



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities in the Central African Republic through the Promotion of Intercommunity Dialogue and Economic Cooperation (SVC)**

Final Program Report  
January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016



**PROJECT SUMMARY**

Award No: AID-OAA-A-14-00024

Start Date: January 15, 2014

End Date: October 31, 2015

Report Date: January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016

Total Award: 1,999,986 USD

## A. Summary

Within a continued context of political instability in the Central African Republic (CAR), Mercy Corps implemented the “Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities through the Promotion of Intercommunity Dialogue and Economic Cooperation (SVC)” program, whose goal was: ***“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.”*** Implemented from January 2014 to October 2015, the program built the capacity of community leaders to peacefully manage tensions and rebuild community cohesion in Bangui and Bouar. Results of the program’s endline and final evaluation demonstrate that the program made great strides in changing community perceptions, increasing tolerance and restoring cooperative linkages between divided communities.

The program’s first objective was to enhance community leaders’ capacity to resolve inter-community disputes non-violently. To achieve this, Mercy Corps trained local community leaders and community associations on *Interest Based Negotiation* and conflict analysis techniques, and supported key stakeholders to resolve conflicts at the community level. Its second objective focused on enabling Christian and Muslim communities to find mutually beneficial community restoration and livelihoods activities to rebuild their communities. Mercy Corps supported local grassroots associations and entrepreneurs to implement 91 socio-economic projects in Bouar and Bangui, which benefited both Christian and Muslim communities and set an example for the wider community about the benefits of cooperation. Finally, Mercy Corps and our local partners helped to organize a network of motivated and trustworthy peer educators (predominantly youth) to conduct regular outreach and community mobilization activities around the principles of non-violence. The peer educator networks were instrumental in achieving the program’s third objective of influencing public attitudes towards tolerance and non-violence. Peer educator sessions reached hundreds of thousands of people in four arrondissements of Bangui, Bimbo, Begoua, and in Bouar over the duration of the program.

## B. Progress made/results achieved

**In term of first objective of enhancing community leaders’ capacity to resolve inter-community disputes peacefully**, Mercy Corps identified 75 community leaders representing Muslim and Christian communities and put in place 28 Inter-Community Peace Committees (IC-PC) with a total of 255 members (including 100 women). In addition to the aforementioned 75 community leaders, these committees included other community and religious leaders, youth and women leaders as well as representatives of civil society organizations. Mercy Corps trained all IC-PC members on the principles of Interest-based Negotiation (IBN), on tolerance and social cohesion, and on conflict analysis. 36 Central African teachers and 100 other community leaders (identified by local organizations and community organizations) were also invited to participate in these trainings, so the program trained a total of **391** individual community leaders.

The training program built participants’ capacity to systematically analyze disputes and plan community-based mediation activities. They learned how to appreciate and empathize with other community members, and by practicing communication skills, improved their ability to teach and persuade others to be more understanding and tolerant. The training enabled teachers to educate students on social cohesion principles, and has improved relationships between students at school. At Miskine High School in the 5<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, Muslim students have restarted attending school and were accepted by other students. Student also reported that they restarted visiting each other’s families. Mercy Corps provided ongoing coaching to IC-PC throughout the program and during weekly meetings with peace committees, leaders often reported the positive impact that the IBN

training had on their ability to mediate disputes. As a result of this training and support, IC-PCs were able to **facilitate 214 community dialogues** and **resolve 200 conflicts** over the life of the program.

Under the **second objective of enabling Muslim and Christian communities to better work together**, the project supported joint economic and social initiatives that would benefit both Christian and Muslim communities to demonstrate how cooperation could have a positive impact on the entire community. Mercy Corps supported the organization of **32 community fora** to discuss mutually beneficial socio-economic micro-projects attended by **1,250 people including 564 women** from Muslim and Christian groups. The program then organized 12 community micro-project selection sessions during which 100 community leaders used rigorous selection criteria to select a total of **99 micro-projects**. Muslim and Christian groups jointly submitted 22% (22) of all funded projects, including eight in Bouar and 14 in Bangui. The SVC program team supported all project beneficiaries to put in place project management committees and to use management tools related to financial management, project planning, implementation and monitoring, and environmental mitigation and monitoring. A total of 703 association members (including 364 women) participated in these project management trainings. Following a pre-award review process, Mercy Corps signed sub-grant agreements with all grantees and supported 59 organizations (who didn't yet have bank accounts) to open accounts with local micro-finance institutions to better manage their funds and reduce risks.

To provide ongoing support to the associations implementing socio-economic microprojects, SVC recruited and trained **16 local agents** who conducted, in coordination with project staff, **2,134 micro-projects monitoring sessions**. After successful completion of their planned activities, 16 micro-projects



The PAMOR Association built a new water point in Bangui with an SVC micro-project grant. Photo: Mercy Corps

beneficiary associations requested additional material support from Mercy Corps to continue their activities on an ongoing basis. Because these associations had already demonstrated their ability to successfully manage their funded activities, after review Mercy Corps decided to honor these requests with additional material support. This included providing sewing machines, soap-making equipment, and agricultural tools. Mercy Corps conducted 165 evaluation sessions to close out 90 completed projects including 70 in Bangui and 20 in Bouar, which mobilized 1,324 members of these associations. At the end of the program, 91 of the 99 grantees completed their planned activities and adequately reported on the two tranches of funding received from Mercy Corps.

**Cooperation between communities**  
The SVC final program evaluation revealed that:

- 80% of the respondents acknowledged that if different groups could work together on micro-projects, then they could work on other issues, including conflict resolution.
- 75% of respondents agreed that micro-projects had increased cooperation between previously antagonistic groups.

**Ten micro-projects in Bouar focused on income generating activities, and produced net profits of 3,617,972 XAF after three months of implementation.**

Feedback during focus group discussions indicated that micro-projects were well received and appreciated by community members. Socio-economic projects do not only bring opposing groups to work together, but they also provide an opportunity to earn a livelihood in a situation of dire need, where most families find themselves in the Central African Republic. Through the implementation and follow up of micro-projects, the program reinforced cooperation amongst 39,768 members of Central African civil society organizations, including 16,561 women, and also strengthened social cohesion between Muslim and Christian communities.

Mercy Corps surpassed its **third objective of influencing public attitudes towards tolerance and non-violence**, notably by supporting 200 trusted community members (including 100 women) to be Peer Educators (PEs) in their communities.

Mercy Corps developed a community awareness-raising guide, and then trained PEs on the eight modules of this guide, including social cohesion, peace building/conflict, human rights, democracy, good governance, corruption, relationship building, and Central African citizenship. Peer Educators received ongoing support from the program team and organized weekly awareness-raising activities in their communities. In total, they completed **19,347 awareness sessions** (door-to-door or mass awareness raising sessions) focused on social cohesion, tolerance, peace, human rights, and citizenship, following the Peer Educators Guide. PEs also distributed community education brochures to support the education messages. The PEs played a pivotal role in community education, and the final evaluation found that their messaging contributed to a reduction in tensions between groups. The approach of peer educators was particularly effective because the messages were developed and tested within communities to ensure their relevance to community members.

IC-PCs and community leaders also led 235 awareness-raising sessions for 2,153 people from different religions and ethnic groups, including 785 women, to promote conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue in their communities. Those sessions facilitated the realization of 12 actor-mapping exercises that engaged 469 community stakeholders and conflict key actors, including 139 women, during which community members identified all conflict actors as well as their external and internal allies.

Mercy Corps, community leaders, and IC-PCs created spaces and conducted 214 intercommunity dialogues that mobilized 1,733 community members, including 448 women, among which 60% were religious leaders. Dialogues provided strong foundations for a greater understanding of different religions in an effort to promote peace and also helped to resolve several conflicts between Muslim and Christian communities. The dialogues in **Bouar** facilitated the dismantling of all illegal barriers and the return of more than 200 refugees from Garoua Boulai to Bouar, allowed young Muslim moto taxi drivers to restart their activities, allowed Muslim traders to reopen their stores and continue their trade in market places, and facilitated the reopening of the Haoussa market where Muslim and Christian now sell together. In addition to the immediate benefit to Muslim economic actors, this also contributed to an increase in affordable goods available to the communities. In **Bangui**, dialogue between Muslim and Christian communities leaders from the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th arrondissements resulted in Muslim community merchants restarting trading, and around 300 community members returning to their communities. A reconciliation celebration was organized in the 2nd arrondissement during which Muslim and Christian leaders called for peace and reconciliation as well as for forgiveness between the two communities.

IC-PCs applied their IBN skills by working with community members to resolve 200 conflicts including 78 intercommunity (religion/ethnic) conflicts. IC-PCs also tracked conflicts in a conflict-log developed by the program, recording information about the type of conflict, the parties involved, the location, and other pertinent information. Acknowledging the important role of youth in building social cohesion, the IC-PCs selected 100 youth leaders (including 50 young women) to form 12 Youth

**Increasing tolerance**  
Community leaders were surveyed about their perceptions of social cohesion in their communities.

- 85% of community leaders feel that people are respected for who they are (vs. 15% at baseline).
- 96% in agreement that people are proud to be Central African (vs. 10% at baseline).
- 44% of leaders feel that people are integrated in their community (vs. 14% at baseline).

Notable results of awareness raising:

- Two former Anti-Balaka leaders became peer educators and reached 3,102 young Anti-Balaka fighters. As a direct result, 283 Anti Balaka pledged to lay down their arms.
- 500 refugees and IDPs returned to their communities in Bouar and Bangui.

Social Cohesion Clubs (YSC). Mercy Corps trained 100 YSC members on life skills, good governance, human rights, social cohesion, and how to work together and raise awareness among other youth. The 100 youth leaders in turn trained 940 members of their associations. Following training, the clubs organized and implemented 24 projects with support from SVC micro grants. The projects engaged a total of 17,345 youth including 5,706 young women from Muslim and Christian communities as well as ex-combatants, and contributed significantly to reinforcing collaboration among youth in Bouar and Bangui.

Also in support of the third objective, PEs conducted a total of 280 focus group discussions and household visits with community members to collect testimonies about peace to complement the peace messages communicated through outreach sessions. The discussions involved 36,607 community members, including 19,062 women. Mercy Corps, IC-CP and LC used some of those messages to develop 27 Peace messages in French and Sango that were broadcasted by nine radio partners in Bangui and Bouar. In Bouar, those messages were translated and broadcasted in Gbaya and Foulbe local languages to reach more community members. In addition, religious leaders, ex-combatant and civil society organizations sponsored 14 radio talk shows on Radio Ndeke Luka and Radio Notre Dame on themes such as social cohesion, the return of IDPs and refugees, tolerance and forgiveness. As result of the talk shows, Radio Notre Dame created a weekly radio program called “Wa ti Siriri” or “the peace flame” which will continue after SVC. One on-air debate around peace and social cohesion in Bangui was also conducted, and eight SMS peace messages were produced by Mercy Corps, IC-PCs and CLs, and sent to all holders of Moov, Orange, Télécel, and Azur telephone companies in CAR. Mercy Corps also signed a contract with the Network of Journalists for Human Rights (RJDH), training 10 journalists who collected 20 testimonies (peace messages and success stories) from micro-projects beneficiaries and community leaders, and broadcasted them via five radio stations in Bangui and Bouar. Highlighting positive examples of cooperation was a powerful means of giving people hope and confidence to work together and to become change agents in their respective communities. The use of radio and SMS to convey narratives of peace and tolerance served to amplify positive messages and highlight constructive initiatives in program areas.

## **C. Challenges**

Mercy Corps implemented the Stabilizing Vulnerable Community program in a context of insecurity in Bangui and Bouar. Throughout the program period, heightened tensions and volatility in the program area caused frequent interruptions in the implementation of program activities. Several carjacking and attacks targeting staff of international NGOs as well several other security incidents constrained Mercy Corps movements to the field off and on throughout the duration of the program. The challenging operating context led notably to delays in program start up and disrupted the program’s final evaluation, but after receiving two no-cost extensions, Mercy Corps was able to conclude all planned activities and reach the program’s three objectives.

