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ENGAGING COMMUNITIES FOR PEACE IN NIGERIA

ANNUAL REPORT/4TH QUARTER REPORT

JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2015

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ENGAGING COMMUNITIES FOR PEACE IN NIGERIA

ANNUAL REPORT #1/4TH QUARTER REPORT
JUNE 8 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

Contract No.: AID-620-A-15-00002

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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the United States Government.

¹ Mercy Corps requested and received a waiver for what would have been its first quarterly report, covering June 8 – 30, 2015. Because of the short reporting period it was agreed to cover this period under the next quarterly report, such that this report covers the full quarter from July 1-September 30 in addition to June 8-June 30.

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ACRONYMS

CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
ECPN	Engaging Communities for Peace in Nigeria
FY	Fiscal Year
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RCT	Randomized Controlled Trial
SOW	Scope of Work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

Program Name	Engaging Communities for Peace in Nigeria
Activity Start Date and End Date	June 8, 2015 – June 7, 2017
Name of Prime Implementing Partner	Mercy Corps
Contract Number	AID-620-A-15-00002
Name of Sub-awardees	Pastoral Resolve, Inter-Gender Development Centre
Geographic Coverage	Benue, Nasarawa ²
Reporting Period	June 8 – September 30, 2015

1.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/INTRODUCTION

Engaging Communities for Peace in Nigeria (ECPN) is a two-year, USAID-funded program that aims to reduce violence in the Middle Belt states by peacefully preventing and resolving farmer-pastoralist conflicts. The three objectives of the program are:

1. Strengthen the capacity of farmer and pastoralist leaders to resolve disputes in an inclusive, sustainable manner;
2. Leverage social and economic opportunities to build trust across lines of division; and
3. Foster engagement among farmer-pastoralist communities, local authorities and neighboring communities to prevent conflict.

The program is built on this core theory of change: If farmer and pastoralist communities improve their skills in peacefully managing disputes, collaborate across conflict lines to address underlying tensions, and work with surrounding communities and government authorities to prevent conflict, then communities will increase their trust, economic interdependence, and capacity to monitor and prevent conflict, leading to reduced inter-communal violence.

ECPN leverages Mercy Corps, USAID, and global best practices for people-to-people initiatives to shape the design of the interventions. These include promoting the sustainability of negotiated agreements by

² While the full range of possible states now includes Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, and Taraba, the sites currently selected for implementation are in Benue and Nasarawa. Hence, reporting will center on these states even though the grant agreement states a broader list of states.

practically addressing economic and environmental drivers of resource-based conflicts; connecting community-level engagement with higher level initiatives; and including a broad range of stakeholders in the development of dispute resolution agreements.

The ECPN program is focused on reducing violence in 20 farmer and pastoralist communities (or 10 conflict sites³) across the targeted states of Benue and Nassarawa through an integrated economic development and conflict management approach. The program is implemented in partnership with Pastoral Resolve (PARE) and the INTER-GENDER Development Centre (Intergender), both of which have over 10 years' experience operating in the Middle Belt at the intersection of livelihood enhancement, gender equity, governance, health, and development with diverse and often marginalized communities.

³ Mercy Corps will in this and subsequent reports define a “conflict site” as a location for implementation composed of at least two communities (one farmer, one pastoralist) that are in conflict. Thus ECPN intervenes in 10 conflict sites, which equals 20 distinct communities.

1.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS TO DATE

In this reporting period, no progress against indicators has been made as this quarter's activities have been devoted to starting up the program and implementing the baseline study. As shown in the table below, no progress is expected in this Fiscal Year (FY) due to the timing of the grant period.

