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FY15 Q1 Report: October 1st-December 31st, 2014

Program: Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities in the Central Africa Republic through the Promotion of Intercommunity Dialogue and Economic Cooperation (SVC)

Submitted January 31, 2014



Community level awareness raising session Bimbo Youth Center

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A. Executive Summary

During the reporting period, the general political context in CAR was challenging, and included a number of high profile events. Preparation for the Forum of Bangui took center stage in the national news. The Forum, set to take place in mid-February, aims to facilitate reconciliation between warring factions, and in the short term, orient the government's policy in the lead up to the August elections.

The preparation for the Forum did not initially include consultation with local government representatives, religious leaders, or the civil society in the provinces. However, after much protest from the civil society, a consultation took place on December 20th, with the 16 ministers from their respective prefectures. Local level consultation will continue throughout the month of January. This level of consultation is a positive sign compared to the former national dialogue. Indeed, the Brazzaville dialogue held in July, was boycotted by several leaders of the civil society, who were against meeting outside of the country. The leaders also felt the action plan proposed by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) failed to take into consideration many important points, such as the disarmament of forces in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, the rehabilitation of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and the revival of the national economy.

Ahead of the Forum, the government has expressed their intent to close the IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) site at the M'Poko Airport, which could expose IDPs to risk and plunge neighborhoods into chaos.

Within this turbulent political situation, Mercy Corps is implementing a program whose goal is: **“to address the accelerating violence in CAR by providing mechanisms for peaceful resolution of inter-community conflicts together with longer-term activities to rebuild trust and cooperation between affected communities.”**

During this reporting period Mercy Corps has advanced on all three of its program objectives. In terms of the **first objective** of enhancing community leaders' capacity to resolve inter-community disputes, Mercy Corps has:

- Accompanied Peace Committees and community leaders to help them to apply their newly acquired Interest Based Negotiation skills in negotiating conflicts.
- Established four Student Peace Committees at University of Bangui.

Under the **second objective** of enabling Muslim and Christian communities to better work together, the project continued to support joint economic and social initiatives that benefit both Christian and Muslim communities. Mercy Corps has:

- Trained socioeconomic project group members on financial and budgeting skills.
- Finalized youth training guides and trained youth on life skills.
- Submitted 90 socioeconomic project proposals to the USAID AOR for approval.
- Reviewed the 90 projects for the Environment Impact and Mitigation Measures and submitted the completed environmental screening forms.
- Signed 52 contracts with projects holders.

Mercy Corps has also made significant strides in meeting its **third objective** of influencing public attitudes towards tolerance and non-violence. During this reporting period Mercy Corps has:

- Collected peace messages gathered during training sessions from over two hundred participants to develop peace messaging via radio and SMS.

- Conducted awareness-raising sessions with Intercommunity Peace Committees (IC-PC) and Community Leaders (CL) to promote peaceful conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue in their community.
- Continued meeting with the Network of Journalists for Human Rights (RJDH) to collect peace messages and success stories, and share them via the radio.
- Continued broadcasting peace messages on a daily basis through five partner radio stations.
- Received signed contracts and completed training on awareness raising techniques for all 200 Peer Educators (PE) including 100 women
- Supported the 200 Peer Educators in organizing 4,000 awareness sessions.
- Received support from a conflict mitigation consultant in the development of conflict mapping guides, youth training curriculum, and the design of community dialogue processes.
- Continued social cohesion working group coordination meetings in order to avoid duplication of activities and enhance coordination.

Security

Bangui

- During this reporting period, the security situation in Bangui and its surroundings was somewhat turbulent. Work in Bangui was disrupted during the first three weeks of October because of the 48-hour ultimatum given to the President by the Anti-Balaka Coordination for her to leave office. Given the high level of violence, Mercy Corps decided to close the office throughout the second week of October. The office was reopened during the third week, but very few national staff were able to return to work due to tensions in their neighborhoods and lack of available transportation.
- Carjackings of vehicles continue at an unprecedented rate, as well as other forms of criminality. Similarly, there has been an increased threat of attacks against expatriates, including an attempted kidnapping of an international humanitarian worker. Mercy Corps continues to adhere to stringent security procedures to protect all program staff.
- Frustrated by their continued confinement, the Ex-Séléka individuals in the Béal camp in Bangui vented their frustration. On November 13th and 14th, many camp residents openly carried arms outside of the camp, threatening to blow up the Prime Minister's office, Community Hospital, and an ammunition stockpile situated within their camp. Recent negotiations between the transitional government of CAR and the Ex-Séléka groups contained in the camp have helped to calm the situation, yet tensions and the risk of Ex-Séléka violence remain.