In addition, the program’s second objective of socio-economic cooperation between communities also presented some unforeseen challenges. Firstly, while SVC gave preference to joint projects that would bring together divided communities, this became a challenge due to the massive displacement after the 2013/2014 conflict that changed the overall demographics of target communities. As a result the majority of projects that were submitted did not explicitly involve both Christian and Muslim community members, but did have benefits that extended to the communities as a whole. Secondly, we faced challenges in working with grantee associations that had limited capacity to manage funds and implement projects – this was mitigated by the training and monitoring done by the program team and community monitors, but overall the socio-economic micro-projects took longer than expected, another reason why the second NCE was requested to extend the program through October 2015. Finally, the surge of insecurity in Bangui and on the axe Bouar-Garaou Boulai has had an impact on socio-economics projects’ completion: eight projects unfortunately did not achieve their intended

objectives. Mercy Corps had to continue to follow up with these associations after the end of the SVC program, and four of them have now completed their projects. Mercy Corps continues to help the remaining four associations to identify ways to continue their activities independently.

Skepticism and the time it takes to build trust amongst community members was a common challenge among partners working in social cohesion programming in Bangui. There was mistrust between communities and even among the leaders, and to manage the situation, NGOs met and trained different groups and individuals separately. Only Mercy Corps was able to bring them together around the same table and this is even reflected in the composition of MC's peace committees. Mercy Corps was able to fund 36 joint socioeconomic initiatives that benefitted both Christian and Muslim communities. Mercy Corps also ensured that all other projects also included both communities in the implementation and the achieved benefits.

## **D. Lessons learned**

One of the clearest lessons we have learned is to build as much flexibility as possible into program design. This is especially true in CAR, where the context remains fluid due to contextual changes and security challenges as described in this report. SVC was able to adapt program planning to respond to issues of limited access, adapting to the local context to make the selection of socioeconomic projects fair and transparent, as well as establishing peace committees and peer educators to reach displaced Muslim communities. We also learned through implementation that we needed to allocate additional time and resources to adequately train low-capacity community based organizations so that they were set up to effectively manage their projects. Overall, the program needed an additional 10 months to reach its objectives – reiterating that recovery programs in volatile settings, such as CAR, need to be designed with a high degree of flexibility in mind.

Another lesson learned during the program was the importance of recognizing and engaging parties in conflict in the dialogue process. In the SVC experience, actor mapping has allowed us to organize dialogues with all stakeholders including members of Anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka groups, which has provided an opportunity for parties in conflict to face each other and be heard. We have seen examples of ex-combatants laying down their arms and engaging in peace work, and those who have denounced conflict have been some of the best advocates for peace because they are able to reach and persuade the armed youth in their communities. Similarly, allocating adequate time and resources to youth-focused activities (such as the youth social cohesion clubs) was key.

Finally, following an upsurge in violence in CAR in late September 2015, we learned that reconciliation takes time and that local actors will need additional support to continue upholding messages of peace and tolerance and resolving conflicts locally. Positive attitudes of tolerance and reconciliation will need to be supported by medium and longer term investments in the recovery and rebuilding of Central African communities. The 2015/2016 election cycle has been hopeful for many Central African citizens as the elections have occurred in relative peace, but much work is left to be done to support social reconciliation and economic recovery in order to prevent and mitigate future violent conflict in the country.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## EVALUATION

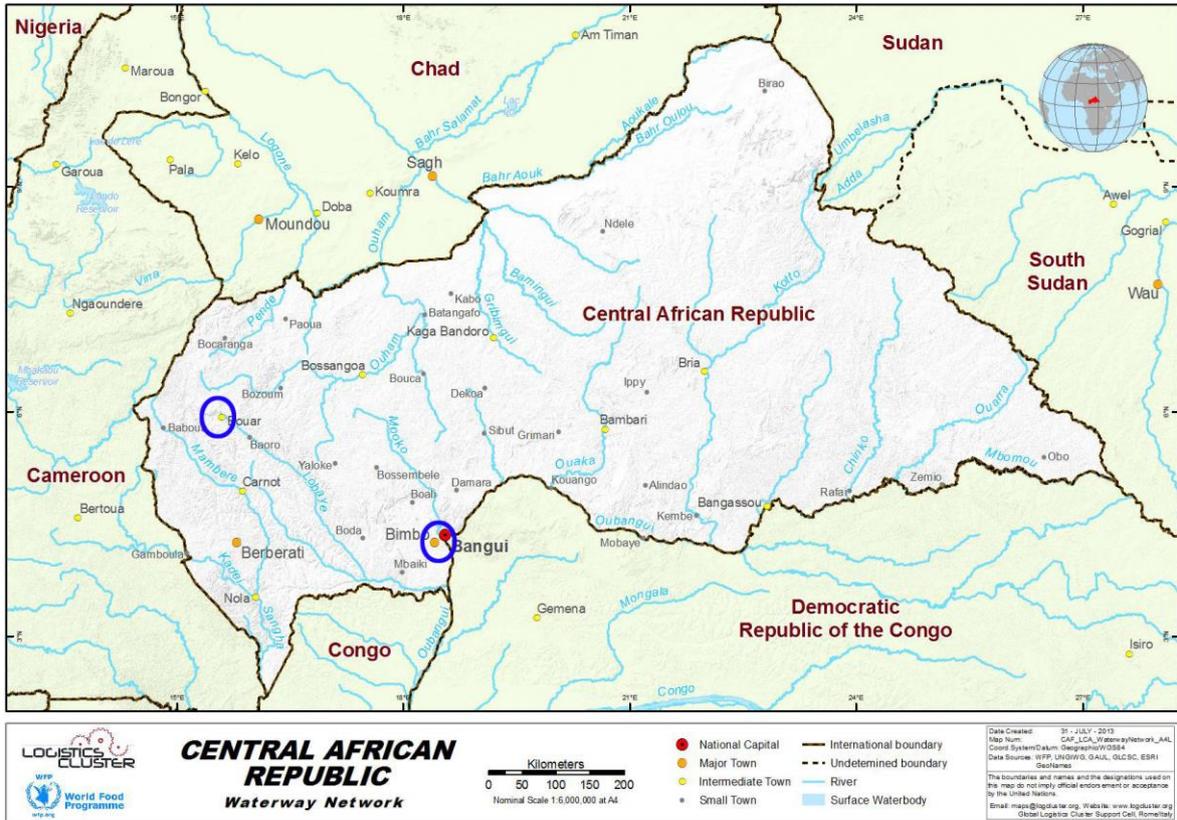
Final Evaluation of Mercy Corps' program:

**Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities in the Central African Republic  
through the Promotion of Intercommunity Dialogue and Economic  
Cooperation (SVC)**

-Emmanuel Makuza Rugumire, Consultant

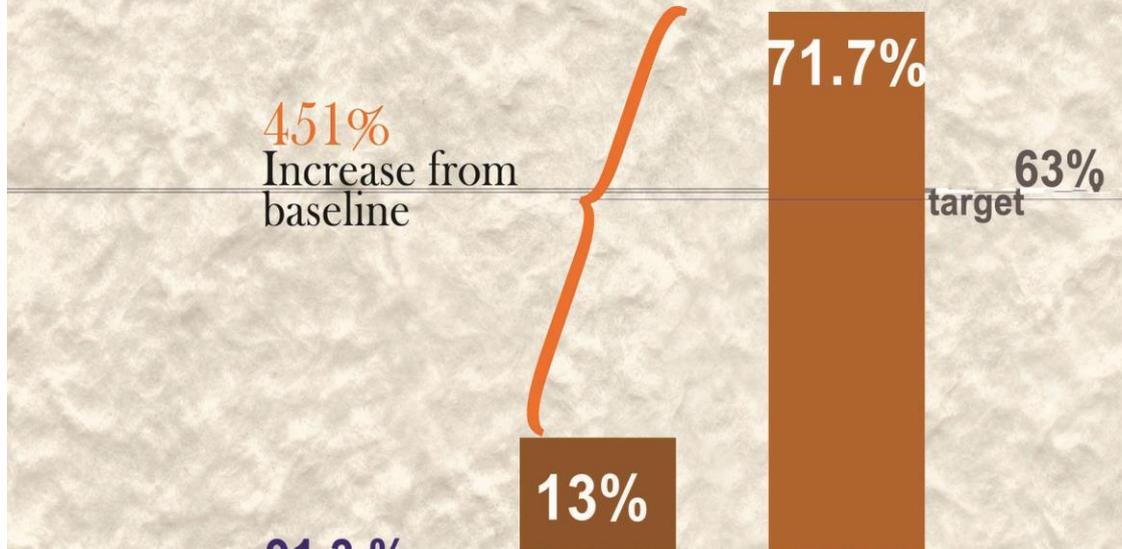
October 2015

Map showing program area



**...Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities in the Central Africa Republic Program...in a nutshell..**

% of people agreeing that conflicts were managed peacefully

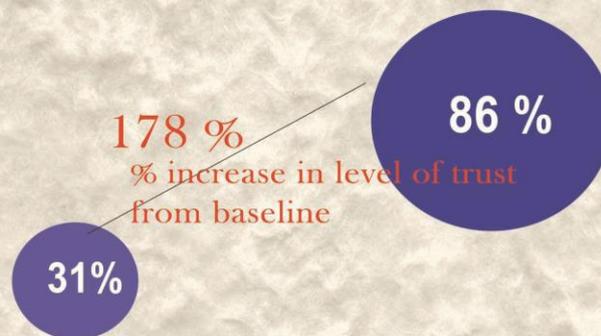


**91.3 %**

people agreeing that dialogue contributed to peace

**94.5 %**

people saying Mercy Corps activities contributed to a reduction in violence



413,978 people reached by the program

19,347 awareness sessions conducted by

200 peer educators trained by Mercy Corps

98 micro-projects financed and supported

300+ project holders trained

26 leaders sign a reconciliation pact

12 (of 12) conflict mapping exercises conducted

## Executive Summary

Through a cooperative agreement from USAID's complex crisis fund, Mercy Corps implemented a program entitled *Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities in the Central African Republic through the Promotion of Interfaith Dialogue and Economic Cooperation* (SVC) from January 2014 through October 2015. The goal of the program was to help community leaders of all faiths work together to peacefully manage tensions and rebuild community cohesion in two strategic urban centers in the Central African Republic. The program was implemented in Bangui and its surrounding suburbs of Bimbo and Bégoua; and in Bouar town (6 *groupements* and surrounding villages).

This evaluation found that the program achieved its goal of helping community leaders of all faiths work together to peacefully manage tensions and rebuild community cohesion in Bangui and Bouar. The capacity of Muslim and Christian community leaders was strengthened, which led to the resolution of **200 conflicts**. SVC also promoted attitudes of tolerance and non-violence through support of inter-community peace messaging, peace dialogues and awareness-raising in the target communities.

### Key evaluation framework:

To follow up on the internal endline survey conducted in June of 2015, the evaluation considered the following USAID PMP indicators: a) % change in the number of respondents in agreement that conflicts are managed peacefully and successfully and b) % change in number of people who reported a more positive attitude of the "other" group.

Findings were similar to those reported in the endline report and indicated outstanding performance of the program, often surpassing the set targets.

- **71.7%** of the participants reported that conflicts were managed peacefully, corresponding to **451%** increase from the baseline of **13%**;
- **74%** of the participants said they were willing to work with the "other group";
- **91.3%** acknowledged that peace dialogues had contributed to a reduction in violence; and,
- **86.2%** reported a positive change in attitude towards the "other," meaning a **178%** increase from the baseline of **30.1%**.

### The evaluation further assessed:

- Community leader's capacity to resolve disputes (objective 1);
- The use of conflict resolution skills, and whether those skills had been transferred to local peace committees and to the community;
- The level of involvement of community members in peace building initiatives and its effectiveness in reduction of violent conflict and social tensions;
- The impact of partnerships and implementation of socio-economic projects (objective 2);
- The degree to which change in attitudes could be attributed to Mercy Corps' activities.