ECPN Project Indicators	Project Baseline		FY 2015 Q4 Reporting Period (Jul-Sept 2015)			Annual Target	Year to Date Actual	% of Annual Target	Life of Project Target	LoP Actual	% of LoP Target
	Date	Value	Target	Actual	% of Target						
Goal: Reduced violence between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria's Middle Belt states in target sites											
# of reported incidents of violence in communities where ECPN is implemented	31-Oct	TBD	0	0	0%	TBD	N/A	N/A	TBD	N/A	N/A
Outcome 1 Capacity of communities to resolve disputes increased.											
1.1. # of disputes resolved by trained participants	31-Oct	0	0	0	0%	0	0	N/A	100	0	0%
1.2 # of stakeholders benefiting from conflict mitigation trainings with USG assistance	31-Oct	0	0	0	0%	0	0	N/A	200	0	0%
1.3 Number of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process supported with USG assistance	31-Oct	0	0	0	0%	0	0	N/A	66	0	0%
Outcome2 Trust between communities across lines of division increased.											
2.1 % of participants who report social cohesion across conflict group lines	31-Oct	TBD	NA	0	0%	TBD	N/A	N/A	TBD	N/A	N/A

2.2 Number of new groups or initiatives created through USG funding, dedicated to resolving the conflict or the drivers of the conflict"	31-Oct	0	0	0	0%	0	0	N/A	20	0	0%
Outcome 3 Joint community and government conflict management plans developed.											
3.1: % of community members in target sites reporting that government is competently addressing concerns	31-Oct	TBD	NA	0	0%	TBD	NA	N/A	TBD	NA	N/A
3.2 Number of people participating in USG-supported events, trainings, or activities designed to build mass support for peace and reconciliation	31-Oct	0	0	0	0%	0	0	N/A	2,000	0	0%

II. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

2.1 PROGRESS NARRATIVE/KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Overall, ECPN is on track to meet its targets based on the workplan. First-quarter activities have been devoted to program start-up and baseline activities (described below), which are necessary to successful implementation for the duration of the grant.

2.1.1 Kick-Off Meeting

The first activity carried out in the quarter under review was the Kick-Off meeting. The objective of the meeting was to ensure that team members are fully oriented to the key program documents and the Program Work Plan (PWP), and to ensure that there is common understanding and acceptance of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, baseline schedule, milestones and critical path. More importantly the Kick-Off meeting was held to brief Operations, Procurement and Finance departments within Mercy Corps Nigeria about Engaging Communities for Peace in Nigeria (ECPN), to enable them to understand the needs and requirements of the program in relation to anticipated large procurement tasks, operations burdens and challenges with finance.

Highlights of the Kick-Off meeting were PowerPoint presentations by Program Manager of ECPN on the goals and objectives of the program, and by the Director of Conflict Management programs on the program parameters of ECPN.

2.1.2 Reconnaissance Survey

The goal of the pre-site selection reconnaissance survey was to gather data relating to the feasibility of and need for ECPN program implementation in selected communities experiencing farmer/pastoralist conflicts in Nassarawa and Benue states. The survey enabled Mercy Corps to understand the dynamics and complexities of specific sites through facilitated key informant interviews with local community leaders, youth, women, religious leaders, local government authorities, and community-based organizations (CBOs), as well as international organisations and business communities. Preliminary baseline information was gathered on the local context (for better planning of data collection), the locations of communities, the severity of the violence in the selected communities and the possibility of implementing the ECPN program in particular communities.

The survey was carried out by a small team (including partners) led by Mercy Corps to the following sites/communities across Nasarawa and Benue, prior to the baseline survey: Akpanaja, Tunga, Tudun Adabu, Torkula, Zongo Akiki, Daudu, Tor Donga, Mbise-Mbayongo, Obagaji, and Loko. It was found that in all these communities, similar conflict drivers exist. Indiscriminate cattle grazing, land encroachment (on the side of the pastoralists) and perceived unfair penalties for the destruction of farmlands and cattle rustling (on the side of the farmers) appear to be the major source of violent conflict in the targeted sites/communities in Benue and Nassarawa states. As a result of the violent conflicts that arise around these issues, many of the community chiefs and leaders had run away from their communities to either the state capital or Abuja, which not only contributes to a leadership vacuum in these sites, but will also increase the level of difficulty in getting buy-in by all community stakeholders around ECPN.

