



INTEGRATED STIMULUS PACKAGE TO IMPROVE RESILIENCE (INSPIRE)

Fourth QUARTER REPORT (July 2014- September 2014)

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Finished Cash for Work local bridge in Juoljok August 2014

Overview of Implementation Period

During the implementation period, there was relative peace in Abyei Administrative Area (AAA), while the security situation in Unity State continued to be fragile and unpredictable. Waves of panic spread over a wide area of Unity State after IGAD peace monitors were detained, resulting in death of one the members in Mayom. Furthermore, shooting of a UNMISS helicopter in Bentiu resulted in death of all crew members. Humanitarian activities were greatly affected by these events within Unity State. Furthermore, fighting erupting around Bentiu town forced the population that had returned from POCs to flee their homes yet once again, causing a new displacement and consequently loss of livelihoods.

Late breaking update: MC conducts periodic market-based price assessments in locations where we operate. In a November 4, 2014 market price assessment in AAA under INSPIRE, food and a few non-food-item prices surveyed were found to have increased by 95% compared to one month ago (see annexed data). Key take away points from the assessment were:

- According to the seasonal calendar, prices should be reducing by this time of the year.
- A major cause of rising prices is that there are more restrictions on smuggling of goods from Sudan. Traders from Sudan who used to smuggle in goods through Aweil and Wara Wara in NBeG have stopped.
- High fuel crisis coupled with bad road conditions from Juba have resulted in limited flow of products into the area.
- Although no major incidents of criminality have been reported as yet, the situation can only get worse without trade goods from Sudan and Juba.

In addition to insecurity and disruption to markets, both Unity State and AAA experienced heavy rainfall during the reporting period. The rainy season caused significant floods in most parts of Unity State and Abyei Administrative Area and further affected the population's ability to farm, pursue other livelihood options, and gain access to basic services including markets and hospitals. Households in Mayom County in Unity State were forced to leave their homes while IDP camp living conditions became dire. IDP households found themselves in an extremely vulnerable position, and this led to increased pressure and demand from the affected population for humanitarian interventions in the sectors of WASH and NFIs. Moreover, the heavy rains had a significant negative impact on livelihoods and particularly subsistence agriculture in AAA, where certain households lost their crops due to flooding.

On the other hand, households in AAA who had planted more recently, in the previous quarter, benefited from the rainfall, and some already started harvesting in areas where the flooding did not cause excessive damage. Most households in Unity State were not able to actively engage in farming during the planting season, which will have a far-reaching impact for the upcoming year through an increased hunger gap and decreased household food security, as well as reduced income due to the inability to sell produce on the market. In addition, road infrastructure deterred accessibility to most of the areas during the reporting period, which also caused delays in program implementation.

The POC in Bentiu was completely flooded and water was as high as one meter. This led to even harsher and harrowing living conditions for the IDPS. INGO operations were severely hampered as major operations and service delivery were completely restricted owing to the flooding. Mercy Corps was affected by flood waters as 236 latrines collapsed in areas within the POC where Mercy Corps was

operational. Furthermore, huge logistics challenges arose as airstrips and runways were flooded, making transportation of critical WASH materials difficult. Despite these challenges Mercy Corps provided latrines, bathing areas and water in POC 1, which houses between 5,500-6,000 IDPs. Mercy Corps also responded to a new area with Bentiu POC, namely POC 6 and we have committed to drilling a bore hole and providing latrines and bathing areas for a further 6,000 IDPS who will be housed in POC 6.

For the INSPIRE program, especially in Abyei Area, Mercy Corps finalized much of the AFS and ERMS components that had been earmarked for the first year while planning for the second year. After the approval of the modification of the Program to include WASH and NFI distribution components, Mercy Corps re-launched the program by hiring new staff. Lifesaving activities have commenced in Abeimnom and Mayom among IDPs and households who returned to their homesteads.

Mercy Corps carried out cash-based activities, seeds and tool distributions, and VSLA activities in AAA under INSPIRE, and WASH, Logistics and NFI activities in Unity State during the period under review, as detailed in this report.

Sector 1: AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

1.1 IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION/FOOD SECURITY

1.1.1. Selection, Identification and Registration of 2,000 HHs in AAA and Unity State

Mercy Corps completed the identification, selection and registration of beneficiaries in the previous quarter for AAA. Insecurity prevented Mercy Corps staff from accessing Unity State to complete the same process. Until present, the INSPIRE team working together with village committees has identified a total of 1,286 beneficiaries.

