

**FY15 Q2 Report: January - March 2015**



**Preparation of agricultural voucher fair, March 30th**

**The Southeast Economic Recovery and Protection Project (SERAP)**

Funded by USAID / Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

<b>COUNTRY CONTACT</b>	<b>HEADQUARTERS CONTACT</b>	<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>
<p><b>Marie de Col</b> Deputy Country Director</p> <p>Address: Avenue de l'Indépendance Quartier des évolués, SICA I Bangui, Central African Republic Telephone: + 236 70 93 32 38 Email: mdc@cr.mercycorps.org</p>	<p><b>Rebecca Inman</b> Program Officer</p> <p>Address: 45 SW Ankeny Street Portland, OR 97204 Telephone: +1 503 896 5802 Email: rinman@mercycorps.org</p>	<p>Award No: AID-OFDA-G-13-00093 Start Date: June 15, 2013</p> <p>End Date: September 14, 2015 Report Date: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Total Award: USD \$1,510,927</p>

## 1. Executive Summary

The Southeast Economic Recovery and Protection II Project (SERAP) began in June 2013 to respond to the mounting protection and relief needs of conflict-affected communities in Southeastern Central African Republic (CAR). The goal of the program is to increase food security, enhance community resilience and strengthen the protective environment via community-based mechanisms for children, women and men affected by conflict in the Mbomou prefecture, including survivors, escapees and host communities.

During the reporting period, the project achieved the following:

- 2,500 beneficiaries started training and received agricultural products (seeds, tools and food kits) via a system of vouchers in which all products were sourced locally.
- All 61 Resilience Groups in both project locations were trained in Village Savings and Loan (VSLA) methodology.
- The gender-based violence (GBV) prevention strategy of the Listening Center was continued with the start of training on conflict mediation for couples and discussion groups with men on topics found to be the most recurrent type of cases at the Listening Center.
- The two Listening Centers responded to 222 cases throughout the reporting period, of which 36 involved minors.

## 2. Program Overview

SERAP was designed to respond to the mounting protection and relief needs of conflict-affected communities in southeastern CAR through interventions in child protection, agriculture, food security, and socio-economic support.

### Expected Results as of June 14th 2014<sup>1</sup>:

- 20,000 vulnerable people, including 3,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)-affected communities, will continue to have access to protection services, including prevention and response to GBV;
- 4,000 vulnerable people, including 2,000 IDPs in LRA-affected communities, will have restored assets in order to promote livelihoods and economic recovery;
- 2,500 vulnerable people, including 1,250 IDPs in LRA-affected communities, will have improved agriculture livelihoods and income generation opportunities; and
- Surveillance information will be collected to provide timely and rigorous early warning and vulnerability information on emerging and evolving crises situations for 93,457 people living in the Mbomou prefecture, including 10,000 IDPs.

## 3. Security

During the reporting period, no major security incident took place in the towns of the prefecture, while acts of banditry on the outlying roads of Bangassou and Rafai continued. The LRA remains a security threat in the region, especially for remote villages, which are a preferred target for the armed group. Ex-Seleka elements have been engaged in low-intensity disputes over lucrative locations (mines and markets). In Bangassou, tensions between communities did not result in any major security incidents. Nevertheless, in the medium-term, there is a risk of such occurrence, particularly with the gradual return of Muslim IDPs whose properties are illegally occupied by other residents.

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<sup>1</sup> Date of No Cost Extension

## Performance Summary

### Award-level Beneficiaries

Cumulative Period Targeted		Reporting Period Reached		Cumulative Period Reached	
Total	IDP	Total	IDP	Total	IDP
93,457	10,000	27,341	1,413	150,317	12,951

### Progress to Date

<b>SECTOR #1</b> <b>PROTECTION</b>	<i>Objective:</i> LRA-affected populations have continued access to protection services	
Geographic Area (s)	Mbomou Prefecture in Southeastern CAR, with particular focus in the towns of Rafai, Agoumar, Selim, Dembia, Geurekindo and surrounding villages	
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: 15,000	IDP : 3,000
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 27,341	IDP: 1,413
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 117,486	IDP: 12,119
Subsector: Child Protection		

INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
Number of people trained in child protection, disaggregated by sex	Male	Yes	40,000	4,433	29,271
	Female	Yes	45,000	4,940	35,161
	Other (Children)	No	NA	NA	NA
Percentage of targeted children reporting an improvement in their sense of safety and well-being at program close, disaggregated by sex.	Boys	Yes	75%	0*	93% as of mid-term evaluation conducted in August 2014
	Girls	Yes	75%	0*	88% as of mid-term evaluation conducted in August 2014
	Other	No	NA	NA	NA

