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FY16 Q2 Quarterly Report

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Niger Development Food Aid Program “Sawki”

2012-2017



Mobilization for community cleanliness in Dan Fountou in Zinder region. Photo: Mercy Corps

PROJECT SUMMARY

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End Date: 08/31/2017
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Total Award: \$19,312,269

I. Executive Summary

Mercy Corps and Helen Keller International are implementing a five-year (2012-2017) Development Food Assistance Program (DFAP) entitled “*Sawki*” funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Food for Peace (FFP). Now in its fourth implementation year, the program is designed to respond to the food security needs of more than 92,092 beneficiaries in Maradi and Zinder regions, two of the most food insecure regions of Niger. Within these regions, *Sawki* is targeting 62 villages based on criteria of social vulnerability, economic opportunities and agro-pastoral linkages and aims to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition through two interrelated strategic objectives:

- SO1: Reduce chronic malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under five with an emphasis on children under two.
- SO2: Increase the local availability of and households’ access to nutritious food by diversifying agricultural productivity, rural households’ income and increasing resilience to shocks

During the reporting period, the program progressed towards achieving its objectives. Under SO1, the program continued its efforts in promoting appropriate nutrition practices during a child’s first 1,000 days with essential nutrition actions and behavior change being facilitated by lead mothers and community nutrition volunteers. An approach of community animations entitled “*Mu da Kanmu (Change for ourselves)*” is being emphasized during sensitizations with community members and care groups. Several culinary demonstrations throughout the project zone were conducted to promote the consumption of nutrient-rich foods and animal products as well as child growth monitoring. Furthermore, the activities under SO2 continued to advance as planned. These included the evaluation of Farmer Field Schools, promotion of vegetable gardening, monitoring the interventions of small ruminants, and training of paravets in target communities. In response to previous delays in WASH activities, *Sawki* has developed an accelerated WASH action plan, including the recruitment of a new WASH manager. Cross-cutting gender activities continue to be integrated across the two strategic objectives.

The *Sawki* team also conducted a strategic program review and planning process this quarter in order to maximize program impact and the sustainability of results. This process was informed by the results of the program’s external mid-term evaluation, by guidance from Mercy Corps’ technical teams, and by feedback received from FFP. Priority areas include: improving access to water (domestic use and irrigation); expanding the Farmer Field School (FFS) activities to reach more households in the target communities; increased focus on empowering women, with a particular focus on expanding vocational and literacy training; and strengthening socio-cultural behavior change communication strategies (CCS). In February 2016, Mercy Corps wrapped up a Strategic Resilience Assessment in Niger with strong participation from the *Sawki* team and partners. The assessment findings reiterate the importance of *Sawki*’s approach to strengthening women’s empowerment and local governance structures (see M&E section of this report).

Finally, during the reporting period the *Sawki* team welcomed its new Chief of Party, James Bariyanga, who took over management of the program in March 2016.

Key activities achieved under SO1 (Health/Nutrition):

Promoting appropriate nutrition practices during a child’s first 1,000 days:

- 780 lead mothers received refresher training on Essential nutrition actions (ENA). Refresher training was also done for community nutrition volunteers in order to enhance their nutritional knowledge and capacity and these volunteers assist in teaching members of the community.

- 96 lead mothers were trained on the signs of danger during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) and the pre-and post-natal care referral system for pregnant women.
- 216 monthly meetings were held which focused on themes of Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and behavior change by the community health promoters and lead mothers.
- During sensitization meetings, "Mu da Kanmu " has been a key theme to promote ownership of project activities by community members.
- 390 cooking demonstration sessions were conducted to promote the consumption of locally-available nutrient-rich foods and animal protein; 59 cooking demonstration sessions using CSB+ were conducted at distribution sites
- Child growth monitoring: Out of 15,032 children that were screened, 1,190 children were classified as moderately malnourished, while 250 children were classified as severely malnourished, which represents almost 10% of suspected cases of severe malnutrition that were referred to health centers for investigation and quality monitoring.

Key activities achieved under SO2 (Agriculture/Livelihoods):

- Vegetable gardening: Sensitization on production and utilization of local nutritious food stuffs continued with 74 sensitization sessions held where 1,028 women and 329 men were reached, an activity that is reinforced by the cooking demonstrations under SO1.
- Conservation and dissemination of orange fleshed sweet potato is prioritized by the program. At 15 sites there were orange flesh sweet potato vines are being prepared for further multiplication and production will be expanded during the rainy season.
- Promotion of vegetable production continued during the quarter: 35 vegetable farmers were trained in vegetable production techniques in two villages.
- WASH Infrastructure. In Zinder region 65 vegetable garden wells have been constructed including 38 fully completed, including the set up of management structures/committees, and 27 wells that are at advanced stages of completion. For Maradi region, 45 boreholes been constructed, including 40 for small irrigation. Reception of all completed infrastructures will be made in quarter 3.
- Structuring and organization of Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) groups: There is increasing capacity of farmer groups in VLSA with 94 groups already meeting the knowledge and skills required to move from phase 1 to phase 2.
- Cascade training of farmers by FFS farmer graduate volunteers: 67 FFS were evaluated this quarter. 3,576 producers participated in farmer field schools and were evaluated as best performers and will provide support in training other farmers.
- Construction of local warehouses for harvested agricultural products: 18 communities have each mobilized harvested agricultural products and stocked more than one ton of harvest. These communities will be prioritized for store construction.
- Livestock: 19 new para-vets were trained and equipped with tool kits. In Maradi, 282 livestock owners were trained by the para-vets, providing feeding and animal health technical assistance. In Zinder, 27 para-vets offered technical support to 1,128 livestock farmers.

