

GOAL NIGER

OFDA

Grant agreement no. AID-OFDA-G-13-0063-00

Final Report

1st May 2013 to 28 February 2014



IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE
HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY THE PROTRACTED CRISIS IN NIGER

01-MAY-13 TO 28TH FEB-14

Submitted by: GOAL
Peter Heaney
Email: pheaney@goal.ie
00 353 1 2809779



Project Summary Sheet

Head Office:	GOAL	Local Office	GOAL Niger
Mailing Address:	PO Box 19, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland		PO Box.
Contact Person:	Peter Heaney	Contact Person:	Suzan Hodgson
Title	Desk Officer	Title:	Country Director
Telephone:	00 353 1 2809779	Telephone:	00 227 8965 6394
Fax:	00 353 1 2809215	Fax:	N/A
Email:	pheaney@goal.ie	Email:	shodgson@goal.ie

Submission date

31 May 2014

Program Title:

Improving food security and livelihoods opportunities for the most vulnerable households affected by the protracted crisis in Niger

OFDA Award no:

AID-OFDA-G-13-0063-00

Project Duration:

1 May 2013– 1 April 2014

Country/Region:

Niger, Zinder region

Status and Time Period of this report:

Final report: 1 May 2013 – 28 February 2014



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Additional documents included;

- A. Narrative report*
- B. Budget*
- C. SF 425*
- D. Asset Disposal letter*
- E. GOAL Case Study; 'Strengthening resilience of local communities through livestock reconstitution in Zinder region of Niger'.*



Programme Overview

This intervention sought to support vulnerable populations in Niger in line with USAID/OFDA's mission to provide humanitarian assistance through disaster response, early recovery, and risk reduction activities that increase vulnerable communities' and households' resilience and reduce the impact of recurring shocks.

With support from OFDA, GOAL supported vulnerable communities affected by crisis in the departments of Mirriah, Takeita and Damagarama Takaya, Zinder region, Niger. Through its project entitled "Improving food security and livelihoods opportunities for the most vulnerable households affected by the protracted crisis in Niger", support was given to increase availability of and access to diversified income sources through Villages Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups and Cash for Work (CFW). This enabled targeted households to build their productive assets through increased income and access to savings whilst ensuring gains in resilience were not retrenched upon during the lean season. This project also focused on improving agriculture production through the distribution of small ruminants, providing a source of income and building household assets to increase resilience to recurrent shocks.

Achievements

A summary of the achievements under this grant are detailed below.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MARKET SYSTEMS

During the period of this grant, in the economic recovery and market systems sector, vulnerable communities were supported to establish VSLAs. This was a means of formalising traditional saving and lending schemes, *tontines*, in order to increase accountability and empowerment amongst group members while strengthening their leadership and governance skills. During the grant period, we planned to establish 15 VSLAs with a total of 375 members. However, the project had a much wider impact through the contagious effect of positive results of created VSLAs at a village level. By the end of May 2014, a total of 80 VSLAs with a total of 1760 members were functioning with support from project trained village agents.

Under this sector, a total of 700 very vulnerable households benefited from CFW activities for a period of 3 months to help them meet their immediate needs while fostering their capacity for recovery and resilience. CFW activities focused on land recuperation and water wall digging that provided opportunities for gardening activities. Another activity that was very beneficial was pond weeding that consisted of the removal of invasive grasses from water ponds. 12 ponds were cleared and used afterwards for agriculture purposes. A total of 15 hectares of land was recuperated through CFW activities in addition to 7 water walls that were created.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The main objective under this sector was to improve access, availability and utilization of food and to reduce communities' vulnerability to disaster. GOAL supported 1,000 households to rebuild their livestock capacity. This strengthened capacity of the most vulnerable households to resist recurrent shocks and disasters that have marred the region for a decade. 800 very vulnerable households received a kit that included 4 small ruminants (goats); 3 females and one male each. In addition to this, animal health monitoring, in collaboration with Government technical services, was strengthened in order to reduce post distribution losses of animals due to illness. Building on lessons learnt through previous programming GOAL used animal fairs to distribute the goats, allowing beneficiaries to select the animal of their choice. The animals were carefully vaccinated and dewormed. At the end of the project, only 2% of goats were reported by beneficiaries as dead/sold/eaten.