2.1.3 Nigeria Monitoring & Evaluation Management Services (NMEMS) Orientation

Mercy Corps' ECPN program team attended an orientation meeting at Nigeria Monitoring & Evaluation Management Services (NMEMS). Issues such as sharing of the M&E Plan, the Work Plan and data quality management were discussed during the orientation meeting. It was agreed that NMEMS would share an orientation package with Mercy Corps and Mercy Corps would send them the draft M&E Plan.

2.1.4 Baseline Survey

During the quarter under review, the first round of the baseline survey was conducted in targeted communities in Nassarawa and Benue states as well by Mercy Corps staff, an international research consultant and enumerators. The baseline survey followed a full-program rigorous research design, described in the M&E Plan, that will use a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) approach to establishing the impacts of the program on communities over time and in comparison to communities in which the intervention did not take place. The impact evaluation will specifically allow Mercy Corps, partners, and USAID to understand the effects of the people-to-people Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and joint economic development projects under Intermediate Result 2. The Scope of Work (SOW) for the baseline study, including a description of work performed by a consultant, is included in Annex A.

The first round of baseline data collection covered a range of approximately 20 conflict sites (40 communities) across Benue and Nasarawa. To carry out the data collection, a consultant with expertise in impact evaluation design was engaged. Together with the support of the Mercy Corps Nigeria team, Mercy Corps headquarters, and the ECPN team, the consultant designed an RCT survey, the results of which were meant to inform site selection. This RCT methodology was employed to ensure that ECPN will work in similar sites with the greatest need for conflict management intervention, and that comparison sites will have similar conditions to treatment sites.

The survey was translated and back-translated into Hausa and Tiv. After a rigorous training period for enumerators originating from the states being studied, the ECPN team piloted the survey and further refined it. All surveys were piloted and conducted using an electronic tablet and database system to minimize errors in data entry and speed up the baseline study process. Once the tool was further revised, two teams in Nasarawa and Benue simultaneously collected data from approximately 40 communities. A total of about 410 surveys were collected during this period, after which these results were analyzed.

This small number of surveys was collected in order for Mercy Corps to be able to gauge overall conditions around inter-group relationships and security. Based on this, all communities were eligible to participate in the program because of low scores related to peace and security, with the exception of one. Analysis was performed by the survey consultant, after which a random selection process of the eligible sites indicated 10 intervention sites and three control sites, with one additional site selected as back-up where Mercy Corps could collect further data in case for some reason it has to stop implementing in one of the sites selected.

In the next quarter, baseline data collection will be completed after the data collection team returns to each site that was selected to be intervention, control, or back-up (14 total) to collect an additional 40 surveys. The team will then analyze baseline data to be reported in the M&E Plan.

2.1.5 Strategy Planning Meeting with Partners.

The objectives of the strategy planning meeting were to discuss ECPN partners' workplans and budgets, and the program site selection methodology. Highlights of the meeting included the presentation of draft workplans and budgets by the partners and discussion on potential site selection. Site selection was based

on the research already conducted through the baseline survey, in which a first round of data collection was implemented in roughly 20 sites (40 communities) across Benue and Nasarawa. To complement this research and ensure that the data reflected realities on the ground, the team leads for each state for first-round data collection were invited to share their insights into the conflict dynamics and confirm that the sites selected were appropriate for the ECPN program model.