Bouar

- International forces have testified that Anti-Balaka armed groups have become active once more in the region. The theft of livestock by armed groups, presumed to be Anti-Balaka forces, is impacting small herding communities in rural areas surrounding Bouar. However, no incidents have impacted the progress of the project. Mercy Corps is following the situation closely to monitor developments and react accordingly.
- On the 21st of October a Mercy Corps vehicle was involved in a traffic accident, which sadly caused the fatality of a member of the local population. As a security measure and for fear of reprisal, Mercy Corps paused project activities for three days, including SVC, and used unmarked vehicles to travel.

B. Performance Summary

During this reporting period Mercy Corps hired a consultant to give support to the CAR peacebuilding and social cohesion programs. The consultant, who is a former Mercy Corps country director and conflict program specialist, spent two weeks in Bangui and provided necessary support to the SVC team to finalize the youth training curriculum, design a conflict mapping tool and guide them in its usage, as well as redesign the community dialogue process. Likewise, his work focused on conflict analysis and its impact on SVC program. During his visit, SVC staff also had the opportunity to strengthen their capacity in the Do No Harm approach.

Objective 1: Muslim and Christian community leaders have enhanced capacity to resolve inter-communal disputes peacefully.

Activity 1.1: Prepare training materials for negotiation and dispute resolution workshops:

Complete: IBN Training curriculum, as well as the PowerPoint presentation for Community Leaders and IC-PCs was completed during the last reporting period.

Activity 1.2: Select workshop participants:

30 students (13 women, 17 men) members of the student Peace Committee in Bangui were selected to attend the Interest Based Negotiation (IBN) workshop. The objective was to facilitate the return of Muslim students to the University and to rebuild trust between students of all faiths.

Activity 1.3: Train community leaders in dispute resolution and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes:

Mercy Corps organized a four day intensive training session on social cohesion and Interest Based Negotiation (IBN), conflict, and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes for 30 members of the student Peace Committee in Bangui.

Activity 1.4: Form Inter-Community Peace Committees (responsible for managing disputes in their areas):

During this period, Mercy Corps worked with the *Association National des Etudiants de Centrafrique* (ANECA) and the *Association des Etudiants Musulmans de Centrafrique* (AEMCA), two student organizations at University of Bangui, to put in place four student Peace Committees. These Peace Committees are comprised of 40 members each, including 15 young women. To date, 28 Peace Committees have been established by Mercy Corps in program areas including 24 Intercommunity Peace Committees and 4 student Peace Committees.

Objective 2: Muslim-Christian Communities are better able to work together.

Activity 2.1: Organize community forums to solicit joint inter-community economic and social projects:

Completed: 56 awareness raising sessions were organized by 200 PEs to provide information for community members on the date, time, and location of forums led by Community Leaders. The forums laid out the aims of the socio-economic projects, and detailed the criteria for project selection. 564 people attended these sessions (including 235 women).

In Bangui and Bouar, IC-PCs and Community Leaders, accompanied by Mercy Corps staff, held a total of 32 interfaith forums attended by both Muslim and Christian groups to discuss mutually beneficial socio-economic projects and security concerns. Around 1,245 people, including 564 women, participated in the forums. After detailing project selection criteria, discussion focused on ways Muslim and Christian groups can work together to submit joint projects that will mutually benefit both communities.



Assessment of socio-economic projects

Activity 2.2: Identify and assess social and economic projects:

During this period, Mercy Corps submitted two lists of socioeconomic projects to the USAID AOR, one list of 79 selected projects funded up to \$3,000 and the second list of 11 projects funded over \$3,000. 79 sub-grants have thus far been signed. Mercy Corps reviewed all projects for the Environment Impact and Mitigation Measures (EIMM) and submitted the completed environmental screening forms.