Constraints:

Delay in program start

One of the major constraints faced was the registered delay in starting implementation. While the project was planned to start from May 1st 2013 it did not start until July 2013. The delay was caused by a change in the country management and staffing challenges. This delay was communicated to OFDA in the application for a No Cost Extension on the 20th December 2014.



Staffing

Maintaining the program with sufficient and appropriately skilled staff remained a challenge during the implementation period. The job market in Niger is very small and capable staff are scarce which creates issues in retaining staff. The delay in recruiting a Food Security and Livelihood Coordinator affected the start of the program and during the implementation phase, two staff that were working on Microfinance and Agriculture resigned to join government institutions which also affected planning. However, gaps were filled relatively quickly and the effect on programming was minimised.

Adjustments

This delay resulted in the request for a No Cost Extension, granted by OFDA on the 15th January 2014, and extending the project end date from 31st January 2014 to 28th February 2014. However, this delay did not affect program outputs and outcomes and all planned interventions were successfully implemented.

Beneficiary Overview

Breakdown of Beneficiaries by Objective

Sector	Beneficiaries Targeted	Beneficiaries Reached by Grant End
Economic recovery and Market systems	1075 ¹	1075 ²
Agriculture and Food Security	1000 ³	800
Total	2075	1875

During the implementation, beneficiaries 1075 were reached. The total number of VSLAs increased from the original planned 15 groups, to a total of 78 groups (including the 15 planned VSLA). Following the establishment of VSLA's under this project, additional women in target villages were informed of the benefits of VSLA's by their peers and through Village Agents. GOAL facilitated these through trained and skilled village agents that worked with the intended 15 VSLAs. As a result, spontaneous groups were formed by women identifying the benefits of the planned VSLAs. Of these 63 groups were spontaneously formed within the target villages. GOAL staff in collaboration with Village Agents are continuously monitoring and supporting newly created VSLAs. It is planned that the Village Agents will continue working with these new VSLAs.

Cost Effectiveness

Analysis of the financial report against the planned budget shows that all activities were implemented and there was no variance against the objectives. All procurement was handled in line with GOAL's procurement policies in order to ensure that items purchased were of the best available value and quality.

Assessments and Surveillance

Throughout the grant, regular monitoring and evaluation activities were undertaken in order to enable on-going assessment of project indicators and progress and evaluate how GOAL's activities can be improved to enhance results. The data stemming from these tools, outlined in the table below, has been used throughout this report to measure results.

¹ This includes 375 for VSLAs and 700 for CFW Activities

² When additional VSLA's that developed as a result of the project are included this figure stands at to 2460

³ The 1000 beneficiaries includes 800 household that directly received goats and 200 households that were targeted through goats revolving schemes traditionally known as "Habanaye"



Assessments and Surveillance Undertaken

Tool:	Location:	Comment:
Overall programme surveillance		
Livelihoods and Food Security		
LLH Framework	Zinder	With the assistance of the GOAL M&E Advisor, a comprehensive set of tools and framework has now been developed to support LLH programme including agricultural production, income generating activities. Tools are now being used and rolled out over the Niger programmes, following staff orientations on them.
LLH Monitoring	Zinder	Information concerning LLH activities, including technical support, inputs, training and stakeholder meetings is compiled on a monthly basis at the field level and submitted to Niamey.
Livestock Monitoring Framework	Zinder	As livestock distribution was a major part of this grant, an animal health monitoring protocol was developed to reduce losses and risks of diseases. The animal health specialist in collaboration with government technical services staff put in place a weekly reporting system that collect information from the villages, and send them to the commune and department The last person to receive information inform GOAL animal health specialist. A weekly animal health status report was weekly sent to GOAL by technical services.
Post CFW distribution	Zinder	This was used to assess the impact of CFW activities and determine what CFW payments were used for.