For the site selection, it was discussed and agreed that for Nassarawa state, violent conflicts are of three forms: inter-ethnic conflicts between farming communities (e.g. Tiv farmers and Alago farmers); ethno-political conflicts (like between Ombatse, Alago and other tribes); and pastoralists - farmers conflicts (between herdsmen and different farming groups). These differences were important in trying to isolate communities where pastoralists-farmers' conflicts are most prevalent and therefore more appropriate to focus on. In all of the sites selected through the data analysis, pastoralist-farmer conflict dynamics play a large role in tensions and insecurity.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Activities implemented over the course of the period according to the ECPN work plan were: recruitment of ECPN program staff, program kick-off meeting, reconnaissance survey, design and baseline survey, assessment and target sites/communities selection, community mobilization, and establishment of high-level contacts/initiatives.

2.3 IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges encountered over the course of the quarter related to transportation difficulties. Although sites (farmer and pastoralist communities) were clustered together during the reconnaissance survey to reduce travel time, it became clear that some of these clustered sites within the same LGA had bad road conditions which sometimes render them inaccessible by cars or other large vehicles. Motorcycles are often used on these roads instead. In one community, outsiders can only reach the village using a canoe on the river during the rainy season. In addition to issues with access to sites, some targeted communities were so far apart that it took up to five hours to travel between these communities.

Despite these challenges, Mercy Corps is prepared to implement in some of these sites, given the high level of need and the overwhelming neglect these communities have experienced in terms of support to conflict management. Sites ultimately selected through the baseline data analysis process will be accessible by road, though Mercy Corps will need to ensure the use of rugged vehicles for travel and will need to communicate closely with community members to ensure that roads are passable throughout the year, particularly during the rainy season.

Another challenge centered on delays from partners in drafting their budgets. Mercy Corps expects those to be signed by the end of the next quarter.

2.4 INDICATORS FROM M&E PLAN & TARGETS

As a learning organization, Mercy Corps has invested significant resources in developing indicators and data collection tools to measure program impact, with particular attention to the challenges of collecting

data in conflict-affected environments and evaluating peacebuilding programs. As outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, both output and outcome indicators were used to measure specific results, and disaggregated by a range of demographics including age and sex.

During start-up, Mercy Corps worked with partners to finalize the Performance Monitoring Plan, in close consultation with USAID/NMEMS. Together with an international research consultant and local partners (PARE & Inter-Gender), Mercy Corps has conducted baseline survey using an RCT approach that employs comparison groups to measure impact, based on our experience in other peacebuilding programs (see more in Annex A).

Mercy Corps plans to hold an in-depth M&E workshop with local partners and key stakeholders to ensure a shared understanding of theories of change, indicators, and data collection methods. Mercy Corps will use a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools developed and refined in previous programs, such as negotiation agreement tracking forms that capture the sustainability and legitimacy of agreements (which Mercy Corps has used in programs in Iraq, Jordan and Nigeria), a conflict, resource and actor mapping exercise, and surveys that assess changes in support for economic interaction with former adversaries.

INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES AND USAID FORWARD PRIORITIES

Given that Mercy Corps has not yet implemented activities, there is little to report on the issues below. However, where relevant, a few key points are noted.

2.5 GENDER EQUALITY AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

During the first round of baseline survey data collection, Mercy Corps staff ensured that both female and male enumerators comprised the data collection team. This allowed us to access women respondents who could feel at ease with a woman enumerator. The target for the respondent pool is roughly 50% men, 50% women, so that women and men will be equally represented in expressing their opinions related to key program outcomes. Furthermore, women will be highly active in program implementation and as such, the population of respondents must be roughly equal between men and women so that each has an equal chance of getting selected to participate in a particular activity.

2.6 SUSTAINABILITY MECHANISMS

As implementation of activities has not yet commenced, this section outlines the approach the ECPN team plans to take to put sustainability mechanisms in place. First of all, the ECPN program's phased approach will reduce violence between farmers and pastoralists through integrated economic development and dispute resolution. By linking the negotiated agreements made by these leaders to economic development projects that address underlying tensions, ECPN will incentivize interaction between

adverse communities and business and commercial associations that benefit from cooperation between the two groups. Secondly, the program will support key farmer and pastoralist leaders in building their capacity to resolve disputes peacefully and encourage traditional leaders to foster agreements as they once did, as a means to begin non-violent responses to resolve the polarization between communities. Thirdly, in line with the USAID Nigeria Mission's policy of investing in projects that will be heavily supported by the Nigerian government, Mercy Corps will develop initiatives to constructively engage government both at the state and local level for buy-in to ECPN program.