Subsector: Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
Number of people trained in GBV prevention or response, by sex	Male	Yes	45,000	3,630	38,443
	Female	Yes	57,000	4,577	49,073
	Other	No	NA	NA	NA
Number of individuals benefitting from GBV services, by sex	Male	Yes	80	22	37 survivors
	Female	Yes	800	171	502 survivors
	Other (children)	Yes	190	29	130 survivors

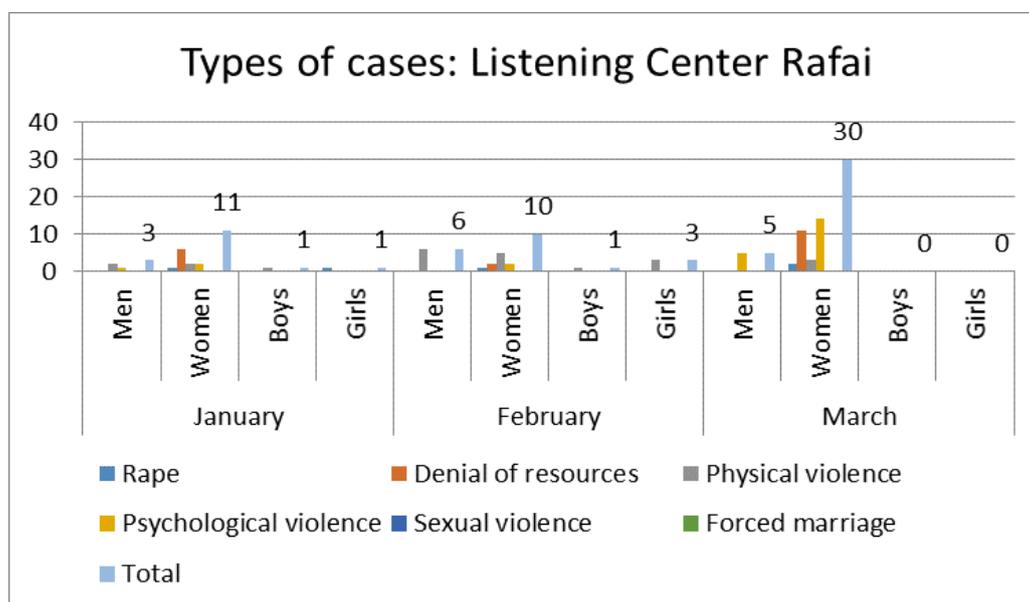
  

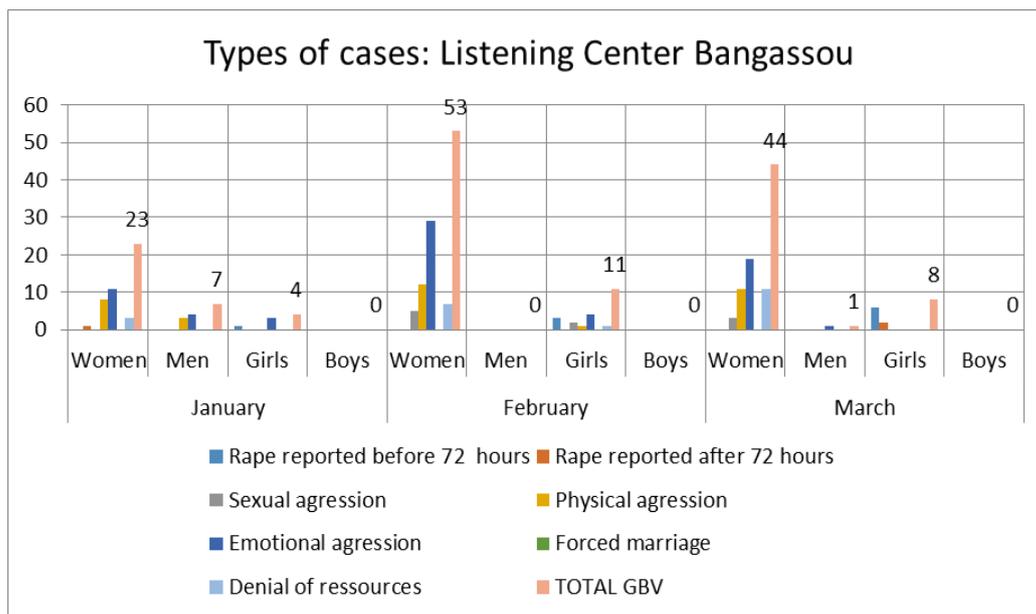
Subsector: Psychosocial Support Services					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
Number of people trained in psychosocial support services, by sex	Male	Yes	0	0	0
	Female	Yes	104	32	72
	Other	No	NA	NA	NA

\*Concerning results to report for the second year of the program, this indicator will be measured at the close of the program

### Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response

The Listening Centers in both locations received 222 GBV- and conflict-related cases during the reporting period. Cases were given psychosocial support and medical referrals as needed. The graphs below show breakdown according to location, gender, and typology.