Summary of Beneficiary achieved

SECTOR 1: Economic Recovery and Market Systems

SUB-SECTOR 1: Micro-finance

Indicator 1: Number of people, by sex, or MSEs newly receiving financial services or continuing to receive financial services due to USAID/OFDA support.	Cumulative progress to date: 375	Target for the life of the project: 375	% of progress towards target: 100%
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Notes: The project targeted 375 women, and through the positive effects of VSLAs at a community level, 65 additional new groups were created through the facilitation of Village agents, as these were formed spontaneously their members are not included here under the direct beneficiaries.

Indicator 2: Percentage of financial service accounts/ groups supported by USAID/OFDA that are functioning properly.	Cumulative progress to date: 100%	Target for life of project: 100%	% of progress towards target: 100%
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Notes: The project planned to establish 15 groups. All 15 VSLAs was established and from the VSLAs monthly update reports, all 15 VSLAs are functioning properly. They meet every week with regular 100% of attendance, contribute weekly savings according to their saving scheme, properly fill VSLA documentation and are lending internally.

Indicator 3: Total USD amount channelled into the program area through sub-sector activities	Cumulative progress to date: 23,800	Target for life of project: 23,800	% of progress towards target: 100%
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Notes: The above mentioned amount is calculated based on all payments made to communities and service providers in the Zinder region under this sector this quarter. These include suppliers, service providers, beneficiaries' allowances through trainings, etc.

Brief Sector Narrative:

1. Microfinance

The establishment of VSLAs during the period of this intervention was aiming at increasing household income through saving and lend schemes. The project successfully facilitated establishment of the 15 VSLAs that were planned and successes from the VSLAs led other community members establish additional VSLAs. By the end of the project a total of 78 groups, of which 63 groups were spontaneously formed, are being facilitated by Village agents trained by GOAL. GOAL also worked closely with a local



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Existing organisation AFV⁴ experienced in VSLAs in order to continue to provide support to the monitoring of performance among created VSLAs using a VSLA Management Information System. GOAL staff were trained in the VSLA methodology and will continue to facilitate this intervention in the area of operation.

The table below summarizes VSLA Performance Ratio

	Member satisfaction	Ratio	Comments
R1	Attendance rate	100%	The percentage represents the attendance rate during weekly meetings for all groups.
R1	Retention rate	100%	This is the number of members who joined and are still in the groups
R1	Membership growth rate	420%	From 375 women that were initially targeted, now the project is facilitating 1950 women from 78 VSLAs, 63 of which were created spontaneously.
R1	Increase in group rate	420%	63 groups were spontaneously formed and are being facilitated by Village agents
R2	Financial performance		
R2	Average saving per member mobilized to date (\$)	5.3	Total of \$10,350 (this include spontaneously formed groups)
R2	Average saving per member mobilized to date (CFA)	2600	Total of 5,071,500 CFA savings (as above)
R2	Annualized return on savings	15%	This is calculated based on projection of savings and internal lending interest rates for all groups.
R2	Average outstanding Loan Size (\$)	\$5	This is the average loan out as of 31 of December across all groups
R2	Average outstanding Loan Size (CFA)	2500	
	Operating Efficiency		
R3	% of members with loans outstanding	65%	
R3	Loan Fund utilization rate	78%	

- A total of 300 women are now engaged in income-generation activities as a result of their participation in VSLA groups across the three departments. This is 80% of women that were under the VSLA aspect of the programme.
- With the aid of a newly developed Income Generation Activity Monthly monitoring form, GOAL's field agents have been undertaking follow-up activities to ensure that VSLA graduates are utilising the grant they were given at graduation.
- Women have progressed and have established businesses. Some common activities for VSLA members involved include farming, establishing small scale peanut oil processing, small scale bakeries, petty trading, etc.
- Ongoing support in business management training and accountability was provided to VSLA members and this helped to improve their business management skills.