Finally, Mercy Corps will engage surrounding "zones of influence," expanding some of its interventions to surrounding communities and local government officials by facilitating forums focused on conflict mitigation and prevention. This approach draws on the successes of previous networks of negotiators and community socio-economic projects. This expansion to surrounding zones will help solidify the gains experienced in target communities.

2.7 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Nothing to report.

2.8 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

While Mercy Corps has nothing to report at this stage, it recognizes that youth are a key group of actors, essential to the resolution of conflict in the Middle Belt. By using a randomized selection process to select respondents for the baseline survey, we should end up with youth being proportionately represented in the potential participant pool. The actor mapping activity to be conducted under Activity 1.1 will allow Mercy Corps and partners to learn more about the roles that youth play in fostering or preventing conflict. Furthermore, youth will be prioritized under the second program component seeking to increase cooperation across conflict lines.

2.9 POLICY AND GOVERNANCE SUPPORT

Mercy Corps has begun to make introductions where needed; in many cases we have already established firm links to local and state government actors related to the ECPN program. More engagement will be conducted in future quarters.

2.10 LOCAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Mercy Corps and partners PARE and Intergender have worked closely since the inception of the program to come to agreement around program approaches and the workplan. To date, these partners have created their workplans and budgets on their own, with Mercy Corps guidance, and are undertaking preparations for their first activities. As noted, Mercy Corps already has plans to conduct an M&E workshop in the next quarter in order to ensure that partner capacity in collecting and analyzing data is adequate. In the next quarter, Mercy Corps and

partners will conduct a joint capacity development assessment so that we can establish a baseline figure for key outcomes related to capacity, set priorities, and then work on joint capacity development over time.

2.11 PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP) AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (GDA) IMPACTS

Nothing to report.

2.12 CONFLICT MITIGATION

As conflict mitigation is the purpose of the ECPN program, information related to this cross-cutting issue is included in the above activity narrative section.

2.13 SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION IMPACTS

As Mercy Corps is committed to using technology when and where it helps to advance program objectives, it has adopted a completely electronic data collection system for the baseline survey. All enumerators were trained using tablets and in uploading their data to a central server at the end of each day. Data is then collated in a central location and analyzed. In addition to improving the quality of data and reducing time to complete the baseline by removing the data entry stage, this has also had a positive environmental impact by avoiding the need to print thousands of pages of surveys in hard copy.

II. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

In this quarter, the Program Manager and partners began to establish contacts with key stakeholders. However, more will be reported after the Actor Mapping exercise under Activity 1.1 is completed.

III. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

In this past quarter, Mercy Corps hired the full ECPN program staff, including the Program Manager, Program Officer, and M&E Assistant. This team has significant experience in conflict management and community

development and is providing a strong foundation for implementation. Furthermore, the Director of Conflict Management Programs informed USAID she would be transition to a headquarters-based position at Mercy Corps. Thus, a request was made and approved for a replacement on key personnel in the position of the Director of Conflict Management Programs for Mercy Corps Nigeria. The selected candidate will assume this position next quarter.

During the month of September, a vehicle was procured for the ECPN program—a Ford Ranger that fits all specifications according to the grant agreement. The only large remaining personnel and administrative related task was for the selected driver to commence work; he will begin in the next quarter.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

In all the communities where the baseline survey was conducted, it was observed that community-entry protocols play key important role in the success (or lack of it) in collecting data from the targeted communities. While Mercy Corps engaged community mobilizers in setting up initial meetings in various communities, we learned that we need to investigate further before engaging with a mobilizer to ensure he or she is trust by the community and close enough to its members. In some cases, because the selected sites are so remote, general mobilizers covering an entire LGA would not be familiar enough with the particular social landscape of a given village. We have now identified specific community mobilizers for each chosen site and will avoid such delays in the future.