## Summary of Findings:

### 1. *Key Achievements*

- **451% increase in respondents indicating that conflicts were solved peacefully in their communities— from 13% in the baseline to 71.7% in the final evaluation.**

Mercy Corps surpassed the program target of 63% for this indicator with a final result of 71.7% as measured during the final evaluation. The slight decrease from the results of the endline survey carried out in June 2015 (which found that **82%** of respondents reported that conflicts were solved peacefully) may be attributed to the fact that the final evaluation was conducted during a period of increasing violence in Bangui (late September 2015). The result is supported by qualitative evidence – community leaders and peace committee members said the training they received from the program empowered them to resolve disputes.

**Also, 86.2%** of the respondents said that they trusted the “other group” in their communities, which is a significant improvement in comparison to **30.1%** at the beginning of the program. The positive change in attitudes was also demonstrated by a willingness to solve conflicts with others - 74% expressed a willingness to work with others to solve conflicts and 73% thought others would do likewise.

### 2. *Relevance of program and coordination*

Mercy Corps often took the lead in the coordination of the Social Cohesion Working Group<sup>1</sup>, a country-level working group that brought together the government of CAR and INGOs working on social cohesion. To avoid duplication of efforts, the SCWG shared areas of operations and themes for action. Partners expressed satisfaction with their relationship with Mercy Corps.

### 3. *Recommendations*

- Identify local structures to mainstream the good work that Mercy Corps did, especially on micro-projects, to support their continuity. These would include local NGOs and other members of the Social Cohesion Working Group.
- Due to delays at the beginning of the program, the SVC program had to increase the speed of implementation to make up for lost time. It is important however, when dealing with processes like social cohesion, trust building, peacebuilding to adapt and adjust to timelines of partners and stakeholders. The SVC team was composed of only eight staff who led diverse activities, including overseeing 98 micro-projects, training 200 peer educators, to carry out 19,347 awareness sessions on nine modules, training peace committees, community leaders and other partners. Anecdotal evidence suggests that MC was working at a pace that was faster than its partners, so a recommendation would be for Mercy Corps to invest in more staff positions to ensure that each component has adequate support for quality implementation and follow up.
- Focus on activities that bring people together for the most impact. Those include peace dialogues, community leader resolution of conflicts, trainings and micro-projects.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Working Group on Social Cohesion (SCWG) was initially composed of Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), community leaders and local authorities. More NGOs and partners joined throughout 2015.

## Acronyms

AB	Anti-Balaka
CCF	Complex Crises Fund
CDCS	Country Development and Cooperation Strategy
CPP	CAR Partnership for Peace
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
GoCAR	Government of the Central African Republic
IGA	Income Generating Activity
MC	Mercy Corps
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
NCE	No-cost Extension
PC	Peace Committees
PE	Peer Educators
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
SCWG	Social Cohesion Working Group
SECC	Securing, Empowering, Connecting Communities (CRS)
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SVC	Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities (MC)
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
USG	U.S. Government

## Table of Contents

Map showing program area .....	i
Executive Summary .....	ii
Acronyms .....	v
1.0 Background: .....	1
2.0 The SVC Program .....	1
2.1 Program Goal & Purpose; .....	1
3.0 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation .....	2
4.0 Methodology & Evaluation Framework .....	2
4.1 Data collection and instruments .....	2
4.1.1 Focus Group Discussions; .....	2
4.1.2 Key informants interviews; .....	3
4.1.3 Direct observation; .....	3
4.1.4 Document Analysis and Literature Review: .....	3
4.1.5 Household Survey: .....	3
4.2 Sampling .....	3
4.3 Limitations to the Evaluation .....	3
4.4 Challenges; .....	4
5.0 Findings& Synthesis .....	5
5.1 Socio-economic characteristics of respondents .....	5
5.2 USAID Performance Indicators: Peaceful Conflict Management .....	6
Change in the number of people who report a more positive attitude towards the other group. ....	7
5.2.1 Change in perception of levels of Violence: .....	8
5.3 Community leader’s capacity to resolve disputes (OBJ 1) .....	11
5.4 Levels of cooperation (OBJ 2) .....	12
5.5 Coordinating with other INGOs and partners: .....	14
Conclusion: .....	15
6.0 Recommendations and Lessons Learned .....	16
References: .....	17
Mercy Corps SVP Outputs: .....	18

## 1.0 Background

Long before the 2012-13 crisis, Central African Republic experienced cyclical civil conflicts as a result of breakdown of political systems. The recent crisis however surpassed previous experiences in terms of violence and human cost. Sectarian and political violence killed thousands of people, displaced about 1 million people, including more than 416,000 who fled to neighboring countries. More than 65,000 people were displaced in the capital, Bangui, and 2.5 million of the country's population of 4.6 million was in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Besides the destruction of critical infrastructure and basic social services, the conflict destroyed the social fabric that Central African society and increased vulnerability in what was already one of the world's poorest countries. Before the crisis, the Central African Republic was the 5<sup>th</sup> poorest nation in the World. Currently it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> poorest nation, after Burundi (IMF, 2015)

*"... the situation in the Central African Republic has seriously deteriorated. The most recent series of events was triggered by an attack by anti-Balaka and other armed groups against Muslims in Bangui on 5 December, which left more than 600 people dead and 214,000 internally displaced..... The attack has triggered widespread violence between Christian and Muslim communities in Bangui and across the country."*

Secretary-General Report the situation in the Central African Republic, December 2013, pg1.

## 2.0 The SVC Program

From January 15, 2014 to October 31, 2015 Mercy Corps implemented the *Stabilizing Vulnerable Communities in the Central African Republic through the Promotion of Inter-community Dialogue and Economic Cooperation* (SVC) program. This program was funded through a USAID cooperative agreement with a total value of \$1,999,986. The project benefited from a No-Cost Extension of nine months, extending its duration from 12 to a total of 21 months.

SVC was implemented in Bangui (including 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement and the surrounding suburbs of Bimbo and Begoua), as well as in Bouar Town (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Groupements). These areas had experienced high levels of community and internecine conflicts along religious lines.

In line with Mercy Corps' mission of alleviating suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities, SVC sought to address the accelerating religious violence in CAR through immediate action to provide mechanisms for peaceful resolution of inter-community conflicts with longer-term activities to rebuild trust and cooperation between affected communities.

### 2.1 Program Goal & Purpose

The overarching goal of the program was "to help community leaders of all faiths work together to peacefully manage tensions and rebuild community cohesion in Bangui and Bouar."

To achieve this goal, the SVC was designed around three objectives based on three theories of change, arrived at after a thorough conflict analysis and pre-program assessment. It was theorized that:

*1. If Muslim and Christian leaders were provided with training and opportunities, then they would be able to peacefully resolve conflicts and reduce violence in their areas.*

The intervention consequently sought to:

1. Strengthen the capacity of community leaders in Muslim and Christian communities to resolve community conflicts and deal with the legacy of violence in an open, inclusive, and sustainable manner.

*2. If people from divided communities worked together to increase their economic opportunities, then they would be more inclined to work together positively on other issues.*

The intervention consequently undertook to:

2. Reinforce sustainable dispute resolution methods and generate increased trust through joint economic and social initiatives that benefit both Christian and Muslim communities.

*3. If people see respected leaders speak out in favor of peace, then they will be less likely to view violence as a legitimate way to resolve differences.*

The intervention consequently endeavored to:

3. Promote attitudes of tolerance and non-violence through support of inter-community peace messaging.

### **3.0 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation**

The evaluation measured the impact of the program, quantitatively and qualitatively, on social cohesion among Muslim and Christian communities using baseline and endline data and indicators established in the program. The evaluation quantitatively and qualitatively assessed whether the objectives of the program had been achieved through the implementation of the various interventions and sought to determine which activities were most effective in terms of impact and cost effectiveness. Findings from this evaluation, we hope, will provide an opportunity for learning, growth and reflection for USAID, Mercy Corps, and our local stakeholders and partners.

### **4.0 Methodology & Evaluation Framework**

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach as stipulated in the terms of reference as a way of increasing validity of findings through triangulation. Qualitative data complemented the results from the quantitative survey, by confirming patterns (triangulation) in the results, or by shedding light on responses that were provided by participants.

The evaluation focused on the goal of the program: “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” based on the theories of change mentioned on the previous page.

### **4.1 Data collection and instruments**

#### **4.1.1 Focus Group Discussions**

After consultations with Mercy Corps CAR, and SVC program staff and partners, a review of project documents and literature was undertaken, and a list of benchmark questions were prepared and pilot-tested in Bangui. These questions corresponded to and elicited information about the three program results. Additionally key informants were interviewed to complement and/or elucidate views expressed during focus groups.

#### **4.1.2 Key informants interviews**

Key informants were selected with respect to their level of knowledge and experience with issues related to the SVC program objectives and to social cohesion in general. They included members of focus group discussions with diverging views, peer educators, local community leaders, project staff, Mercy Corps SVC partners, youth groups, micro-project beneficiaries and others who were identified in the course of the evaluation.

#### **4.1.3 Direct observation**

Before fieldwork, temporary field assistants were hired by Mercy Corps and trained to observe and note processes, events and physical signs that could shed light on livelihoods and social cohesion of participants. Field assistants were briefed about the project by SVC staff. Additionally field assistants were trained on fieldwork, fieldwork ethics (do no harm principles in research), the importance of good accurate data, and administering survey questions. Assistants participated in the translation of the questionnaire and focus group protocols into Sango, the national language of the Central African Republic. This exercise helped them in internalizing the questions and the nuances of the questions in Sango, and acquiring a global idea of the project goal.

#### **4.1.4 Document Analysis and Literature Review**

The evaluator reviewed relevant documents provided by the SVC program to better understand the program prior to finalizing the tools for data collection. These documents included but were not limited to program documents, performance monitoring, annual reports and baseline and endline evaluation reports. Literature on social cohesion and conflict mitigation was also consulted. Literature review was an ongoing process that anchored the evaluation.

#### **4.1.5 Household Survey**

A household survey was undertaken using a questionnaire on social cohesion and SVC program activities. To ensure continued comparability of results, the survey questionnaire updated and customized the methodology used for the SVC baseline and endline studies previously conducted. The questionnaire used items in both studies were revised to reflect parameters and perceptions of conflict and violence and how these were impacted by the project's activities on building inter-community dialogue, social interaction and economic cooperation. The questionnaire also included standardized measures of social cohesion.

### **4.2 Sampling**

Selection of respondents was jointly undertaken by the consultant and SVC program personnel. In light of a lack of a comprehensive sampling frame (number of beneficiaries estimated, complexity of the program, diversity of activities) a stratified purposive sampling approach was used that focused on representativeness (gender, religion). A sample of 316 respondents was drawn, which is statistically valid. The field exercise was able to reach 311, representing a reach of more than 98.7% of the sample size originally targeted.

### **4.3 Limitations to the Evaluation**

This evaluation was undertaken within a window of time of 25 days in the life of participants. Therefore it could only capture a snapshot of their lives, as remembered. Reliance on self-reporting as a method of data collection has inherent weaknesses; poor memory, a possibility of misunderstanding questions and deliberate deception can contribute to inaccuracies especially if respondents are beneficiaries with hopes of influencing further support from Mercy Corps. Additionally selection bias could not be overruled, owing to the trade-off between randomly selected respondents and the need to cover all aspects of project support. Mitigation measures were incorporated into the design; these include a relatively large number of respondents selected, representativeness, and stratified stage randomisation. The program reached many people besides the primary targets of community leaders, peace committees and micro-project beneficiaries. These could only be estimated. The study endeavoured to reach secondary beneficiaries of the communities.

#### **4.4 Challenges**

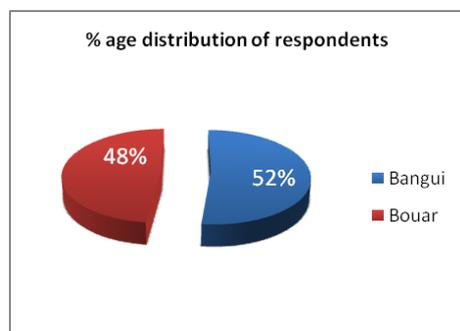
The following challenges were anticipated: insecurity, difficulty to access respondents and the rainy weather slowing fieldwork. In addition, the escalation of violence in Bangui that started September 26<sup>th</sup> also impacted the evaluation – data collection was postponed for a period of several days and the external evaluator was obliged to leave the country prior to the end of the evaluation. Data collection was able to resume in early October, led by a local team with remote support from the evaluator.