Before signing each contract, Mercy Corps required project holders to submit their activity and funding disbursement plan. Mercy Corps has now received their request for the payment of the first funding installment. In Bouar, the contracts for the remaining 18 socioeconomic projects will be signed in January. The 20 remaining contracts are currently pending approval by the USAID Bureau Environmental Officer.

As the aim of socioeconomic projects is to bring together Muslim and Christians from divided communities, the number of projects by religion is as follows:

- 54 socioeconomic projects will bring together Muslims and Christians during their implementation to demonstrate the value of mutual cooperation.
- 20 projects submitted by Christians will involve Muslims, while 5 projects submitted by Muslims will involve Christians.
- 29 projects were submitted by exclusively Christian groups, 5 by exclusively Muslim groups, and 1 project was submitted a group that preferred to remain undeclared.

Activity 2.3: Identify and mobilize community members with financial, technical, vocational or business skills training to support economic and social projects:

In Bouar, Mercy Corps trained 40 members (including 26 women) of the selected socioeconomic project groups. The members were trained over a two-day period (6th-7th November) on the necessary financial and business skills for the management of their projects. Mercy Corps is also supporting these group members by organizing technical and vocational training opportunities (traineeships) with other skilled community members. These training opportunities will begin when project holders start their projects to ensure that they have the skills and technical knowledge to effectively carry out their

initiatives. These traineeships aim to develop inter-community relationships throughout the implementation of the socio-economic projects.

Objective 3: Public attitudes towards tolerance and non-violence are positively changed.

Activity 3.1: Peace Committees organize community dialogues on peacebuilding and intercommunity relations:

During this period, the 200 PE (150 in Bangui and 50 in Bouar including 100 women) signed MoUs. Peer Educators are responsible for working directly with their respective communities on a weekly basis to organize activities in support of peace. Activities include weekly educational sessions on conflict mitigation, radio talk shows, and intercommunity dialogue.

In order to reinforce PEs' capacity on conflict mitigation and intercommunity dialogue, Mercy Corps finalized the *Community Awareness Raising Guide* (see Appendix 4), which includes modules that each PE will use to raise awareness and educate community members. This guide contains eight training modules: social cohesion, peace building/conflict, human rights, democracy, good governance, corruption, relationship building, and Central African citizenship. During October 2014, Mercy Corps trained the 200 Peer Educators for three days in each location. The training focused on two aspects:

1. *Building skills for Peer Educators on how to organize community awareness-raising sessions:* this component of the training presented the objectives, activities, beneficiaries and stakeholders, areas of intervention of the project. The training also outlined Peer Educators' roles and responsibilities, the participatory education approach, awareness-raising session tools, materials and methodology, and the preparation of community education and awareness sessions.
2. *How to use the Community Awareness Raising Guide with the aim to rebuilding trust and confidence:* This training focused on:
 - Reinforcing social cohesion
 - Building working relationships between communities and their members
 - Definitions of conflict, how to avoid conflict, conflict as an opportunity for dialogue
 - Human rights in general, with focus on those recognized by the constitution of CAR such as freedom of movement, physical integrity, freedom of religious identity, etc.
 - Discrimination against minorities, minority rights, and protection for minorities
 - Notions of Central African citizenship
 - Domestic and community violence
 - Peace-building and democracy
 - Community participation, good governance, corruption etc.

Each module ends with ideas of concrete action community members could take to reinforce collaboration and cooperation among community members across dividing lines.

At the end of the training, Mercy Corps provided a copy of *Community Awareness Raising Guide* to each of the 200 Peer Educators to help organize and track activities and educate their communities on the modules listed above. Mercy Corps also provided a report template that each PE will submit at the end of each month. This report includes information on activities realized, constraints, and next steps.

After the training, Peer Educators began their work by organizing group discussions and household visits to collect peace messages to be broadcasted through SMS and radio (see Activity 3.3 below).

Community Awareness raising sessions by Peer Educators: In order to increase the impact and reach of Peer Educators’ community awareness raising activities, Mercy Corps has requested they organize awareness raising sessions for groups of 50 community members on a biweekly basis. Following this methodology, the 200 PEs in Bangui and Bouar organized 4,000 awareness and education sessions with the aim to alter beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as a basis for preventing violence and reinforcing community cohesion. The sessions reached 36,141 people, including 18,982 women. The sessions focused on: social cohesion, fostering peaceful relationships, governance, human rights, corruption, democracy, rights of minorities, freedom of movement, right to physical integrity, CAR citizenship, all of which form part of the modules in the Peer Educators *Community Awareness Raising Guide*.