In Bangassou, physical and emotional aggression remain the most recurrent types of GBV registered at the Listening Center. The overwhelming majority are directly related to denial of resources (food, clothes, forceful removal from the shared household) to women upon informing their intimate partners of a pregnancy. During the reporting period, the staff at the Listening Center organized group discussions with men and women regarding this phenomenon with the objective of analyzing the root causes and identifying effective prevention methods. Over the next months, trainings and community group discussions on these topics, as well as on family abandonment and denial of resources, are scheduled to take place, with a focus on actively engaging male leaders of the community.

In addition, efforts continued to engage men in the community to act as leaders of change in the prevention of GBV and to increase awareness of the services provided at the Listening Center, and to combat the perception that Listening Center is strictly for women.

Children, especially girls, remain the principal target group in rape cases, with neighbors or family members as main actors in many cases. Despite the increased awareness-raising in the surrounding areas of Bangassou regarding the services of the Listening Center, it is highly likely that rape and sexual violence cases remain underreported to a severe extent. In the absence of a functional system of justice (the *gendarmerie* is only partially functional) and given the culture of impunity, it is likely that this trend of severe underrepresentation will continue in the medium-term. During the reporting period, the program protection and psychosocial staff organized monthly trainings on GBV, including legislation in force for state and local authorities (including the police/*gendarmerie*), reaching 109 people. Nevertheless, their outreach or response capabilities remain limited to non-existent, and the vast majority of cases, especially in rural areas, remain underreported.

In response to a pressing need identified at the Listening Center, the psychosocial agents in Bangassou identified 23 couples (respected members of the community) and started trainings on conflict mediation for couples. These 23 couples will then go on to conduct awareness-raising sessions. These trainings have a strong practical component as they actively engage men’s perspectives on relationship dynamics.

In March, in order to increase outreach into social groups at high risk of GBV (sex workers, women accused of sorcery), the psychosocial staff organized activities with members of both groups. These activities included two training sessions, individual psychosocial sessions, and referral to Mercy Corps’ socio-economic reintegration programs (such as vocational training).

Community Counselors and Protection Committees (22 in Bangassou and 19 in Rafai) implemented a total of 361 awareness-raising sessions in their respective communities (see table below), reaching 6,005 women, 5,059 men, 6,003 girls, and 6,612 boys. These sessions focused on GBV, gender equality, the role of the Listening Center and its referral system.

The informal partnership on medical referral with MSF-Belgium was reinforced during the reporting period, with MSF health promoters participating in activities at the Listening Center. Additionally, the medical referral focal points have been geographically expanded by reinforcing contact with nurses/midwives and other medical personnel working at the medical centers in the outlying areas of Bangassou.

**Child Protection**

During the reporting period, all 51 Mercy Corps Protection Committees in Bangassou and Rafai, both old and new, received training on children’s rights and met in monthly coordination meetings and a February refresher two-day training for the Protection Committee members in Bangassou. In Bangassou, there was an emphasis on identifying Protection Committees in the villages in the outlying area (54 persons out of 116 members), in order to create and reinforce a referral system for the protection of children rights.

To complement the community awareness-raising sessions undertaken by Community Counselors, Protection Committee members focused on child rights in their community outreach activities. In this reporting period, Mercy Corps continues to capitalize on the co-financing opportunity provided by UNICEF to provide a small monthly stipend to Protection Committee members.

Month	# of awareness raising sessions	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total
January	110	1,927	1,410	2,370	2,573	8,280
February	139	2,305	1,868	1,941	2,144	8,258
March	112	1,773	1,779	1,692	1,895	7,139
Total	361	6,005	5,057	6,003	6,612	23,677

**Play Therapy**

During the reporting period, the 36 play therapy groups (4,872 children in total) in Bangassou and Rafai have been active, with approximately four to eight meetings/trainings per month organized by coaches for each club. In addition to sports and games, these meetings begin with talks on conflict resolution and human rights, with active contribution from the children.