*1 Public Sensitization Meeting Organized by Mercy Corps and the Commune of Begoua, Bangui*

## 5.0 Findings & Synthesis

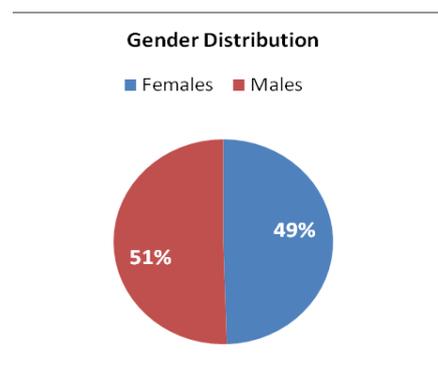
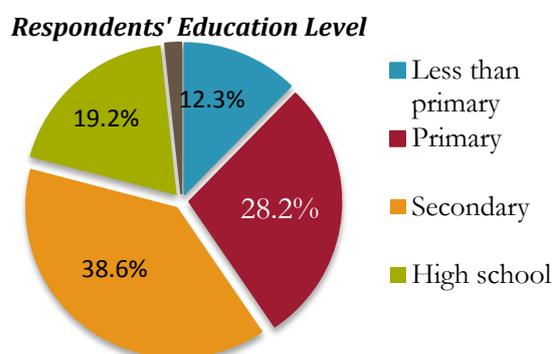
### 5.1 Socio-economic characteristics of respondents



The household survey had targeted 316 respondents but reached 311 respondents, representing a reach of 98.4% above the accepted threshold of 60% in face-to-face interviews<sup>2</sup>; 48% of the respondents were in Bouar City and 52% were in Bangui. In both survey areas the study reached all the localities where Mercy Corps had intervened with the SVC program. Efforts were undertaken to establish a balance between the number of men and women who participated in the study. Equally the study sought to involve the different

religious and age groups.

The socio-economic profile of respondents mirrored findings from the endline survey, and national demographic statistics.



Statistics indicate the religious composition of CAR before the current crisis as 15% Muslims, 80% Christians 5% others.<sup>3</sup> This composition has changed as a result of forced migration of Muslims, particularly. There was a challenge in finding Muslim respondents, who after 2013 events had fled especially from Bangui and other urban areas. The sensitive nature of religion as a way of self-identification is borne out by the fact that 4.2% of the respondents declined to respond about their religion. For levels of education, we use the findings of the endline survey that was carried out end of June 2015<sup>4</sup>.

% age distribution by religion

Animist	1.6 %
Catholic	37.3%
Muslim	8.4%
Protestant	48.6%
Declined	4.2%
Total	100%

<sup>2</sup> Kiess & Bloomquist (1985), The American Association for Public Opinion Research cited in Biersdoff K (2009) How many is enough? The quest for an acceptable survey response rate.

<sup>3</sup> <http://m.state.gov/md148671.htm> (accessed 30 October 2015)

<sup>4</sup> The final evaluation was undertaken two months after the endline survey. The education parameter, we surmise, cannot have changed substantively.

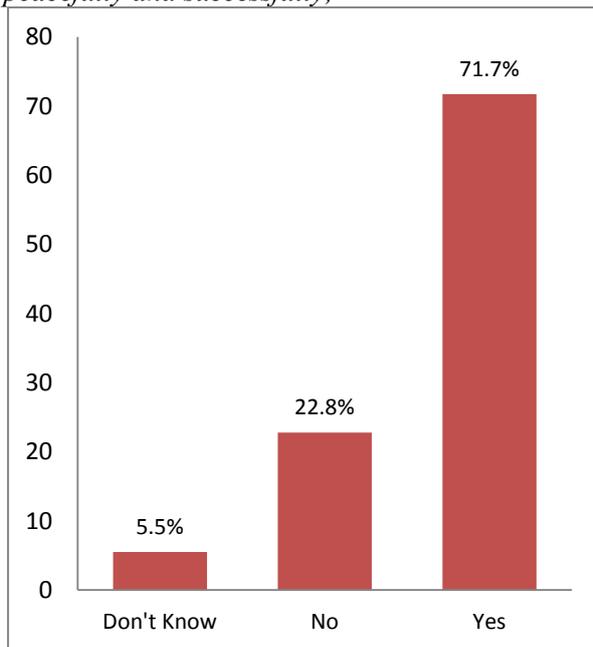
## 5.2 USAID Performance Indicators: Peaceful Conflict Management

The key outcome for the Mercy Corps SVC program was that traditional, community and religious leaders have enhanced capacity to resolve inter-communal disputes peacefully. The SVC program did exceptionally well on this indicator, as illustrated below.

- *532% increase in respondents indicating that conflicts were solved peacefully in their communities— from 13% in the baseline to 82.2% in the endline*
- *451% increase in respondents indicating that conflicts were solved peacefully in their communities— from 13% in the baseline to 71.7% in the final evaluation.*

Targeting community and religious leaders was very judicious because they are the most involved group in conflict resolution (endline study; 2015, pp 12), enjoy respect in the community, and have the capacity to influence members of the community. The program also reached out to non-conventional armed groups, with impressive results (see project outputs in annex 2). An explicit analysis of the influence of „spoilers“ and the intervention that Mercy Corps undertook to mitigate against their influence is presented in the conclusions.

### 1. Percentage change in the number of respondents in agreement that conflicts are being managed peacefully and successfully;



#### Are conflicts being managed peacefully disaggregated by Religion & Gender

<b>Religion</b>			
Religion	Don't Know	No	Yes
Animist	0	60%	40%
Christian	6%	21.3%	72.7%
Moslem	3.8%	34.6%	61.5%
Declined	0	15.4%	84.6%
Aggregate	5.5%	22.8%	71.2%

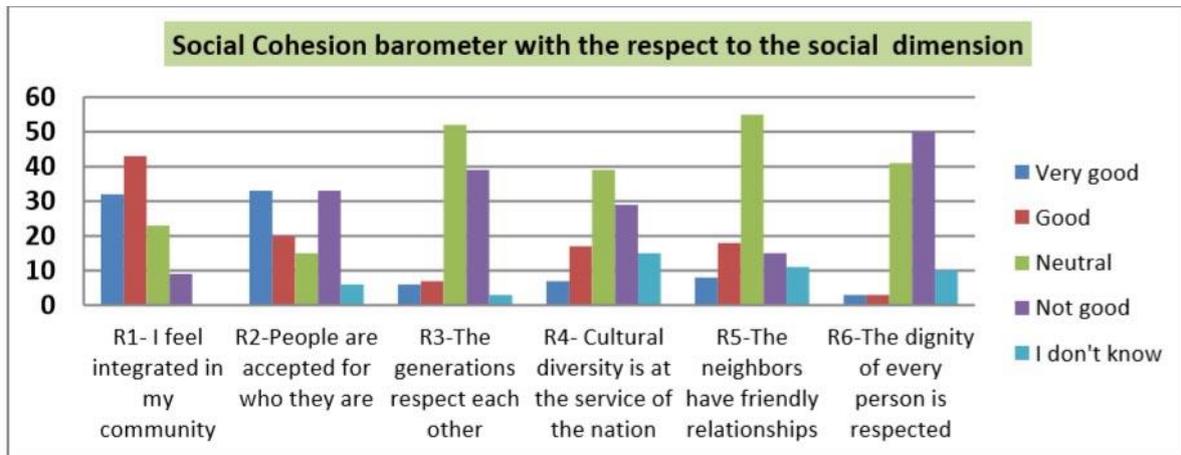
#### Gender

Gender	Don't Know	No	Yes
Female	5.2%	23.4%	71.4%
Male	5.7%	22.3%	72.0%
Aggr	5.5%	22.8%	71.7%

Total  
100.0  
100.0  
100.0

The percentage of respondents in agreement that conflicts were being managed peacefully and successfully was 71.7%, up from 13% reported in the baseline, indicating a 451% increase from the baseline. This percentage might have been higher but was likely influenced by an eruption of violence during the study.

At the beginning of the program, community leaders were invited to assess the level of social cohesion in their communities. The results reflected failing social cohesion and lent weight to the rationale of the program.



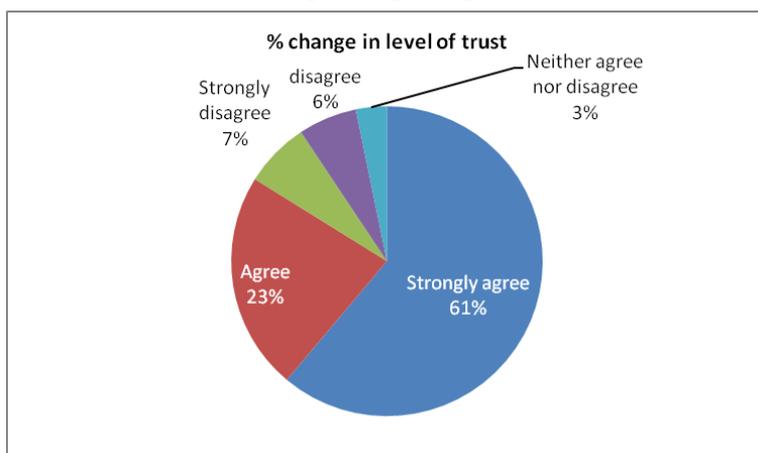
Perceptions on social cohesion by community leaders; baseline study 2014

The high percentage of respondents agreeing that conflicts were being managed peacefully and successfully is only half the story. Testimonies from focus group discussions and key informant interviews demonstrate the impact of the capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully, often averting situations that could lead to loss of life.

“Two neighbors had a conflict of ownership of certain materials... they could not agree who should have been the rightful owner. The first one threatened to call his Anti-Balaka brothers from Gobongo. The other also said he would call other Anti-Balaka...I think from 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement. I realized the situation was going to become violent, and people would lose their lives, even those who were not party to the conflict. I called a fellow elder, and using the knowledge from the training that Mercy Corps had given us, we resolved the problem.”

*Community Leader, Bangui*

During focus group discussions, respondents recounted experiences of conflicts that could have fatal endings had they not been de-escalated and subsequently resolved. Most of the community leaders agreed that the Mercy Corps training they had participated in gave them the skills and confidence to resolve the conflicts. As observed by Mercy Corps in 2014: “because of the underlying tension caused by this continuous threat of violence, a single rumor can end in thousands of people fleeing into the bush to escape a possible attack. Whole villages have fled conflict-related violence, while others remain during the day to work and flee into the forest at night, exposing them to disease and malnutrition.”



*Change in the number of people who report a more positive attitude towards the other group.*

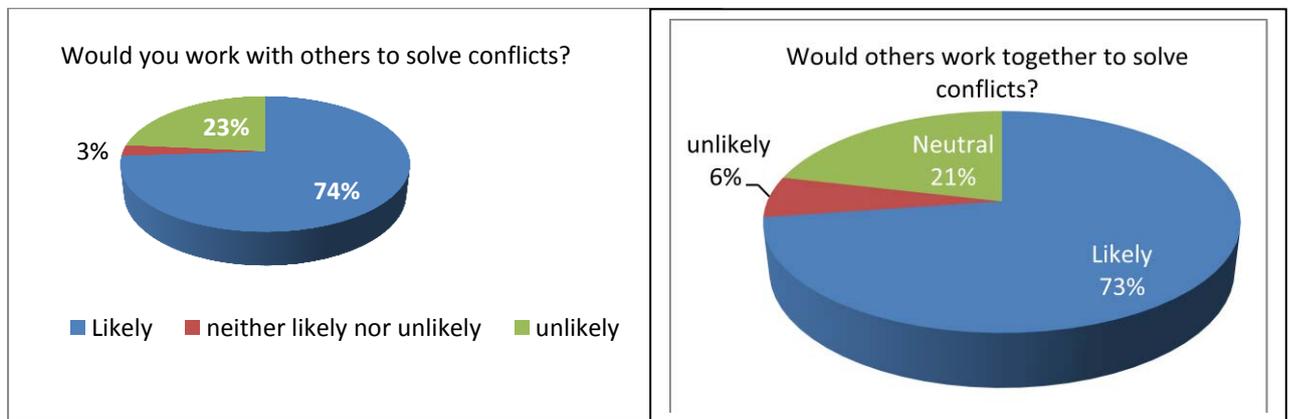
Results from the survey indicate a significant increase in the level of trust between communities - 86.2% of the respondents said that the level of trust in their communities had significantly improved. This is in comparison to 31.1% at the beginning of the SVC program, and this demonstrates a positive change in attitudes towards others. Focus group discussions strongly highlighted the influence of the program, in this shift.