Table 1: Community members’ participation in Community Awareness sessions organized by PE

Locality	Number of PE			Number of Sessions	Number of Participants		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
1st Arrondissement	7	3	10	200	1,061	956	2,017
2nd Arrondissement	7	3	10	200	1,133	723	1,856
5th Arrondissement	17	23	40	800	4,850	4,413	9,263
8th Arrondissement	18	22	40	800	3,338	2 958	6 296
Bimbo	12	13	25	500	288	396	684
Bégoua	14	11	25	500	3 068	2,903	5,971
Bouar	25	25	50	1,000	3,421	6,633	10,054
TOTAL	100	100	200	4,000	17,159	18,982	36,141

Due the improvement of the security situation, Bouar had the highest rate of community member participation (10,054) of all program areas. Likewise, this chart shows that Bouar PEs mobilized more women than other program areas, no doubt because of the same reason. Following the same logic, Bimbo PEs mobilized fewer people, as the security situation remains tenuous. Bimbo is followed by the 5th arrondissement of Bangui and Bégoua where PEs implemented activities in daylight to motivate community participation. Finally, in the 1st and 2nd arrondissements, the low number is due to the fact that the program has relatively fewer PEs in these areas, as they are less affected by conflicts.

Community members welcomed the awareness-raising sessions attests Isabelle Nguirembo, a citizen in Bimbo, “*This is the first time for me to really know what social cohesion is and to realize that my attitude in my community toward others can impact community cohesion, positively or negatively.*” It should be mentioned that most PEs targeted and educated Anti-Balaka group members. Many anti-balaka groups have understood the importance of peace and are willing to cut ties to the group but still request program support to have alternatives to violence.

On December 4th, three Peer Educators (two men and one woman) organized a community awareness-raising session at Bimbo Youth Center. This event welcomed SVC program staff and representatives from the US Embassy, USAID, and Mercy Corps. Local authorities such as the Prefect of Ombella Mpoko, Mayor Representatives, and General Secretary of the prefecture were also present. The event mobilized around 108 community members, including 46 women, and focused on social cohesion among and between communities, existing gaps in the community, and actions to be taken to overcome those gaps. Discussions also focused on the attitudes toward social cohesion and what specific actions communities can take to foster social cohesion in the future.



Member of the Anti-Balaka militia stating his intention to quit the group

During these awareness raising sessions, Syrius Lobaye, a leader of a Anti-Balaka group comprised of 52 youth, cut his ties to this group. He said, *“I’ve been involved in with the Anti-Balaka, thinking that this it was the only way to earn a living. Now realize that I was wrong so I decided from now to quit the group”*. He also promised to support Peace Committee members and Peer Educators’ effort to persuade former group members to also quit the group (see Appendix 3—Beneficiary stories).

Many community members spoke in favor of the benefits of social cohesion and welcomed the activity. For example, Denise Madima Duekue, Prefect of the Ombella Mpoko Prefecture, said *“We are happy to be here and welcome this kind of activity from Mercy Corps. Extreme poverty is one of the roots causes of conflict in our area. Sensitizing our community on social cohesion reinforces collaboration and facilitates our work...”* She thanked Mercy Corps and USAID for the support in rebuilding confidence and trust between communities.



The Prefect of Ombella M’poko during an awareness raising session



Sister Anna Maria gives a speech on the lack of youth opportunities and its impact on community violence.

Sister Anna Maria Franco Dasilva, a religious leader of *Association Soeurs Filles du Sacré Coeur de Jesus* in Bimbo, gave a speech on lack of youth education and employment. She encouraged Mercy Corps to continue awareness raising activities to all community members, but also spoke encouraged more youth initiatives

During this activity, USAID and US Embassy representatives had the opportunity to discuss with community leaders and Peace Committee members as well as with socio-economic project holders on their work with Mercy Corps, in terms of benefits, challenges, and perspectives.