⁴ AFV: Association en Faveur des Vulnérable



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- VSLAs satisfaction monitoring reports that are produced by Village agents on a monthly basis show that women can now contribute to the socio-economic development which decreases their dependence on their husband for every household needs.
- The leadership skills of women have increased tremendously to the point where women have now started getting involved in community conflicts resolution; something that was traditionally done by men.
- Continued follow-up with VSLA groups will be conducted by GOAL from May 2014 using a newly developed tool to collect results which will be gathered in a database to analyse progress in all the groups. Current feedback from VSLAs who are utilising their economic assets is that they wish to maximise their incomes by establishing group managed businesses in preference to individuals ones.
- Illiterate women expressed an interest in attending literacy schools and this will now be integrated in village planning. VSLA field agents alongside GOAL staff are facilitating advocacy in order to find a means to help these women to achieve their goals
- VSLA's have also proved to be a useful forum for women to discuss other issues. One example is of a VSLA in Dogo commune which encouraged a woman to re-enrol her 3 kids in school.
- Men also noticed the change in household economy caused by women joining VSLAs. In response men began establishing their own VSLAs and by the end of the program they had organised a total of 4 independent VSLAs learning from their wives, and with the facilitation of Village agents

SUB-SECTOR 2: Temporary Employment

<p>Indicator 1: Number of people employed through CFW activities, disaggregated by sex;</p>	<p>Cumulative progress to date: Males: 450 Females: 250</p>	<p>Target for the life of the project: Males: 450 Females: 250</p>	<p>% of progress towards target: 100%</p>
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Notes: The total number of 700 CFW beneficiaries was achieved. Assets developed through CFW such as ponds and water walls are being used by community members. A joint visit to all CFW sites was organized with GOAL staff, technical services from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. The assets created (water walls and cleaned ponds) were handed over to community leaders and beneficiaries for further use and development. During this intervention GOAL conducted a post CFW post distribution assessment to assess how the money received was used by beneficiaries. Findings showed that 89% of the money received was used to cover day to day needs including, health service fees (6.5%), payment of debts (12%), education fees and material for children (5%), buying clothes (3%) and buying food mainly cereals and beans (62.5%). The remaining percentage was used to start small income generating activities, buying small animals like chicken and goats. A total of 32 women reported starting small scale businesses using CFW benefits that will continue to help them increase their income. The main income generating activity that was selected by most women (25) was to sell locally made cakes and bread; others are locally processing peanut oil and sell it.



Indicator 2: Average total USD amount per person earned through CFW activities;	Cumulative progress to date: 108	Target for the life of the project: 108	% of progress towards target: 100%
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Notes: The total amount of money per person is calculated at \$2.7 per day for 40 days which is equivalent to \$108. The total payment was made during this grant period.

Indicator 3: Total USD amount channelled into the program area through sub-sector activities	Cumulative progress to date: 105,060	Target for life of project: 105,060	% of progress towards target: 100%
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Notes: The amount mentioned above is calculated based on all payments made to communities and service providers in the Zinder region under this sector. These include, suppliers, service providers, beneficiaries through cash for work activities, etc.

2. Temporary Employment

A total number of 700 beneficiaries were employed through cash for work activities. Payments, type of activities and number of beneficiaries are summarized in the table below.

DEPARTEMENT	Activities	SITES	PARTICIPANTS			Amount per day	days	Total amount
			men	women	Total			
D.T. KAYA	Cleaning of ponds	Kol-kol	38	93	131	1,300	40	6,812,000
	Cleaning of ponds	Rahin Malam	105	74	179	1,300	40	9,308,000
MIRRIAH	Dredging	Garaké	90	39	129	1,300	40	6,708,000
	Cleaning of ponds	Labdo Maidoki	107	42	149	1,300	40	7,748,000
TAKEITA	Cleaning of ponds	Kantame	110	2	112	1,300	40	5,824,000
Total			450	250	700	1,300	40	36,400,000



By the end of the program, various results were achieved under the temporary employment sub sector