**Change in level of trust in last 6 months**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Improved</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>86.2</b>
Same	28	9.0
Deteriorated	15	4.8
Total	311	100.0

Would you be willing to work with people from the other group?		
	frequency	percent
<b>Yes</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>74%</b>
No	81	26%
Total	311	100

The change in attitudes is also demonstrated by a willingness to solve conflicts with others. Asked if they would be willing to work with others to solve conflicts 74% expressed a willingness to work with others. They also thought others would do likewise (73%).

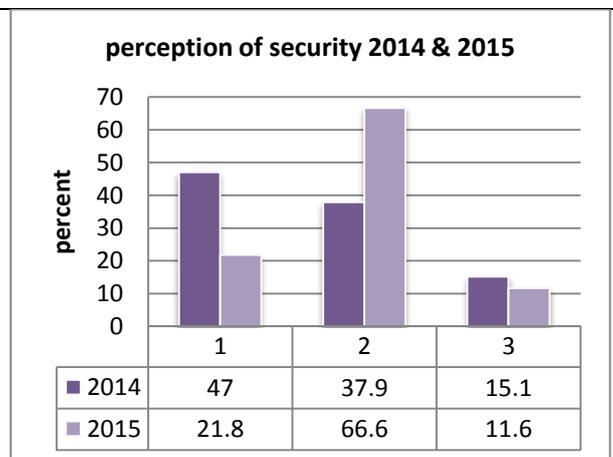


The positively changing attitudes towards the „other“ coupled with a willingness to resolve conflict peacefully set a robust foundation for social cohesion. To fully appreciate the SVC program’s contribution to the peacebuilding and social cohesion in the project areas, one needs to examine the pre-program situation, as demonstrated below.

**5.2.1 Change in perception of levels of violence:**

Dangerous	47	21.8
Secure	37.9	66.6
Neither	15.1	11.6
	2014	2015

The change in perception of improving security is noted with 66% of the respondents saying their area was secure, from 37.9% twelve months ago. The volatility of the security situation was highlighted by flare of violence during the study.



Before the SVC program, respondents indicated a high level of mistrust and random acts of violence that were not sanctioned, because state organs were not functional. There has been marked change in the security but the security situation remains volatile.

In 2013 the situation was terrible... we lived in fear of our lives. Looting, killing, raping were happening every day... we suffered at the hands of Seleka,...when the Anti-Balaka came we thought we were going to receive salvation...only to perceive that they were equally bad! The situation continued even in 2014. Thanks to God, the last six months have been good... We are doing business...and people have returned to their communities.

*Community member, Begoua, Bangui.*

The abatement in the levels of conflict can be recognized by the fact that some internally displaced members of the community are returning. Although as we were told during focus group discussions, the decision to remain in IDP camps is not entirely due to security considerations as some of the population remains in the camps because at least there, they can get meals and shelter.

...You are asking me about those in camps...of course they returned... it is their community, isn't it? Why should that surprise you? They are some who remained...they want to get something... may be some support, food. Sometimes they are at home, in the evening they go back to the camp...do you think that is normal?

*Peer Educator, Begoua.*

Findings indicate that there are more members of the community returning than leaving. This is also an indicator of a return to peace. The return of IDPs, however, comes with new challenges that can create conflict anew, when they find their homesteads destroyed, or properties looted, often with culprits still within the community. This underscores the importance of Mercy Corps work. Social cohesion is not a project: it is a process that requires time and concerted continuous effort.

*In the last 6 months, would you say people have left or returned to your community?*

Don't Know	21%
Left	20%
<b>Returned</b>	<b>59%</b>
Total	100%

The involvement of members of the community in the program was high and documented; open-air discussions and peace meetings were very well attended and brought together a spectrum of participants from all walks of life. Mercy Corps' approach to use entertainers and facilitators to pass along messages of peace proved effective. It raised interest and people could talk about sensitive issues in a relaxed way and constructive non-violent manner.

Public social cohesion events increased the visibility of Mercy Corps. Other activities also attracted interest and participation in the activities of the SVC program. Findings from the survey indicate more than 50% participation.

*Participation in Mercy Corps Activities in the last six-months*

Activity	Yes	No	Can't recall
----------	-----	----	--------------

Participated in peace dialogues	67.8%	31.8%	.3%
Heard peace messages on radio	82.3%	11.9%	5.8%
Participated in peacebuilding	63.3%	30.9%	5.8%

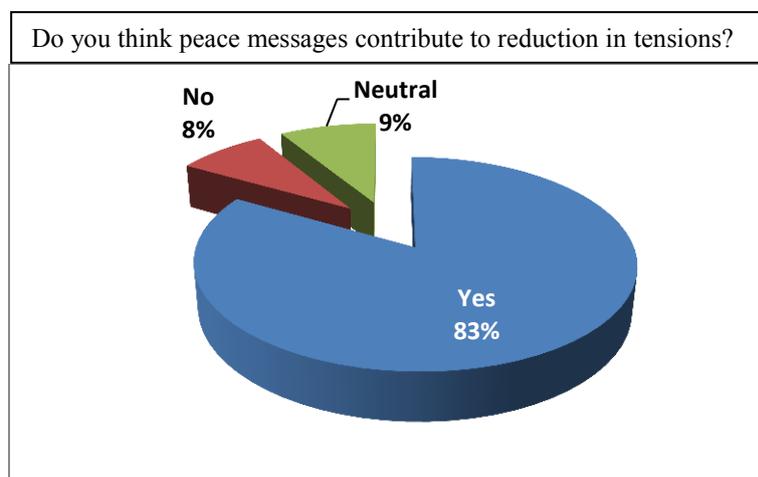
Most importantly, though, regarding the perception of communities on the interventions of Mercy Corps insofar as social cohesion is concerned, 94.5% of respondents were of the opinion that peace-building activities contribute to a decrease in violence.

Do you think peacebuilding activities have contributed to a decrease in violence?

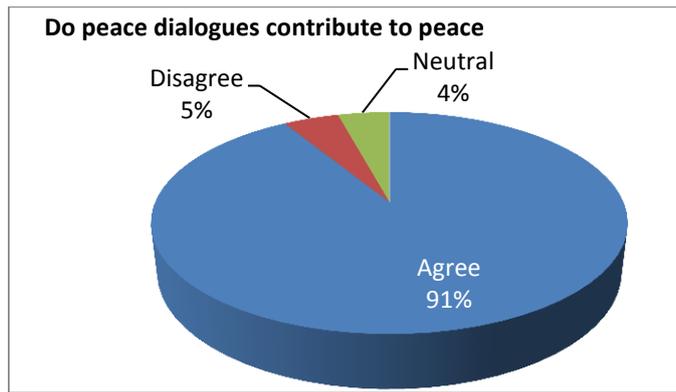
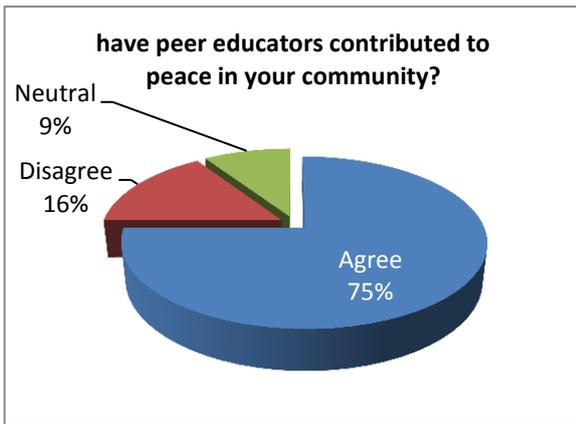
Religion	No	Yes
Animist	20.0%	80.0%
Christian	5.2%	94.8%
Muslim	3.8%	96.2%
Declined	7.7%	92.3%
Aggregate	5.5%	94.5%

91.3% agreed that peace dialogues contribute to peace. Peace dialogues and peace committees were a cornerstone of the SVC program.

Among the activities that facilitated contact with populations, and paved the way for dialogue, was peace messaging. The SVC program undertook a concerted campaign on peace advocacy, through peace messages, through radio and short messages SMS. The result of this activity was very positive. Of those asked, 83% agreed that peace messaging contributed to a reduction in tensions between groups.



The positive impact of peace messaging derives from the participatory way that peace messages were developed. Mercy Corps asked participants and members of the community to come up with peace messages that would have the most impact. From these, several were selected and widely broadcast. Thus when peer educators undertook their activities, the communities were more receptive of their messages.



From the data one can conclude the outreach activities of the SVC program were highly effective, as perceived by the program beneficiaries. These observations were echoed during the focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

### 5.3 Community leader’s capacity to resolve disputes (Objective 1)

**In the last six months have you heard a respected leader speaking out for peace?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Can't remember	40	12.9	12.9	12.9
	No	53	17.0	17.0	29.9
	Yes	218	70.1	70.1	100.0
	Total	311	100.0	100.0	

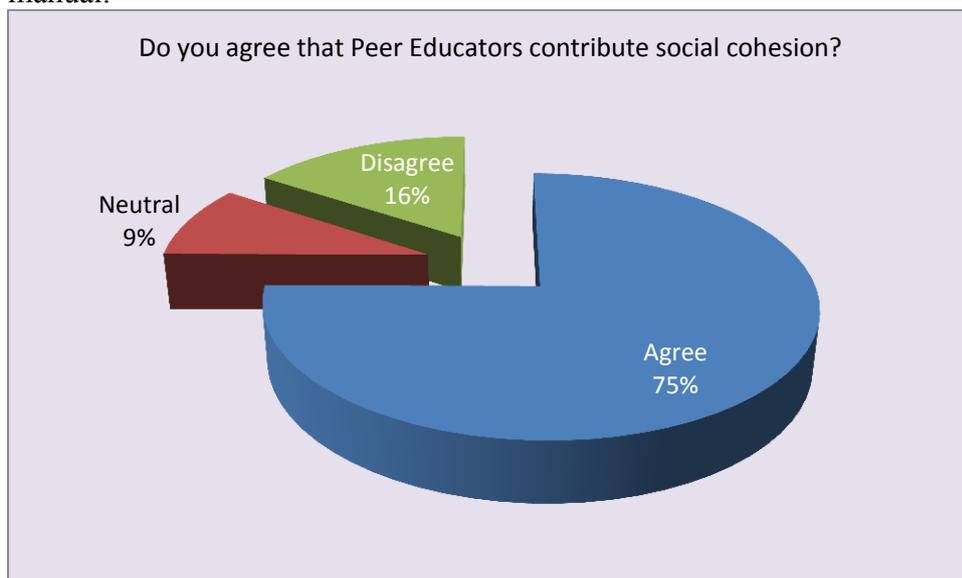
The community leaders interviewed said the training they received empowered them to resolve disputes. Community leaders are highly respected and their opinions carry a lot of weight. The impact of community leaders capacity to resolve conflicts is best understood not in numbers (although that is equally high: 70.1%) but the effect it had on the communities, which was shared in anecdotal evidence. Community leaders cited such examples as negotiations that resolved disputes that could have led to bloodshed, and resolving a dispute where a Muslim child was being stopped from attending school, thus setting a precedent for other children who had feared to attend school because of their religious identity.

Peace Committees have been active identifying and resolving disputes, and because they were formed in a transparent and participatory manner, they enjoy the trust and confidence of communities. In a situation where government institutions are absent or mistrusted, peace committees serve a very important role. The training that peace committees received has contributed to their role.