In conclusion of these conversations, Mercy Corps was congratulated by USAID representatives, community members, and local authorities who perceive this event as an opportunity to build lasting community impact.

As Mercy Corps is the only INGO having peer educators, this program component is having a great impact on rebuilding community cohesion and reinforcing trust and confident between people from divided communities.



USAID and Mercy Corps representatives with Peace Committee members and project holders

Conducting community dialogue: Mercy Corps re-advertised the scope of work for a consultant to work on inter-community dialogues. This consultant was responsible for developing the community dialogue guide which has been used by Mercy Corps to organize community dialogues.

Youth social cohesion club training: Mercy Corps finalized youth training guides and trained 60 youth representatives (including 30 women) of 60 youth organizations in Bangui during three days. Youth have been selected from local schools and the wider communities. The training focused on life skills, such as, public speaking, relationship building, dispute resolution and peace building, leadership, youth employment—job research, interview preparation, self-esteem etc., good governance, human rights, democracy, social cohesion, and how to work together and mobilize as youth. The training also informed participants on how to organize youth awareness raising activities within the community. This part focused on:

- Writing awareness raising/ educational messages (where, who, objectives, kind of materials to be used etc.)
- Sports to reinforce youth cohesion and rebuild trust and confidence among youth
- Use of posters as outreach tools

- Use of theater as an outreach tool (how, when, where, who etc.)
- Question/Answer game (what kind of question to ask during outreach sessions etc.)
- Organizing conferences on specific topics

During these three days, youth exchanged their experiences and practiced some of the topic activities together. This training was an opportunity for youth to better understand their role in promoting peace in their community. It also enabled young people to better understand their roles in their community and it urged them to promote social cohesion.

During this participatory youth training, some youth leaders gave their impressions. Melchiade Bounkalo said, *“Thanks to Mercy Corps and USAID for this training. Training youth in peace and social cohesion is an arm for peace that is bigger than a bomb. We are now aware of our role in the community and will be responsible for it, from here on out...”*

The trained youth will in turn inform and educate their peers within their specific organizations and perform a similar role as Peer Educators, but specifically working youth to youth. These groups will later organize awareness sessions for the community at large. They will also be responsible for coming up with their own economic and social activities (sports, movies clubs, chess clubs, drama groups, community radio messaging). Mercy Corps will train the remaining 40 youth in Bouar during the next quarter.

Activity 3.2: Peace Committees work to resolve disputes in their communities: During this period, Mercy Corps developed the conflict log for use by Community Leaders and Peace Committee members when they worked and/or resolved conflict (see Appendixes 1 and 2). This log includes information on the type of conflict, the parties, reasons for the conflict, location, and any eventual agreement negotiated.

Resolving disputes in the communities: During this reporting period, Mercy Corps staff met twice a month with Intercommunity Peace Committee members (IC-PC) in Bouar and Bangui to identify conflicts to be negotiated in the upcoming weeks within their communities and then to discuss challenges and lessons learned after those conflicts are negotiated. Due to the diversity of conflicts, Mercy Corps regularly provided support to improve conflict negotiation. The conflict log allowed Peace Committee members to be proactive when conflicts occurred. This practice will serve as a method of early warning system for future conflicts.

During this period, IC-PC in Bouar and Bangui, with the support of Mercy Corps staff, applied their newly acquired IBN skills. These Peace Committee leaders worked with community members to resolve three types of conflict: family issues, interpersonal, and community (religion/ethnic groups). During the next quarter, Mercy Corps will focus on negotiations and leaders will detail disputes in the log that will be submitted to Mercy Corps on a bi-weekly basis. Mercy Corps will in turn be able to monitor and evaluate what types of disputes are being resolved, how they are being resolved, and how effectively the newly acquired skills are being applied.

Awareness sessions in promotion of peaceful resolution and interfaith dialogue: Eight community awareness raising sessions were organized by Community Leaders and Peace Committees with Mercy Corps support. In total, 409 people including 163 women participated in the activity. In Bangui, the activities took place in Bimbo with 105 people, including 65 women. In Bouar, the activities took place in 7 areas and were attended by 304 people, including 98 women. The Community Leaders and Peace Committees invited members of their communities and passersby to participate. The awareness raising sessions were held in central locations (including churches, youth centers and outside the mayor’s office), and consisted of dramatized sketches to convey key peace messages to their

audiences. The activities encouraged tolerance and raised community members' awareness on non-violent conflict mitigation.

