives (SO)					
SO 1: Increased year-round availability of food at the HH level	% HH with moderate or severe hunger (hunger scale)	70%	30%	-	21.1%
	Average Coping Strategy Index (CSI)	20	No significant change in CSI during hunger season	-	4.4
	HHs adopting a survival coping mechanism at least once in 7 days	28.40%	<i>Not included in log frame</i>	-	0%

Plan for Next Quarter

Food for Work activities will continue in all four communes throughout April and May. During this time 2,860 participants will focus on land rehabilitation and environmental awareness, while 640 women will be engaged in tree nursery activities, for a total of 3,500 participants. Land rehabilitation efforts will conclude at the end of May, leaving tree nursery participants to continue working into June. Although the vegetable harvest for all off-season gardens is expected to end in April, nutrition education will continue. The four hand-dug irrigation wells that are currently under construction should be completed during the next quarter in addition to five Californian irrigation systems⁶ that will be installed at garden sites. Water storage basins will be constructed at certain garden sites to facilitate future planting and irrigation. Rehabilitation on the remaining two wells will be completed. A mid-term evaluation will be conducted in April to measure result indicators.

Success Stories

Beneficiaries' daily struggles before FABRIC's intervention are illustrated by the fact that most families only ate one meager meal per day, usually consisting of watery millet porridge. Through FFW monthly rations of staple foods, combined with vegetables from off-season gardens, beneficiaries are now able to experience a variety of nutritious meals, multiple times a day. Moumey, a mother of eight in the commune of Banibangou said, "Since we began the vegetable harvest, I have always had something different to cook for my children. For example, yesterday I made dambou (traditional couscous) mixed with cabbage. I plan to pick okra so that I can make a special sauce for dinner tonight. The garden produced many potatoes, so I prepare potatoes often as well."

Fouera Bouriema, who is the primary provider for the 10 members of her household, revealed that the project has done much more than just providing food for her community. Typically, during the lean season when families have exhausted all of their food supplies, they are left with no choice but to open their granaries and consume the seeds reserved for planting. "Fortunately, this year we can close the granaries and actually use the seeds to plant this planting season," said Fouera. Communities now have sufficient food to sustain them during this difficult time, and can use the reserved seeds as intended, allowing them to produce a better harvest later in the year. "This project has helped lift us out of the problem that we found ourselves in. Now we know the techniques needed to continue the same work on our own," added one village chief.

⁶ Underground low pressure PVC pipes that distribute water through several surface outlets throughout the garden