#### Peer Educators

Peer educators are members of the community who were identified by the community, vetted by community leaders and given short-term contracts and trained by SVC to conduct outreach for members of the community. They contributed a lot to the social cohesion activities by sensitizing the population on critical issues relevant to social cohesion and peace-building. The peer educators were selected in a transparent participatory way and

enjoyed the trust of the population. They were trained on nine modules<sup>5</sup> that are in the MC manual.



Most of the respondents agreed that the peer educator’s role contributed to peace and social cohesion. The approach could have been further strengthened by adapting the tools of the nine modules to the local environment and needs, and adjusting curricula and tools based on feedback from peer educators.

*“...I was sensitizing the population on democracy and the fight against corruption... then someone in the crowd shouted at me... “why are you telling us that? Why don’t you first talk to the authorities about corruption? Apparently some people had been denied getting their identity cards...or birth certificates because they had not paid a bribe”*

*Peer Educator, Bangui*

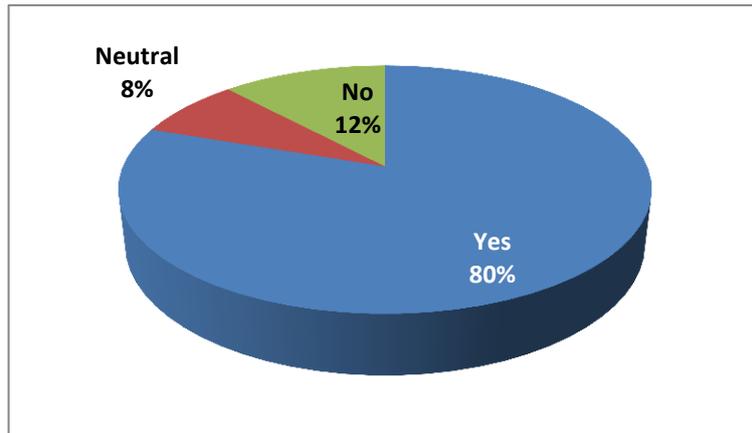
#### 5.4 Levels of cooperation increased from socio-economic projects (Objective 2)

Mercy Corps supported 98 Micro-projects, and 80 % of the respondents acknowledged that if different groups could work together on micro-projects, then they could work on other issues, including conflict resolution. Feedback during FGDs indicated that micro-projects were well received, and appreciated by communities.

<sup>5</sup>1) Social cohesion, 2) fostering peaceful relationships, 3) good governance, 4) Human Rights, 5) the fight against corruption, democracy, 6) minority rights, 7) freedom of movement, 8) right to physical integrity, and 9) CAR citizenship

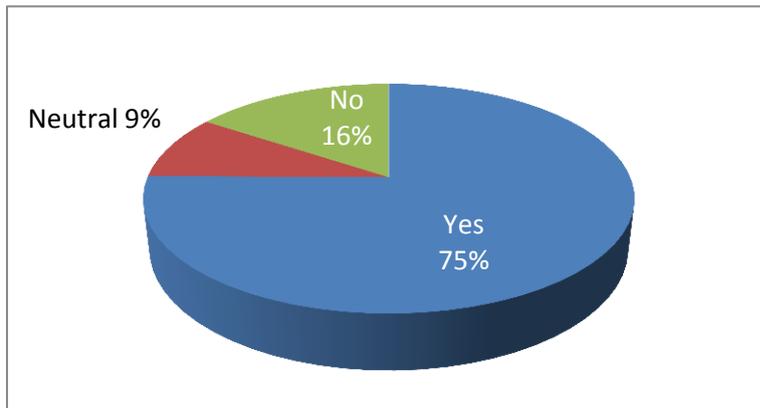
*Do you agree that if members of different groups work together on micro-projects they can work together on other issues?*

Socio-economic projects received a lot of accolades from beneficiaries. They contributed to anchoring social cohesion and bringing groups who had been antagonistic to work together. Social cohesion activities without supporting income generation activities (IGAs) were likely to be unsustainable, once the initial excitement of a new program had dissipated.



Social economic projects did not only bring opposing groups to work together, but in many cases they also provided an opportunity to earn a livelihood. As programs come and go in the Central African Republic, micro projects may perhaps be SVC's enduring footprint, serving as a basis for social cohesion. The SVC program facilitated capacity building of local associations by training grantees on indispensable skills in the management of micro-projects, including financial management, opening bank accounts, good governance, loan management, bookkeeping, and accounting. Records indicate that more than 370 micro-project beneficiaries were trained, including more than 127 women.

*Would you say micro-projects increased cooperation between previously antagonistic groups in your community?*



75% of respondents agreed that micro-projects had increased cooperation between previously antagonistic groups. The change in perception of the other, catalyzed by micro-projects, sets a good foundation for social cohesion.





*Textile products of the Christian Association for development*

The sustainability of the micro-projects, and their contribution to social cohesion, was supported by three aspects:

- The participatory process that informed the creation of micro-projects. The selection, vetting and approval of micro-projects were done by community leaders, peace committees, peer educators and other community members with support from the SVC program team in a transparent process.
- The income benefits that are accruing from micro-projects; some of which are providing employment to members of civil society organizations involving different communities. These associations often also serve as a safety net for their members.
- Many projects provided services to benefit the larger community; such as the rehabilitation of market spaces, rehabilitation of schools or creation of new water points.

## **5.5 Coordinating with other INGOs and partners**

Mercy Corps often took the lead in the coordination of the Social Cohesion Working Group, which brought together INGOs, the government of CAR, and local NGOs working on social cohesion. To avoid duplication of efforts, the SCWG shared areas of operations and themes for action and reinforced activities of each other. Collaboration went beyond social cohesion programming, MC participated in security meetings and other activities. Partners expressed satisfaction with their relationship with Mercy Corps.



Focus Group Discussion with Micro-project leaders, Association Gui na Titi Mo Si Mo Wara Mo Té 3eme Arrondissement

## Conclusion

Overall, the Mercy Corps SVC program did an exceptional job to achieve its objective of stabilizing communities and contributing to social cohesion. The outcomes of the SVC program were highly appreciated by communities. Community leaders' interventions, micro-projects, peace committees and peer educators each had an influence in changed attitudes towards the „other“ in the community. These successes need to be built upon as part of laying a foundation for long-term social cohesion. Social cohesion, trust building and other social processes require time, especially in the aftermath of violent conflict.

Results from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews indicate that the main threats to social cohesion are non-conventional armed groups. Mercy Corps exhibited great courage to engage and sensitize these actors on social cohesion and the need to resolve conflicts peacefully. This was not without risks, but the Mercy Corps strategy paid off; in Bangui and Bouar, 220 anti-Balaka fighters led by over ten anti-Balaka commanders decided to support Mercy Corps-trained community leaders and with Peace Committees to bring about social change. The involvement of these influential actors in spreading a message of non-violence resonated strongly with anti-Balaka fighters.

In Bouar, 26 ethnic group leaders representing a population of 39,205 minorities in Bouar signed a *reconciliation pact*<sup>6</sup> by which the leaders commit to non-violence in resolving

<sup>7</sup> Reported in the Endline Study, 2015:7

conflict, forestalling discrimination on any premise and safeguarding minorities in Bouar. The pact was a result of dialogue initiated through the project. As a result of these activities, roadblocks were removed and populations of different religious confessions were allowed to move freely and go about their lives immediately following the SVC interventions.

Today Muslims are accepted in our community even though there are still some challenges...before, being identified as a Muslim led to automatic aggression. We now work together for the benefit of the community. Our association is composed of Christians and Muslims.

*Association Gui na Titi Mo Si Mo Wara Mo Té*

The complementarity of Mercy Corps activities demonstrates a well-designed program. Radio talk-shows and peace messages prepared the terrain for constructive dialogue. Micro-projects added a new and compelling dimension; providing tangible benefits to communities, and catalyzing reconciliation. This explains the substantial impact of the program on social cohesion.

## **6.0 Recommendations and Lessons Learned**

Results from the study indicate a considerable level of effort on the part of Mercy Corps SVC and subsequently remarkable achievements on the three objectives. In a short period, SVC successfully undertook many diverse activities.

Future programming could learn from the minor shortcomings which, given the working environment and situation in CAR, could have been overlooked.

- There appears to be a lack of a robust considered exit strategy for the program, especially after such success. The program comes to an end at a critical period prior to elections; early indications point to a possibility of election violence. More than a half the respondents expressed fear that there could be election-related violence.

### *Recommendation:*

Identification of possible structures to mainstream the good work that Mercy Corps did, especially on micro projects to support their continuity. These could include local NGOs and SCFG.

The SVC program had eight staff: the number of activities it had to implement was simply astounding! 98 micro-project, 200 peer educators, implementing 19,347 awareness sessions on nine modules, sessions reaching 413,978 people, without forgetting peace committees, community leaders and other partners. To get the maximum results the task should be equal to the capacity of the personnel. Anecdotal evidence indicates that MC was mainly implementing without taking a breath, to evaluate and learn, and to change course where needed.

### *Recommendation:*

To avoid efforts being spread too thin, some activities could have been dropped, so that MC could focus on its areas of strength. Or, more personnel could have been recruited to deliver appropriately. The activities with the most impact were peace dialogues, community leader resolution of conflicts, training and micro-projects. Not to take away anything from communication activities like peace messaging, culture and sports promotion for social cohesion, because they prepared the ground for social cohesion, but to point out that these activities are also undertaken by other INGOs and national processes. It would be judicious to focus on activities that physically bring communities together and micro-projects and devolve peace messaging to others.

A new program to consolidate what was achieved by SVC on social cohesion would be a better option of strengthening the outstanding work of Mercy Corps.

### **References:**

Haines, Michael, (2014) Complex Crises Fund: Central African Republic Mid-Cycle Portfolio Review, USAID

Alexandre, Marc, Willman A, Ghazia A, Rebosio A, & Kanishka B, (2013) Societal Dynamics & Fragility Engaging Societies in Responding to Fragile Situations, World Bank.

Maynard, Kimberly A., (1997) Social Reintegration in Post-conflict Societies, USAID Conference Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, & Reintegration in Post-conflict Societies October 30-31, 1997

Cox, Fletcher D., Catherine R. Orsborn, & Timothy D. Sisk (2014) Religion, Peacebuilding, and Social Cohesion in Conflict-affected Countries Sié Chéou Kang Center/University of Denver

Kenwill International (2010) Evaluation Report For Stability, Peace & Reconciliation In Northern Uganda Project (Spring) USAID

Dandy, Justine (2013) Research into the Current and Emerging Drivers for Social Cohesion, Social Division and Conflict in Multicultural Australia, Joint Commonwealth, State and Territory Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

Mercy Corps 2014 Quarterly Reports

Mercy Corps 2015 Quarterly Reports

Mercy Corps 2014 Baseline Study

Mercy Corps 2015 Endline Study

## **Mercy Corps SVC Outputs:**

**OBJECTIVE 1:** As part of enhancing community leaders' capacity to resolve inter-community disputes, Mercy Corps has:

- Trained local NGO members and UN agency beneficiaries (UNICEF, WHO), in social cohesion and peace.
- Supported Community Leaders and Peace Committee members to organize awareness sessions to promote peaceful resolution of conflict and dialogue in their communities.
- Trained local NGOs and associations on Interest Based Negotiation, conflict analysis, and social cohesion.
- Conducted 12 (of 12) conflict actors mapping exercises in Bangui and Bouar.
- Supported Peace Committees and Community Leaders to resolve 46 conflicts.
- Engaged with a consultant to develop and train Community Leaders and Peace committees on basic training on conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm principles.
- The conflict mitigation consultant also developed conflict mapping guides, youth training curriculum, and community dialogue processes.
- After being trained, Community Leaders were supported by SVC staff to train Peace Committee members in social cohesion, conflict and Interest Based Negotiation (IBN).