- There were increased opportunities for beneficiaries to practice gardening activities due to cleaned ponds and water walls.
- Village leaders reported a decrease in the number of men who migrated to Nigeria and other places during CFW activities. This helped farming activities and increased levels of production at household levels
- Monitoring reports gathered information around improved diet for beneficiary households and women reported that through gardening activities, they were able to change the diet for their children and improved their nutrition status
- The post CFW distribution monitoring showed that children were able to get school material and return to schools due to CFW remuneration
- The post CFW distribution assessment showed that where possible, the number of women in such activities should be increased to ensure the effective use of payments for households. Where men were engaged, the rates of covering household needs was lower compared to those where women were responsible and getting payments. For example, one man reported to have bought clothes for children and wife before buying for food. While women most importantly was covering the needs of food and plan for other expenses. GOAL also learnt that there is a need to increase awareness raising before CFW about other opportunities existing in the area for generating more income.

SECTOR 2. Agriculture and Food Security

SUB-SECTOR 1 Livestock

Indicator 1:	Cumulative progress to date:	Target for life of project:	% of progress towards target:
Number of animals treated from or affected by livestock activities	3080	3200	98%

Notes: All the planned goats were purchased and distributed through animal fairs. During the project all animals received additional health monitoring visits. GOAL organized a training of 88 community veterinary volunteers, or Para-vets, (2 from each village) and these are responsible for monitoring animal health on a weekly basis in collaboration with the veterinary officer at commune level. The *Habanaye* system is yet to start as the goats have not yet reproduced. During this quarter, approximately 80% of goats were gestating, therefore within a few months they will reproduce and the additional 200 beneficiaries targeted (through *Habanaye*) will be reached. During this quarter, 120 goats were reported dead/sold and technical services continue to investigate the cause of death and will continue to monitor this in order to limit the risk of disease outbreak.



Indicator 2: Number of people benefiting from livestock activities, by sex;	Cumulative progress to date: Women: 800 Men: 0	Target for life of project: Women: 1000 Men: 0	% of progress towards target: Women: 80% Men: 0
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Notes: During the project period, a total of 800 women were reached by this intervention under livestock sub sector. The 1st category of 800 was reached through direct target, and the remaining 200 will be reached through the *Habanaye* system as and when goats reproduce. GOAL in collaboration with government technical services established a strong *habanaye* monitoring system that will allow for continued distribution after project is finished. Beneficiaries receiving the second generation of goats were identified and lists were handed over to local and traditional leaders for monitoring purposes. Meetings were organised in each village to raise awareness of the importance of *habanaye* and beneficiaries committed to not break the cycle of passing on goats to others.

Indicator 3: Number of veterinary interventions (e.g., treatments, vaccinations, etc.);	Cumulative progress to date: 6400	Target for life of project: 6400	% of progress towards target: Treatment: 100% Vaccination: 100%
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Notes: GOAL, using OFDA funding, ensured all animals distributed were vaccinated and dewormed just after distribution. This activity was mainly implemented by technical services which GOAL facilitated to reach communities. The Government contributed to this intervention by bringing vaccines and providing full time technical staff that worked with beneficiaries for a period of 6 months following distribution to ensure effective monitoring of their livestock. In addition to vaccination, all animals distributed were dewormed and tagged by technical services. The tagging exercise helps in recording and monitoring the reproduction cycle. Each goat is given a number and the same number will be given to the kids for identification purposes.

Indicator 4: Number of animals treated.	Cumulative progress to date: Treatment: 3088 Vaccination: 3088	Target for life of project: Treatment: 3200 Vaccination: 3200	% of progress towards target: Treatment: 98% Vaccination: 98%
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Notes: During this year, a total of 98% of the total goats distributed were treated for infectious diseases. De-worming of the same percentage of goats was also successfully conducted. Of the 3,200 distributed, only 120 goats were reported dead at the end of the project. This was considered a significant success by technical services when results were compared to livestock attrition rates in other areas. The success results from a number of factors: the selection of animals was rigorously conducted to ensure all goats conformed to minimum specifications and standards, the animal fares were organised to take into consideration travel distances that animals would make following distribution, and ensuring consistent post distribution monitoring. Prior to distribution GOAL had signed an MoU with government technical services that clearly detailed roles and responsibilities for each party. Considering the limited number of private veterinary service providers in the targeted department, GOAL facilitated the training of animal health volunteers that will continue to act as 1st aid facilitators and inform the commune's veterinary officer of more complicated cases.