1.1.2. Entrepreneurship support to thirty traders (20 seed vendors and 10 blacksmiths) in business growth and technical knowledge

Related to Activity 1.1.3, as previously reported, Mercy Corps worked with the farmers' unions to select blacksmiths from Warrap State for the provision of inputs and to receive business training. However, since the vendors who could be accessed were neither from Unity or AAA, Mercy Corps decided not to extend any financial support to them in the form of cash grants.

1.1.3. Re-constitution of agricultural assets (seeds and tools) for 1,500 households in Unity and AAA through Agro Seed Fairs and animal assets (goats) to 500 households in Unity and AAA

As reported in the previous quarter, beneficiary households from AAA received seeds and tools. During the period under review, input dealers in 1.1.2 returned vouchers to Mercy Corps and received the allocated sums for participating in the seed fair. Mercy Corps did not experience any challenges in finalizing the process.

1.1.4. Agronomy and agro-forestry training for 100 lead farmers in AAA and Unity State

This activity was finalized during the previous quarter with 50 lead farmers in AAA north and south of the river receiving training in agronomy and agro-forestry training.

1.1.5. Tree nursery and horticulture cash grants (co-investments) to 30 producers/groups (15 AAA, 15 Unity)

This activity has been temporary halted due to the modification to the grant. Mercy Corps intends to request for additional funds from OFDA to allow implementation of this activity.

Sector 2: ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MARKET SYSTEMS

2.1. TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

2.1.2. Cash Transfer for 500 most vulnerable households at US \$40 per household per month for four months in Unity State and AAA

Previously, Mercy Corps had finalized the third cash transfer for 250 households. During the period under review, the INSPIRE team conducted the fourth cash transfer for 250 households in AAA. This was the last transfer to this group of households who received a total amount of 512 SSP (160 USD) per household throughout the life of the project.

2.1.3. 1,500 households participate in 20 Cash for Work projects for a period of 4 months in AAA and Unity State (3-5 CfW projects will be started in February while monitoring of the markets continues)

During the period under review, Mercy Corps finalized two Cash for Work projects: 163 households received 550 SSP (172 USD) each after working for 22 days. In total, 786 households benefitted from 10 different Cash for Work projects. Households reported they used the salary earned to purchase staple food and non-food items at the peak of the hunger gap. Mercy Corps disbursed a total of 432,300 SSP (135,094 USD) for this activity, which contributed to reviving the local market through a significant cash injection.

2.2. LIVELIHOODS RESTORATION

2.2.1. 2-day business training modules for 80 businesses on 'Start and Improve Your Own Business' across the AAA and Unity State

During the period under review, Mercy Corps trained an additional 30 traders, mainly drawn from VSLA groups, on the following topics: marketing, stock control, procurement procedures, recording operating expenses, business planning, people and productivity, as well as pricing and costing. This has enabled traders to improve their business skills.

2.2.2. Entrepreneurship support to 30 traders for bulk procurement in AAA and Unity State

During the period under review, the INSPIRE team provided the first installment of grants to traders in AAA. This enabled beneficiary traders to purchase bulky required food items that usually become scarce within the catchment areas for vulnerable beneficiary households. Each trader received at least 4,500 SSP (1,406 USD) as a co-financing component. Verification will be conducted within the next quarter for the final installment to be disbursed.

2.2.3. Enable livelihoods skills development for thirty youth through apprenticeships

This activity was halted to free funds for life saving activities in the modification of the grant. Mercy Corps intends to request for more funds from OFDA to implement this activity in the second year of the program.

2.4. MICROFINANCE

2.4.1. Mobilize the formation of 60 VSLA groups of approximately 25 members each, in Unity State and the AAA

Within the reporting period, only six new groups have been mobilized in AAA as most of the locations became inaccessible and certain markets received a higher cash injection.

2.4.2. Provide initial 3-day training per group and VSLA materials

With the addition of the six groups mobilized in 2.4.1 above, a total of 29 VSLA groups were trained. This amounts to a total of 710 VSLA members trained from the beginning of the project up to present, out of which 521 members had been trained in the previous quarter. During the trainings, members came up with their own constitution, elected their leaders (Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary) and agreed on the shared value, loaning dynamics in relation to share capital, repayment, and social fund, which were all incorporated in the constitution. Mercy Corps provided the six groups who completed the training with VSLA materials, and all groups have commenced their savings for the first loan cycle. Provision of VSL materials will continue in the next reporting period.