**OBJECTIVE 2:** To help Muslim and Christian communities to better work together, the project continued to support joint economic and social initiatives that benefited divided communities. Mercy Corps has:

- Financed and oversaw the implementation of 89 micro-projects implemented by diverse organizations;
- Trained 89 civil society organizations receiving small grants on financial management;
- Trained 90 youth, including 30 university students, on life skills, and supported 12 youth-led community projects;
- Received, reviewed and approved technical and financial reports from 89 micro-project grantees;
- Supported 54 organizations in opening bank accounts; and,
- Trained 16 local community members to monitor and support micro-projects;
- Trained 166 project holders, including 80 women, on good governance, loan management, bookkeeping, and accounting; and,
- Trained an additional 127 project holders in Bangui, including 56 women, on project development (project assessment, market analysis, the five marketing principles, budget, activities, etc.)

**OBJ 3:** influencing public attitudes towards tolerance and non-violence.

- Conducted biweekly meetings with Peace Committees (PCs) and Community Leaders (CL) to monitor conflict resolution and interfaith dialogues in their communities;
- trained 10 journalists to collect peace messages and success stories, and broadcast them via five radio stations; signed MoUs with Radio Stations in Bangui and Bouar.
- Continued broadcasting peace messages on a daily basis through five partner radio stations.
- Conducted two intercommunity dialogues - one in Bangui and one in Bouar – with over 200 attendees;
- Produced communication materials with peace messages to educate community members;

- Organized two radio talk shows in Bouar;
- Supported the 200 Peer Educators in organizing 11,800 awareness sessions; and,
- facilitated the establishment of 45 youth social cohesion clubs comprising of more than 270 members, including 112 young women.
- Supported 200 Peer Educators (PEs) in implementing 5,637 awareness sessions on the nine modules in the Peer Educators Community Awareness Raising Guide. These sessions reached 147,772 people, including 63,571 women.
- Supported the 200 Peer Educators in organizing 19,347 awareness sessions.
- Engaged with former Anti-Balaka to become Peer Educators. They organized awareness-raising activities in all Bangui localities, reaching 1,757 Anti-Balaka members and community members including 134 women.
- Organized 6 community awareness-raising activities in Bangui, Bimbo, and Begoua with PCs, PEs, and dialogue monitoring committees, which reached more than 3,000 individuals.
- Facilitated local theatre groups in Bangui to produce radio peace messages.
- The Social Cohesion Working Group coordination meetings continued in order to avoid duplication and enhance coordination

**Final Evaluation for social cohesion in CAR**

1.0 SECTION 1: IDENTIFICATION			
1.1	<b>Survey Area</b> A=Bangui B=Bouar 1st Arr=1 .....2 <sup>nd</sup> Arr=2.....5 <sup>th</sup> Arr=3.....8 <sup>th</sup> =4.....Bimbo=5.....Begoua=6.....		
1.2	Please enter gender of respondent	1 = Male                      2 = Female	
1.3	<b>How old are you?</b> PLEASE ENTER YEARS ONLY		
2.0 SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD, RESIDENCY & MIGRATION			
2.1	What is the primary way you make a living? (tick all that apply)	Agriculture ..... 1 Livestock ..... 2 Commerce..... 3 Regular employment ..... 4 Other (please specify) ..... 5	
2.2	How long have you lived in this part of town?	0-6 months ..... 1 6-12 months ..... 2 More than 12 months ..... 3	
2.3	In the last 6 months, would you say people have left or returned to your community?	Left ..... 1 Returned ..... 2 Don't Know..... 3	
2.4	In your community, have you witnessed conflict in the last 6 months	Yes ..... 1 No..... 2	
2.5	In your opinion what do you think are sources of these conflicts? (tick all that apply)	Religion..... 1 Politics..... 2 Ethnicity..... 3 Economic..... 4 Other (please specify) ..... 5	
2.6	What is your religion?	Catholic ..... 1 Muslim..... 2 Protestant..... 3 Animist ..... 4 Other (please specify) ..... 5	
2.7	In your community, what is the primary group that you or your community were in conflict with?	Christians ..... 1 Muslims..... 2 Other (please specify) ..... 3 Don't know or not applicable..... 4	
3.0 PERCEPTIONS ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT			
3.1	Since January 2015, most of the conflicts have been resolved in my community in a non-violent way. ?	Yes ..... 1 No..... 2 Don't know ..... 3	
3.2	Have you participated in a peace forum/dialogue this year?	Yes ..... 1 No..... 2 Can't recall ..... 3	If 2 ⇒ Skip Q 4.1
3.3	Can you recall who organised it? Mercy Corps ..... 1 Community leaders ..... 2 Religious leaders ..... 3 Community members ..... 3 Women's groups ..... 4 Other..... (specify)..... 7	Yes ..... 1 No..... 2 Can't recall ..... 3	

3.4	Can you recall who addressed it? Community leaders.....1 Religious leaders.....2 Community members.....3 Women's groups.....4 Youth groups..... 5 Local authorities.....6 Other.....(specify).....7	Yes ..... 1 No.....2 Can't recall .....3	
-----	--	--	--

4.0 Media Engagement			
4.1	Do you have access to any of the following 1 = Radio      2 = Telephone      3=Radio &Telephone      4=None		
4.2	Have you this year, heard any peace messages on radio?	1 = yes    2 = No    3=cant recall	
4.3	Have you this year, received any peace messages by sms?	1 = yes    2 = No    3=cant recall	
4.4	Do you think peace messages contribute in reducing tension	YES=1 No=2 NOT SURE=3	
4.5	When respected leaders speak for peace, do you think members of the community respond positively?	1 = Yes    No= 2      Not sure =3	
4.6	In the last 6 months have you heard respected leaders speak out against violence?	1 = Yes    No= 2      can't recall =3	
4.7	In the last 6 months have you participated in any peacebuilding activities?	1 = Yes    No= 2      can't recall =3	
4.8	Do you think peace dialogues/forums contribute to reducing conflict in your community? 1 = Strongly agree      3 = neither agree nor disagree      5 = Strongly disagree 2 = Agree      4 = Disagree		
4.9	Peer educators have contributed to peace in my community? 1 = Strongly agree    3 = neither agree nor disagree      5 = Strongly disagree 2 = Agree      4 = Disagree		

### 5.0 TRUST /

5.1	In general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Most people who live in this neighbourhood can be trusted?	1 = Agree strongly / 2 = Agree somewhat / 3 = Neither agree nor disagree / 4 = Disagree somewhat / 5 = Disagree strongly/	
5.1.1	Most people in this neighbourhood are willing to help if you need it /		
5.1.2	Personally I would have no problem trusting people from group X /		
6.0	Over the last 6 months, would you say the level of trust in this neighbourhood has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same? 1 = Much worse/ 2 = Worse / 3 = Stayed about the same / 4 = Better / 5 = Much better /		
6.1	How safe did you feel in the area you live 12 months ago? 1 = Very unsafe/ 2 = Unsafe/ 3 = Neither safe nor unsafe/ 4 = Safe/		

	5 = Very safe/	
6.2	How safe do you feel in the area you live now?	
	1 = Very unsafe/ 2 = Unsafe/ 3 = Neither safe nor unsafe/ 4 = Safe/ 5 = Very safe/	

### 7 . SOCIAL COHESION AND INCLUSION /

7.1	Sometimes there are differences between people living in the same neighbourhood. To what extent do any such differences characterise your neighbourhood?	
	1 = To a very small extent / 2 = To a small extent / 3 = Neither small nor great extent/ 4 = To a great extent / 5 = To a very great extent /	

7.2	Do any of these differences cause problems?	
	1 = Yes / 2 = No /	

7.3	Have these problems ever led to violence?	
	1 = Yes / 2 = No /	

7.4	How strong or weak are the feelings of togetherness that you have with others in your community?	
	1 = Very weak / very distant / 2 = Weak / distant/ 3 = Neither strong or weak / distant nor close / 4 = Strong / close / 5 = Very strong / very close /	

### 8.0 COLLECTIVE ACTION AND COOPERATION /

8.1	In the past 12 months, have you worked with others in your neighbourhood to do something for the benefit of the community?	24.1
	1 = Yes / 2 = No /	

8.2	If there was a conflict in this community, how likely is it that you will cooperate with others to try to solve the conflict?	24.2
	1 = Very likely / 2 = Somewhat likely / 3 = Neither likely nor unlikely / 4 = Somewhat unlikely/ 5 = Very unlikely/	

8.3	If there was a conflict in this community, how likely is it that others will cooperate to try to solve the conflict?	24.3
	1 = Very likely / 2 = Somewhat likely/ 3 = Neither likely nor unlikely / 4 = Somewhat unlikely / 5 = Very unlikely /	

### 10.0 PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT /

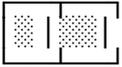
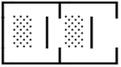
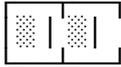
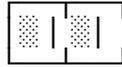
9.1	How much control do you feel you have in making decisions that affect your everyday activities?	
	1 = No control/ 2 = Control over very few decisions / 3 = Control over some decisions / 4 = Control over most decisions /	

	5 = Control over all decisions /		
9.2	Do you feel that you have the power to make important decisions that can change the course of your life?		
	1 = Totally unable to change life/ 2 = Mostly unable to change life / 3 = Neither able nor unable / 4 = Mostly able to change life / 5 = Totally able to change life /		
9.3	How much impact do you think you have in making your neighbourhood a better place to live?		
	1 = Very small impact / 2 = Small impact / 3 = Average impact / 4 = Big impact / 5 = Very big impact /		
9.4	In the past 12 months, have you undertaken any of the following listed activities?		
9.4.1	Attended a peace meeting, dialogue or discussion group	1 = Yes / 2 = No /	
9.4.2	Spoken or met with a peer educator/community leader	1 = Yes / 2 = No /	
9.5	To what extent do community leaders take into account concerns voiced by members of the when they make decisions?		
	1 = To a very small extent / 2 = To a small extent / <i>Gake</i> 3 = Neither small nor great extent / 4 = To a great extent / 5 = To a very great extent /		
9.6	Do you think peacebuilding activities in general, have contributed to a decrease in violence?		
			1 = Yes / 2 = No /
9.7	Do you think conflict may resume during the coming elections?		
			1 = Yes / 2 = No /
9.8	Why do you think conflict may resume during the upcoming elections?		
9.9	To what extent would you say that there is <u>mutual trust</u> between group X and non-group X in this community?		
	1 = Very small extent/ 2 = Small extent/ 3 = Neither small nor large extent/ 4 = Large extent/ 5 = Very large extent/		
9.10	To what extent would you say that there is <u>mutual respect</u> between group X and non-group X in this community		
	1 = Very small extent/ 2 = Small extent/ 3 = Neither small nor large extent/ 4 = Large extent/ 5 = Very large extent/		
9.11	What is your view about the socio-economic status of the group X compared to non group X?		
	1 = Worse off (group X are worse off than non-group X)/		

2 = Same as (group X are the same as non-group X)/  
 3 = Better off (group X are better off than non-group X)/

<b>10. Joint Socio-economic Activities</b>			
10.1	Do you know of any one in your community who has received support for a micro-project?	1 = Yes    2 = No	
10.2	Do you agree that If members from different groups work together on socio-economic projects, then they can work together on other issues?	1 = Very much agree 2 = Agree 3 = Not agree or disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly disagree	
10.3	Would you say that micro-projects have increased cooperation between formerly antagonistic groups in your community?	1 = Very much agree 2 = Agree 3 = Not agree or disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly disagree	
10.4	Would you say that micro-projects have been beneficial to cooperation in your community?	1 = Very much agree 2 = Agree 3 = Not agree or disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly disagree	
10.5	Do you agree that selection of microprojects was transparent and fair?	1 = Very much agree 2 = Agree 3 = Not agree or disagree 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly disagree	
10.6	Would you work with members of group X if you received support?	1 = Yes    2 = No	
10.7	Would you work with members of group X without support?	1 = Yes    2 = No	

**THANK YOU**

ENUMERATOR CODE	FIELD MANAGER CODE	DATA CODERS CODE	DATA CAPTURER CODE
			
Date of completion ____/____/2015 dd mm yy	Date of quality control ____/____/2015 dd mm yy	Date of quality coding ____/____/2015 dd mm yy	Date of data entry ____/____/2015 dd mm yy
Signature	Signature	Signature	Signature

## **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: PEACE COMMITTEES, COMMUNITY LEADERS**

### **Protocol:**

*In all notes and transcriptions participants should be identified by a letter and a number instead of real names for purposes of confidentiality and security (for example R1,R2,R3...)*

### **Introductions;**

FGDs should begin by observing social etiquette common to first encounters in communities. The interviewer will then introduce him/herself and the purpose of the FGD.