<b>SECTOR #2 Economic Recovery and Market Systems</b>	<i>Objective:</i> Livelihood assets of LRA-affected IDP and host households are restored in order to meet household needs	
Geographic Area (s)	Mbomou Prefecture in Southeastern CAR, with particular focus in Bangassou town	
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: 3,500	IDP: 2,000

Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 120	IDP: 0
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 3,640	IDP: 2,112

Subsector: Livelihoods Restoration

INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Period Reached
Number of people assisted through livelihood restoration activities, by sex	Male	Yes	1,470	40	1,597
	Female	Yes	2,030	80 <sup>2</sup>	2,673
	Other	NA	NA	NA	NA
Percent of beneficiaries reporting their livelihoods restored within three to six months after receiving support	N/A	Yes	75%	NA	75%
Total USD amount channeled into the program area through livelihoods restoration activities	N/A	Yes	\$19.6 /beneficiary (\$68,600 total)	0 (additional assistance for livelihoods restoration to be distributed next quarter)	\$19.6 /beneficiary (\$68,600 total)

Subsector: Microfinance

INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Period Reached
Number of people, by sex, or MSEs newly receiving financial services or continuing to receive financial services due to USAID/OFDA support	Male	Yes	189	0	189
	Female	Yes	261	0	261
	Other	NA	NA	NA	NA
Percentage of financial service accounts/groups supported by USAID/OFDA that are functioning properly	N/A	Yes	75% of groups	0	0
Total USD amount channeled into the program area through sub-sector activities	N/A	Yes	\$2,160	0	0

**Resilience Groups Progress:**

The 61 resilience groups have continued their three types of training (VSLA, IGA, and Management) in both locations. A review is underway to assess the group’s progress on an array of factors to decide which groups will receive funding. Selection criteria will be based on quality bookkeeping, reimbursement of loans, group cohesion, feasibility of success of proposed IGA.

**SECTOR #3**

**Agriculture and Food Security**

*Objective:* Agricultural livelihoods and income generation opportunities are strengthened for LRA-affected IDP and host households

<sup>2</sup> VSLA members who have undergone training in the period

Geographic Area (s)	Mbomou Prefecture in Southeastern CAR, with particular focus in Bangassou town	
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: 2,500 direct; 12,500 indirect	IDP: 1,000 direct; 5,000 indirect
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 2,500 direct; 12,500 indirect	IDP 1,434 direct; 7,170 indirect
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 4,500 direct; 22,500 indirect	IDP: 3,434 direct; 17,170 indirect

**Agricultural Tool Kits:**

Between the 31<sup>st</sup> of March and the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 2,500 people participated in an agricultural fair during which, through a voucher system, they received seeds/livestock, agricultural tools and food kits at a total value of \$166,854. Vouchers ensured that all purchases were made from local suppliers of seeds and tools that passed Mercy Corps’ procurement policies. The quality of seeds (corn and peanuts) was tested in Bangui during the reporting period. The agricultural groups (agricultural producers, pastoralists, and fish farmers) identified and supported through the agricultural kit voucher system continue to receive training post-distribution so as to ensure the quality of crops for next year. The agricultural fair occurred without any security incident.

**DIRECT BENEFICIARIES OF AGRICULTURAL VOUCHERS BY TYPE FO VULNERABILITY**

Type of vulnerability	LRA survivors	IDPs	Returnees	Host families	Physical vulnerability
Number of beneficiaries	321	644	790	630	115

<b>SECTOR #4</b> <b>Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management</b>	<i>Objective:</i> Monthly surveillance data is collected to contribute to the national Early Warning System				
Geographic Area (s)	Mbomou Prefecture in Southeastern CAR				
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: 93,457		IDP: 10,000		
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 0		IDP: 0		
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 2000		IDP: 2000		
Subsector: Information Management					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Period Reached
Number and percentage of humanitarian organizations utilizing information management services	N/A	Yes	24	0	8 (33%)
Number and percentage of humanitarian organizations directly contributing to information products	N/A	Yes	25	0	9 (36%)
Number of products made available by information management services that are accessed by clients	N/A	Yes	12	0	6 (50%)

All Early Warning System activities finished in early August due to the end of Action against Hunger's funding for the project.

#### **4. Monitoring & Evaluation**

Program staff members continue to use the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) to collect data on gender-based violence cases seen in the Listening Centers.

#### **5. Coordination**

Mercy Corps has continued to work with medical service providers such as MSF-Belgium so as to offer more comprehensive information during trainings and sensitizations of available GBV related services. Mercy Corps participates in weekly security meetings in Bangassou with other humanitarian aid partners in the area, including ACTED, MSF-Belgium, CRS and Cordaid, in order to share important security related information. Finally, Mercy Corps shares key information on the program activities and security in the South East at Protection Cluster meetings, GBV and Child Protection sub-cluster meetings.

#### **6. Conclusion and Upcoming Activities**

The majority of SERAP activities in Bangassou for the next reporting period will focus on food security follow-up and technical support to agricultural groups while Rafai will continue to focus on protection activities. Priorities over the next reporting period will therefore include:

- Agricultural trainings
- Post-distribution monitoring and follow up
- Continuation of Listening Center activities as well as Community Counselor and Protection Committee awareness-raising sessions