2.4.3. Data collection and follow up

Data collection is a routine part of the VSLA team, where Mercy Corps staff members assist groups especially in their infancy in order to enable them to achieve stability and sustainability in the long term. Groups are visited to provide refresher training and to monitor their savings and loans on a regular basis. Furthermore, Mercy Corps supports older groups during share out of VSLA dividends earned in 2013 under the OFDA funded ECAP.

From the onset of the project, across the 29 new groups, 91,726 SSP (USD 26,884) have been saved and loaned among members with a net social fund of 1,960 SSP (USD 612).

Sector 3: WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

3.1.1 Rehabilitation of Water Sources and Access Points

Mercy Corps WASH team, together with the Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES) department for Abeimnom County in Unity State, conducted an assessment of water points and water yard in the county. A total of 15 boreholes were assessed and recommended for rehabilitation with one water yard. Mercy Corps has started the procurement of required parts and an MOU has been signed with the WES department to be part of the rehabilitation in order to build capacity through the implementation of this activity.

3.1.2 Treatment and distribution of surface water

With the approval of the new modification under INSPIRE incorporating lifesaving WASH activities, Mercy Corps has intensified the water supply within the POC in Bentiu, particularly to serve the increasing needs of POC 1 and POC 6. These two areas have a total of 5,500-6,500 IDPs, and we anticipate growing needs as the IDP population in POC 6 continues to expand

3.1.3 Distribution of point of use (POU) water treatment items and training of the beneficiaries on their use

During the period under review, Mercy Corps WASH team conducted training for village health teams and hygiene promoters in Abeimnom on the use of POU. Furthermore, Mercy Corps also conducted a general community sensitization campaign on the use of water guard. A total of 10 cartons of water guard were distributed to 240 households. Considering the large amounts of flood water, many households are currently using water from unsafe water points. The distribution helped reduce these practices and ensure safe water for targeted households. More sensitizations and distribution of POU will be conducted.

3.2.1 Construction and maintenance of 50 latrine blocks

Following the approval of the modification during the reporting period, Mercy Corps WASH team identified and selected locations for the construction of communal latrines among IDP settings in Agok and within Abeimnom in Unity State. Furthermore, procurement has been started for materials required for the construction of four latrines. Additionally, three latrine blocks in Majak Deng Kaya (MDK) camp hosting IDPs from Unity State were rehabilitated.

3.2.2 Equip each emergency trench latrine block with hand washing facilities

Although Mercy Corps has not finalized any latrine construction, following a hygiene campaign in MDK camp, the INSPIRE team installed hand washing buckets and stands at each of the latrines in the camp.

3.2.3 Create and operate waste disposal facilities

The Mercy Corps team, during the period under review, started the implementation waste disposal primarily within POC 1 in Bentiu. As a follow-up to previous activities that had been implemented

through IOM funding, Mercy Corps embarked on waste management activities. As such, the WASH team worked with hygiene promoters recruited to ensure all waste is collected. However, excessive flooding within the POCs has slowed the process.

3.3.1 Provision of at least three hygiene promotion sessions per month in each target community

Mercy Corps conducted a total of six hygiene promotion campaigns, namely: three campaigns in Abeimom County, two in Agok IDP camps (MDK and Magala) and one in Annet market. Key messages provided during these sessions included hand washing after using the latrine, proper disposal of feces, diseases associated with lack of hygiene and local hand cleaning practices. At the end of each campaign, in each of the camps and at the market, clean-up exercises were conducted to ensure community hygiene. In Abeimnom, hygiene kits, buckets, collapsible jerry cans and soap were also distributed. Mercy Corps' WASH team was unable to reach Mayom partly due to insecurity and inaccessible roads.

3.3.2 Regular distribution of hygiene items to 5,000 households

Related to activity 3.3.1, during the period under review, Mercy Corps' WASH team distributed assorted hygiene items including hygiene kits, soap, narrow-mouthed jerry cans, as detailed above. To achieve maximized impact, Mercy Corps linked the NFI distribution to hygiene campaigns.