During the reconnaissance visit to identify potential sites for ECPN program implementation, the team met many pastoralists in certain communities in both Benue and Nassarawa states. However, during the baseline survey (only a few weeks after the reconnaissance survey) it was discovered that some of the pastoralists who previously lived in those communities and were having conflict with the farmers had migrated either back to Benue state (their former semi-permanent abode) or to Nassarawa (their permanent abode). The pastoralists either came to pasture temporarily in those communities and had to move due to tensions between them and the farmers of those communities (as in the case of Benue state) or moved back to their permanent grazing fields (as in the case of Nassarawa). However, some of the pastoralists, especially those living in Tsohon Tunga, in Awe LGA, Nassarawa State at the time of the reconnaissance survey had moved back to Anyiin in Logo LGA, Benue State at the time of the baseline survey. This was possible due largely to the peace and reconciliation efforts of Benue State government. In order to ensure that ECPN can operate effectively in these highly mobile communities, we will build strong communications procedures between local partners and community leaders, so that leaders can inform us about their whereabouts and future plans. We have also requested and were granted a modification from USAID to expand the geographical scope of the program, so that if communities migrate temporarily we can continue to work with them even if they are located outside of Nasarawa or Benue. Finally, the network of negotiators created through the trainings will allow Mercy Corps direct communication with leaders in each community, which will help allow us to track these leaders, the disputes they are resolving, and their changing locations.

In Benue state, the team discovered there are paramilitary institutions called ‘Civilian’ Joint Task Force (CJTF) established by the state government, which mediate conflict between Tiv farmers and Fulani pastoralists in the state. The CJTF has its headquarters in Makurdi, the state capital, and branches in all the local government headquarters. In the next quarter, further discussion will take place on whether or how best to engage these actors, during the Actor Mapping (Activity 1.1) stage of the program.

V. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

S/N	Activities	Time Period	Responsible Person(s)	Objectives	Expected Outcome	Output/Deliverables
1.	Finish Baseline Study	September -Oct 2015	Mercy Corps, MEL Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline values for key indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Related to entire program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline report
2.	Conflict Actor Mapping	November 2015	Led by Mercy Corps, supported by PARE & Inter-Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build off the violent incident data Mercy Corps collected through ongoing programming in Nigeria Identify possible ways of addressing the conflict through economic or natural resource initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 local leaders (farmers, pastoralists, religious and traditional leaders, influential business and market association leaders, women and youth leaders) whose participation is essential to resolve conflicts identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict actor mapping tools developed. 200 local leaders identified. Activity report. Photos
3.	<i>Training on Interest-Based Negotiation</i>	December 2015	Led by Mercy Corps, supported by PARE & Inter-Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the skills of local leaders necessary in resolving conflicts identified in the mapping exercise Train selected local leaders in interest-based negotiation Guide participants to analyze conflict, economic activity, and resource use in their own community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 local leaders which include farmers, pastoralists, religious and traditional leaders, influential business and market association leaders, women and youth leaders, are trained in interest-based negotiation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 220 local leaders trained Training materials developed Training programme developed Signed participants' attendance sheets Activity report sheet

VI. WHAT DOES USAID NOT KNOW THAT IT NEEDS TO?

To Mercy Corps' knowledge, all new information gathered or insights on the conflict have been shared in a weekly summary update to USAID.

VII. HOW IMPLEMENTING PARTNER HAS ADDRESSED FOLLOW UP FROM THE LAST QUARTERLY OR SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

This section is not relevant for this report given it is the first submitted by Mercy Corps for this program.