Sector Narrative:

The OFDA funded program focused on strengthening animal health systems and monitoring the *Habanaye* system. Training of 88 animal health volunteers on basic animal health care was conducted. This facilitated all animals to be treated for infectious diseases and de-wormed.

1 Training of beneficiaries in associative life

This training was aiming at helping women beneficiaries to know their rights, increase their knowledge of existing socio-economic opportunities within their villages and raising gender awareness. A total of 400 women beneficiaries received this training. The training also discussed the importance of the *Habanaye* system and how this should be conducted. Another theme covered was conflict management in order to facilitate understanding of how to resolve and minimize issues among association members.

2 Training in basic animal health management

After the distribution of goats a series of training to empower beneficiaries in how to handle animal health issues was conducted. A total of 200 women were provided with a training of trainers. Topics covered include: animal fodder management, main goat diseases and how to handle them and general animal handling techniques. These trainings helped to reduce the number of losses post distribution through enabling beneficiaries to detect various diseases and reach existing structures to find treatment.

3 Strengthening community animal health system

During the implementation of this grant, GOAL facilitated the training of community animal health volunteers. This community based structure is planned by the Ministry of Livestock but was not yet existing in the area of operation. It was agreed with the government that to ensure distributed animals have access to regular health intervention services, that an intensive training would be provided to 88 animal health volunteers who will continue to monitor these animals. To facilitate the trained volunteers in assisting the community, veterinary kits were provided through GOAL funding to each village benefiting from goat distribution.⁵ This kit is managed by the trained animal health volunteers however for complicated cases, volunteers communicate with the commune veterinary office or private service providers existing in the area, though the latter are limited in number.

4 Strengthening collaboration with Government institutions.

This has been a particular success under this grant and contributed significantly to the implementation of activities. Government technical services were fully involved in facilitating trainings that were provided to beneficiaries including animal handling and management, fodder management, animal health basics and in providing other technical inputs such as vaccination, deworming, ear-tagging, etc. This collaboration increased ownership of the project and facilitated a smooth phase out of GOAL staff ensuring continued support of beneficiaries.

5 Collaboration with Private sector

During the life of this intervention, GOAL collaborated with KOKARI, a local microfinance institution that facilitated payment of goat traders. Due to the voucher system that was used to distribute goats, it was agreed with KOKARI that they will be paying traders when each animal fare ended and claim reimbursements to GOAL by the end of the activity. This helped both GOAL and traders to reduce risk of cash handling.

⁵ Funding for Veterinary kits did not come from OFDA funding and were funded directly by GOAL



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Financial Issues:

No financial issues indicated.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Collaboration with private sector is important and under this grant GOAL worked with Microfinance institutions to facilitate all money transactions. This includes payment for beneficiaries during CFW activities and payment of goat traders after animal fares. This greatly reduced human resources allocations and the risks of cash handling involved in making these payments. The selection of an appropriate service provider was crucial in this.

Additional lessons were learnt on how the program worked with government institutions and technical services. It is paramount to involve the existing government structures (technical teams) in all phases of the program from development to evaluation. This partnership helps ensure project sustainability and the smooth phase out of GOAL from the intervention. The Government developed plans to continue provide support to beneficiaries in various domains such as animal health care, agriculture extensions and training.

A large percentage of the targeted project population were illiterate. In light of this GOAL adopted a methodology using "Pagi Volts;" a box of images that allows illiterate people to learn through pictures. This methodology was used in all trainings and proved to be efficient.