Peace Committee work for the return of Muslim students at University of Bangui: On December 16, 2014, Mercy Corps staff, the *Association Nationale des Etudiants Centrafricains* (ANECA), the *Association des Etudiants Musulmans Centrafricains* (AEMCA) and 4 Peace Committees from the University of Bangui organized a meeting in the 3rd Arrondissement in favor of the return of Muslim students to the University. 103 people participated from ANECA, AEMCA, OCHA, MINUSCA, SFCG, PC, Student Parent Organization, and Muslim students. The meeting focused on three points:

- a. An invitation from the ANECA and the PC to Muslim students and their parents for their return to the university
- b. Identification of constraints/difficulties that prevent students from reaching the university
- c. Sustainable solutions for their continued attendance

During meetings, Muslim students and their parents expressed the need for support on the following issues:

- a. Ensure student safety during the trip to the university and back, as well as the security on campus
- b. Payment of university fees and scholarships
- c. Several students mentioned the loss of papers, diplomas, and other administrative documents, making it difficult for them to re-register
- d. The need for psycho-social support for students and their parents
- e. The continued running of the bus to the end of this year

Before this meeting, only 13 Muslim students were attending courses at the university. Now there are additional 56 who wish to attend. Mercy Corps, ANECA and other INGOs and UN Agencies are working together to address issues related to their return. Mercy Corps, PC and ANECA met with the Rector of University of Bangui to advocate for the return Muslim students to the University. Key speaking points were student registration, access to the university restaurant, and security measures to prevent violence. The rector and his team committed themselves to these points.

Activity 3.3: Conduct weekly media outreach through peace messages: The 17 Peace messages selected and finalized by Mercy Corps and community leaders during last quarter were recorded in French and Sango by a professional artist contracted under the program. Mercy Corps has contracted five radio stations (three in Bangui—Radio Notre Dame, with a predominately Christian audience, Radio Centrafrique with an audience of civil servants and the community at large and Radio Ndeke Luka which has a nationwide reach—and two in Bouar—Radio Siriri which covers Bouar and the surrounding neighborhood villages and Maïgaro which covers the city center of Bouar) to disseminate the peace messages. All radios broadcasted peace messages from October to mid-December on a daily basis. Feedback reported by radio partners mentioned the interest of communities to continue such projects. Radio partners are writing the final report to be submitted during next quarter.

In order to continue community education through radio listening program, the Pes, with Mercy Corps support, organized a total of 280 focus group discussions and household visits with community members to collect peace messages. Around 315 peace messages were identified on diverse subjects, including social cohesion, human rights, good governance, corruption, freedom of movement, equity and equality, legitimacy, and peace. This activity involved 36,607 community members, including 19,062 women.

The Mercy Corps team has recorded peace messages into the database and categorized them according to topic. Mercy Corps Community Leaders and Peace Community members identified 10 new peace messages. Mercy Corps will contract a professional artist to record them in French and Sango before broadcasting them.

Mercy Corps is working with the Network of Journalists for Human Rights - RJDH to identify journalists who can go to the field to collect community members' testimonies on program activities in regard to social cohesion and peace. In addition, activities will include collecting community members' peace messages. Ten journalists have been identified and will be trained on the Do No Harm approach, the programs objectives, and how to collect, analyze and disseminate community member and beneficiary success stories and challenges regarding socioeconomics, implementation, social cohesion and peace. Identified messages will be broadcasted on the previously mentioned partner radio stations.

C. Monitoring & Evaluation

Following the completion of the baseline analysis, the M&E team analyzed tools to improve the endline survey. This included sharing ideas with the M&E technical unit and collaborating across other social cohesion projects in Mercy Corps. The two tools the SVC team have opted to use in monitoring social cohesion are conflict logs and socio-economic project analysis.