“Hello, my name is [facilitator’s name] and am working on behalf of Mercy Corps to find out about its SVC programme. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this FGD on the experience of MC SVC programme. Your identity and contribution will remain confidential and will contribute to improving future MC programmes on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. None of the information you provide will be attributed to you. For the purpose of analysis of findings can we have your consent to audio record this discussion?.

*Singuila mingui.*

### **Relevance of the programme:**

#### **A: What was the situation before the SVC programme?**

*PROBE FOR;*

Security and human safety in 2012-13 Displacement, incidences of violence and conflict, who was involved, victim, perpetrator etc

#### **B: Process of peace committee formation;**

*Probe for;*

1. Transparency, equity, how they were received by community?
2. Did you receive any training on peace and reconciliation methods? How long was the training?
3. Would you say the training helped you in your duties as peace makers? In what ways have you used the training received? Before the programme, what was the usual way conflicts were resolved.
4. Nature of conflicts; What conflicts do you usually deal with? Have you been able to resolve some conflicts? Could you give us an example, a case of a conflict you resolved? Who was involved?

#### **C: Current situation**

1. How has the conflict situation evolved since the coming into force of the SVP programme? If tensions have reduced what do you attribute the reduction in tensions to? How were returnees received? How were they? (apprehensive? Keeping to themselves? Did some lose property?) how are they now? (integrating? Still untruthful?)
2. Besides the peace committee who else is managing conflicts in your community? Who would you say members of the community listen to, who has most influence on their actions of social cohesion?
3. Is there an improvement in trust and cooperation between Muslims and Christians now? Can you give us any examples? What reasons would you say are responsible for the change in trust and collaboration?
4. In what ways have micro-projects benefitted peacebuilding and social cohesion?
5. What do you think of the impact of peace messaging? Do you think the messages were effective?
6. What would you do differently if you were Mercy Corps?

## Qualitative Field Work Plan

Lieu		Horaire	Respondent Category	Respondent	Responsible
1ere Arr	23/09/2015	8h30 à 10h30	Key Informant Interviews	Community Leaders	Emmanuel
		11h00 à 12h30	Focus Groups Discussions	Peer Educators	REDRICK
2eme Arr	23/09/2015		Focus Groups Discussions	Peace Committees Members	Emmanuel
		13h à 15h30	Key Informant Interviews	Micro Project Beneficiary	Emmanuel
5eme Arr	24/09/2015	8h30 à 10h30	Focus Groups Discussions	Youth Groups	REDRICK
			Focus Groups Discussions	Microprojects	REDRICK
		11h00 à 12h30	Key Informant Interviewss	Community Leaders	Emmanuel
5eme Arr	24/09/2015	13h à 15h30	Key Informant Interviewss	Peace Committees Members	Emmanuel
Begoua	25/09/2015	8h30 à 10h30	Key Informant Interviewss	Peer Educators	Emmanuel
			Key Informant Interviews	Peace Committees	Emmanuel
		11h00 à 12h30	Focus Groups Discussions	Microprojects Beneficiary	REDRICK
		13h à 15h30	Focus Groups Discussions	Community Leaders	REDRICK
8eme Arr	26/09/2015	8h30 à 10h30	Key Informant Interviews	Peace Committees	Emmanuel
		11h00 à 12h30	Key Informant Interviews	Microprojects	Emmanuel
			Focus Groups Discussions	Peer Educators	REDRICK
8eme Arr	26/09/2015	13h à 15h30	Focus Groups Discussions	Youth Groups	REDRICK
Bimbo	28/09/2015	8h30 à 10h30	Key Informant Interviews	Community Leaders	Emmanuel
			Focus Groups Discussions	Microprojects	REDRICK
		11h00 à 12h30	Focus Groups Discussions	Peer Educator	REDRICK
Bimbo	28/09/2015	13h à 15h30	Key Informant Interviews	Women Leaders	Emmanuel

The main objective for the qualitative inquiry was to gain in-depth understanding of the SVC program. We tried to include all the segments that informed the SVC study: Women, Men, Muslims and Christians.





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

AID-OAA-A-14-00024

**Program performance results**

N°	Mercy Corps - 2014 CAR Program Indicators	Indicator Type	Target	Results Achieved	Raison why established goals were not met
1	% change in the number of respondents in agreement that conflicts are being managed peacefully and successfully	"Custom" indicator	50%	71.7%	Mercy Corps exceed the expected result by 143% (as the target was 50% and achievement was 71.7%). The baseline was 13% and the endline is 71.7%.
2	% change in number of people who report a more positive attitude of the other group	"Custom" indicator	Baseline +50%	74% of the participants said they were willing to work with the “other group”	N/A
3	# of interfaith forums jointly conducted (1.6.1-12)	"F" indicator	24	32 interfaith fora were organized attended by <i>1,250 people including 564 women</i> from Muslim and Christian communities.	N/A
4	# of media stories disseminated with USG support to facilitate the advancement of reconciliation and peace processes (1.6.1-12)	"F" indicator	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27 Peace messages in French and Sango were produced and nine radio stations broadcasted them in Bangui and Bouar.</li> <li>14 radio talk shows were conducted on Radio Ndeke Luka and Radio Notre Dame on themes including social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, the return of IDPs</li> </ul>	Instead of focusing only on radio peace messages, Mercy Corps used other techniques such as radio talk shows, on air debates, and sending peace messages through SMS to educate a large number of



				<p>and refugees, tolerance and forgiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One on-air</b> debate around peace and social cohesion was held in Bangui.</li> <li>• <b>8 SMS</b> peace messages were produced by Mercy Corps, IC-PCs and CLs, and sent to all holders of Moov, Orange, Télécel, and Azur phones in CAR.</li> <li>• <b>20 testimonies</b> (peace messages and success stories) were collected and broadcast via five radio stations in Bangui and Bouar.</li> </ul>	community members.
5	# of inter-community peace committees formed	"Custom" indicator	<b>TBD 24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>28 Inter-community Peace Committees</b> were established.</li> <li>• 255 PC members were trained on interest-based negotiation, social cohesion, peace building, and conflict analysis.</li> </ul>	• N/A
6	# conflict maps produced	"Custom" indicator	<b>15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>12 actors mapping exercises</b> were conducted in each of the program areas. Conflict actors and their allies were identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mercy Corps decided to carry out an actor mapping exercise in each of its twelve areas of intervention. This was decided based on the possibility to mobilize all actors involved and ensure their security.</li> </ul>
7	# of community dialogues conducted	"Custom" indicator	<b>24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>214 community dialogues</b> were conducted by Mercy Corps, IC-PCs, and community leaders in Bangui and Bouar which mobilized 1,733 people, including 448 women among which 60% were religious leaders.</li> <li>• <b>200 conflicts</b> were resolved including <b>78 intercommunity (religion/ethnic) conflicts.</b></li> </ul>	• N/A



Community-led **peace dialogues** were a cornerstone of the SVC program. Notable successes of dialogues include the following:

- *Baboua and Yelewa dialogue from September 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015:* During this dialogue, community representatives discussed the herders' return to the village, and the benefits of having different places designated for pastoralists and farmers for their activities and thereby avoid further conflict. It was also decided to set up a mediation committee for peaceful conflict resolution. These various dialogues helped prevent conflicts between Muslim herders and Christian farmers, maintained stability, and reinforced cooperation and social cohesion between communities. In Mbotonga, in addition to representatives from 10 villages, herder IDP representatives from Ngawi village in Cameroon also participated in the dialogue.
- *Bouar inter-ethnic groups dialogue on March 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015:* Mercy Corps brought together 26 youth (20 male and 6 female youth) and 26 leaders (25 men and 1 woman) representing the main ethnic groups (6 from Muslim communities and 20 from Christian communities) to discuss the promotion of peace in communities inhabited by previously antagonistic factions. Broadcasted through radio Siriri in Bouar on March 14th, 2015, these talks enabled a large population to hear the message of peace in their homes. All 26 leaders used their own ethnic dialects to advocate for peace and strengthen solidarity among different marginalized and vulnerable groups who had previously shown signs of distrust towards other groups perceived as "opponents". The talks resulted in a reconciliation pact signed by 26 ethnic group leaders. The pact contains clauses soliciting leaders' commitment to endorse non-violent conflict resolution, forestalling discrimination on any premise and safeguarding minorities in Bouar. Community leaders have since managed to maintain peace and stability within Bouar. While previously few trading opportunities existed among communities of different ethnicities and religions, traders of all faiths are at present successfully cooperating. The pact has especially facilitated the re-integration of Muslim traders into the local economy.
- *Bangui Inter-religious dialogue: from June 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>,* Religious leaders signed and disseminated an "inter-religious dialogue act" in which leaders condemned the use of religion for criminality and violence and denounced the interference of the government in religious affairs. They also invited the government of CAR and its partners to facilitate reconciliation and forgiveness between Central Africans. Following the dialogue, religious leaders organized several awareness sessions on religious peace.
- *Intercommunity dialogue in Bouar and Bangui: From June to July, 2015,* Facilitating the return of more than 200 refugees from Garoua Boulai to Bouar, this dialogue allowed young Muslim moto taxi drivers to restart their various business activities, Muslim traders to reopen their stores and continue their trade in market places, and the Haoussa's market to re-opened where Muslims and Christians now sell alongside each other. In addition to the immediate benefit to Muslim economic actors, this also contributed to an increase in affordable goods available to the community. In Bangui, dialogue between Muslim and Christian community leaders from 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissements resulted in approving or accommodating each other, Muslim community merchants restarted trading, and around 300 community members returned to their community and shared security information. A reconciliation celebration was organized in 2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement during which, Muslim and Christian leaders called for peace and reconciliation as well as for forgiveness between the two communities.
- *Dialogue among former Anti-Balaka, ex-Seleka, youth from civil society organizations, and the self-defense group:* Each party asked for forgiveness, and their representatives signed a pact of reconciliation and peace based upon the Bouar ethnic group leaders' pact. On **May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015** a group of Christian and Muslim community leaders, ex-Seleka and ex-Anti-Balaka leaders and youth from civil society asked for forgiveness from the Muslim community at Lakouanga mosque. On **July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**, at the Bangui stadium, Mercy Corps and IC-PCs supported ex-Seleka leaders and ex-combatant Anti-Balaka who asked for forgiveness from all Central African communities in the presence of the CAR Government (including Ministry of Reconciliation, Sport, Security, etc.), CAR Youth National Council leaders, and multiple religious group leaders (Muslims, Kimbanguistes, Catholics, and Protestants), the President of the Islamic Community in CAR, and Bangui Religious Platform leaders. Participants repeated slogans such as "*conflict is over now, we are all Central Africans, no more division, and we need peace*".
- During program implementation, 36 community leaders who participated in intercommunity dialogues participated in the Bangui Forum sharing several decisions taken during their communities' dialogues.

November 20th, 2015

Mir Ershadullah  
Agreement Officer

**RE: SVC  
Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-14-00024**

**SU: SVC Final Inventory Report**

Dear Mr. Clark:

Please see below all equipment purchased under Award **AID-OAA-A-14-00024, the SVC program in CAR. Please note that this equipment will be used under our new USAID funded grant CMM/ASPIRE**

<b>Asset (over \$5000 in value)</b>	<b>Source/Nationality</b>	<b>Use after award</b>
Generator Perkins 12.5 KVA : Purchase price: \$18.536,54	Origin of Product : France Place of Purchase: Bangui CAR	USAID-funded ASPIRE program, award AID- OAA-A-15-00063
2 Vehicles Toyota Land Cruiser HZJ 79 Pick Up : Purchase price: \$100.000	Origin of Product : Japan Place of Purchase: Bangui CAR	USAID-funded ASPIRE program, award AID- OAA-A-14-00024

Sincerely,

Maggie Janes-Lucas  
Senior Program Officer  
West and Central Africa