3.3.3 Mobilize communities for WASH-related activities

As indicated under 3.3.1, Mercy Corps carried out cleaning exercises with IDPs in MDK and Magala camps during the period under review. Furthermore, in collaboration with other WASH partners, Mercy Corps facilitated the clean-up exercise in Annet market, which is used by IDPs. Community-led WASH activities will be intensified as more locations become accessible within the next reporting period.

Sector 4: LOGISTICS SUPPORT AND RELIEF COMMODITIES

4.1.1 Beneficiary Selection and Needs Verification

During the period under review, following the approval of the modification to include NFIs with the current grant, Mercy Corps collaborated with the Relief Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) in Abeimnom for the beneficiary selection and needs verification for the distribution of NFIs. Following this process, Mercy Corps will request for the first batch of NFIs from IOM.

4.1.2 Beneficiary registration

Related to 4.1.1 above, the Mercy Corps team, together with RRC in Abeimnom, started registration of crisis-affected households for the NFI distribution. This exercise is still ongoing.

4.1.3 Distribution of relief commodities

Mercy Corps renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IOM to access relief commodities from the CORE PIPELINE supply. Although no NFIs have been distributed yet, the INSPIRE

team has requested for the first batch of NFIs from IOM to be distributed in Abeimnom. Following activities 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, Mercy Corps will request and distribute additional NFIs.

4.1.4 Pre-positioning and Warehousing

Mercy Corps will use the warehouse in its Agok office for NFI storage. Furthermore, through RRC, a rub hall in Abeimnom has been identified as a potential location for pre-positioning within Abeimnom. Mercy Corps will seek additional warehouses in Mayom, if security allows, in order to ensure the storage of more relief items for distribution.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the period under review has been characterized by heavy rains and insecurity, which pose numerous challenges for program implementation, particularly in terms of logistical movement. Nevertheless, considerable progress was registered in Abyei Area. After receiving an approval modifying the current grant to include lifesaving WASH activities, Mercy Corps started implementation in Abeimnom. Moreover, Mercy Corps managed to finalize all Cash for Work and cash transfer activities with accompanying food security activities, while traders received cash grants in AAA. This allowed vulnerable households to obtain food and non-food items while markets remained vibrant to supply food basket items required to cope with the increased purchasing power. Mercy Corps implemented this activity at the peak of the hunger gap, when households had to rely on markets as they awaited harvest amidst the rainy season. Mercy Corps' new presence in WASH and NFI distributions has also created a new ray of hope among households in Abeimnom who have been greatly affected by the rainy season. Mayom County in Unity State has remained relatively insecure, thus to a great extent hard to reach. Within the POC camp in Bentiu, Mercy Corps has intensified its water provision and hygiene and sanitation activities and has committed to provide services for 10,000-12,000 IDPs within the Bentiu POC. Mercy Corps will focus on POC 1 and POC 6, which will be demarcated in the near future and expects an increase in population. Mercy Corps will embark on building latrines, bathing areas and providing water for this new area within Bentiu POC.

Mercy Corps continues to monitor the security situation across all implementation areas and assess IDPs who may need support outside Unity State, especially in Abyei Area. With the lifesaving and emergency components included in the grant, Mercy Corps has been in a position to include interventions that will curb the otherwise deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Annex

Market price collection sheet						
Items cost (retail prices) in units that most households. Provide some remarks (eg scarce, available, reduced etc.)						
	Item	Most Common Unit households purchase	Price of Most Unit NOW (SSP) 4th Nov 2014	Price of Most Unit A MONTH AGO (SSP) BASELINE	REMARK (eg readily available, scarce etc)	% Increase as of 4th Nov 2014
Food Items	sorghum	malwa	9	5	available	80%
	Maize	malwa	8	4	available	100%
	okra	bundle	2	1	available	100%
	sugar	malwa	40	30	scarce	33%
	salt	gramme	14	3	available	367%
	spices	pieces	4	2	available	100%
	cooking oil	Jerry can	600	200	scarce	200%
	onion	malwa	60	40	scarce	50%
	tea leaves	gramme	2	1	available	100%
	powdered milk	carton	800	650	scarce	23%
	meat	kg	15	15	available	0%
	rice	bag	200	150	scarce	33%
Non-Food Items	Fuel	litre	25	15	scarce	67%
	bar soap	carton	200	110	scarce	82%
AVERAGE						95%