D. Coordination

USAID Central African Republic Partners Meeting in Nairobi: October 7 and 8 2014, USAID/East Africa team in Nairobi, Kenya organized USAID CAR partners with the aim to:

- Reinforce understanding of the USG Roadmap for engagement in the Central African Republic (CAR), USAID strategy and program priorities.
- Discuss shared understanding of the status of the conflict and political dynamics in CAR and their future trajectories.
- Review of program implementation, best practices and lessons learned, the way forward for completion of projects, and partner coordination.
- Discuss USAID management concerns, questions and issues. Understand ways USAID can be more supportive of partners' work.

Mercy Corps' Deputy Country Director, Conflict Mitigation Advisor and SVC Program Manager participated in the two day meeting, as well as representatives from Search For Common Ground, Catholic Relief Services, and Internews. After discussion on the two first meeting objectives, partners presented their respective programs, indicators, accomplishments, challenges, lessons learned and next steps. SVC PM and the Mercy Corps Conflict Mitigation Advisor worked with USAID M&E team to capture program achievement. This meeting was an opportunity for Mercy Corps to be trained by the USAID Environmental Compliance Team on USAID EMMP procedures. Many coordination activities were identified by CAR partners.

This meeting was a great opportunity to share program achievements, challenges, and next steps. Likewise, it gave USAID the opportunity to better understand the progress of projects in the region.

Meeting with the Working Group on Social Cohesion: During this quarter, the working group on Social Cohesion focused on the Bangui Dialogue initially due to take place in January but now

expected for mid-February. Mercy Corps and other working group partners contributed to the improvement of the government's approach to organize the Bangui dialogue. INGO members of the working group, national, and international actors have expressed their concern about the lack of community consultation (i.e. the third pillar laid out in the lead up to the dialogue). However, several meetings between MINUSCA and the Ministry of Reconciliation were an ideal opportunity for Mercy Corps to voice its opinion on the National Dialogue issues. Mercy Corps will continue participating in future Social Cohesion Working Groups so as to steer important decision making processes such as these.

E. Conclusion and Upcoming Activities

Despite the difficult security environment, Mercy Corps made significant progress toward program objectives. Mercy Corps supported all the 200 Peer Educators in organizing community awareness raising sessions, trained youth social cohesion club members, signed contracts with 52 socioeconomic projects holders, put in place four new Peace Committees, and supported them and community leaders to carry out Interest Based Negotiation in Bouar and Bangui, and continued radio peace messages.

During the upcoming reporting period Mercy Corps will:

- Train Peace Committee members in Interest Based Negotiation
- Train journalists in collecting and disseminating community testimony on program activity, peace and social cohesion Support IC-PC members to resolve disputes.
- Support leaders and IC-PCs to organize awareness raising sessions.
- Train youth in conflict, communication and leadership.
- Continue the implementation of peace message production, focusing on the collection and dissemination of messages.
- Support and monitor peer educators community awareness raising sessions
- Sign contracts with remaining socioeconomic project holder and release funds
- Support Peer Educator awareness raising events to enhance of social cohesion efforts.
- Continue to participate in coordination meetings with other INGOs and UN agencies.
- Support leaders and IC-PCs to organize inter-community dialogues in Bangui and Bouar.
- Develop and finalize a new training curriculum to train selected groups in managing their socioeconomic project.

Activity Plan for upcoming quarter (FY15 Q5)

Planned Activities	Responsible Parties	January	February	March
Activity 1.3: Train community leaders in dispute resolution and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes:	Mercy Corps, Peace Committee members	x		
Activity 2.2: Identify and assess social and economic projects for Youth	Mercy Corps, peer educators, and community leaders	x	x	x
Activity 2.3: Identify and mobilize community members with financial, technical, vocational or business skills training to support economic and social projects:	Mercy Corps		x	x
Activity 3.1: Peace Committees organize community dialogues on peacebuilding and intercommunity relations.	Mercy Corps, peer educators, and community leaders		x	x
Activity 3.2: Peace Committees work to resolve disputes in their communities	Mercy Corps, Inter-community Peace committee and community leaders	x	x	x
Activity 3.3: Conduct weekly media outreach	Mercy Corps, peer educators, and community leaders	x	x	x

List of Appendixes

- Appendix 1. Conflict Resolution Log 1
- Appendix 2. Conflict Resolution Log 2
- Appendix 3. Beneficiary Success Story Awareness Raising Session
- Appendix 4. Community Awareness Raising Guide