Crosscutting Gender activities achieved during the reporting quarter include:

- 188 mentors were trained on gender equity, gender-based violence and women's rights.
- Adolescent literacy: Two start-up trainings were conducted with 36 animators from literacy services centers of Guidan Roumji and Mirriah.
- In 29 communities, husband schools had developed their action plans to address the gender related problems that had been identified

III. Program Activities and Progress against Targets

Coordination

Sawki continues to build collaborative relationships between consortium partners to improve outcomes. First, the PMU, comprised of senior Sawki staff from Mercy Corps, and Hellen Keller International, based in Maradi and Zinder, participate in all programmatic and administrative meetings. Weekly, monthly, quarterly and ad-hoc coordination meeting bring together all Sawki staff with partners representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Public Health, Planning, and INRAN. The regular meetings of the CoPs from three DFAPs are also aimed to maximize coordination within the intervention area. Finally, Program or consortium representatives regularly attend relevant cluster meetings, including the Nutrition Cluster meetings organized by the Department of Nutrition and UNICEF at the regional and national levels. Coordination meeting are also held with RISE partners including REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG at the field community levels and national levels so as to share synergies, experiences/approaches and for avoiding duplications of efforts by the partners.

Mercy Corps also continues to build partnerships and leverage resources with the private sector to support the program’s objectives, such as with Orange Foundation and Nike Foundation (Safe Schools) to complement the implementation of *Sawki* activities in program targeted areas. Regarding coordination with other implementing partners in the target regions, Sawki continued meetings with REGIS-ER REGIS-AG during the reporting period. Based on these interactive meetings, there has been collaborative implementation of field activities during the quarter, and Sawki is discussing MoUs for a more formalized relationship with these partners to ensure sustainability and increased reach. The terms of eventual partnership will be shared with FFP for concurrence before an MoU is signed.

SO1: Chronic malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women & children under five is reduced

Program achievement during reporting period (SO1)

The health and nutrition program activities have continued during the reporting period in all 62 villages of Maradi and Zinder and include the following actions:

- Training community health promoters and CSI health workers in family planning;
- Supervision and monitoring of community education related to ENA and FP in care units, care groups, safes spaces and by health promoters;
- Cooking demonstrations using CSB + and local products at 59 community sites;
- Joint supervision of field activities with implementation partners (CSI, DS and DRSP);
- Organization of malnutrition screening at the community level

The key achievements under SO1 during quarter two are summarized in table below:

Description of Activities	Progress Against Targets (quantitative information, disaggregated by sex where applicable)			Narrative
	Annual Targeted	Reached this quarter	Cumulative reached to-date	
Regular meetings				
Consortium coordination meetings in the field (weekly)	104	14	36	Weekly field coordination meetings are held by the project staff in both Zinder and Maradi offices. During some weeks, staff are engaged in other project activities and no weekly meeting held. Holding regular weekly meetings during the two quarters will achieve 80% of

				the target.
Participation in the Nutrition Cluster Meetings	24	1	3	It is the Regional Directorate of Public health that organizes such meetings and make invitations. Only one meeting was organized this quarter.
Activity planning and supervision	24	6	12	
Quarterly meeting with field implementation partners.	4	1	1	The district health office organizes and invites participants. Only one meeting was organized.
SO1 team bimonthly meetings	4	1	2	
Meetings with other DFAPs	12	2	4	In April 2016, Sawki participated in meetings with REGIs-ER and other DFAPs organized by USAID on experience sharing
Bi-annual meetings by the program with community leaders.	4	0	0	Bi-annual meeting with community leaders planned for next quarter.
Participation in consultative meetings at department level	3	1	1	
IR 1.1: Appropriate nutrition practices during a child's first 1,000 days adopted by pregnant women, mothers and caretakers				
<i>A 1.1.1: Promote ENA practices and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies through district health staff, community health promoters, Care Groups, Lead Mothers, Men's Groups, community sensitization events and radio messaging.</i>				
Refresher training for health promoters ENA (Essential Nutrition Actions)	72	2	71	Two health promoters from Zinder participated in refresher training of lead mothers
Refresher training for lead mothers on Essential Nutrition Actions.	780	780	780	Lead mothers from two regions participated in two refresher training sessions during the quarter.
Training of lead mothers on the signs of danger during pregnancy, Exclusive breast feeding (EBF) And the referral system pregnant women.	129	96	96	96 lead mothers were trained from Zinder. Another group of lead mothers will be trained in Maradi next quarter.
Monthly meetings on themes of Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and behavior change by community health promoters / field workers with leader mothers	864	216	297	Several themes related ENA particularly for first 1000 days of a child were discussed. The program staff will joint review the monthly plan of action for these voluntary community health promoters and encourage them to double the number of meetings held per month.
Monthly meetings on ENA themes and behavior change by leaders mothers	9360	2474	4137	
Numbers of sensitization on ENA themes; ENA held by members of husband schools.	1488	310	566	
Number of monthly home-to-home visits organized by CARE units "Mu da Kammu"	9360	528	528	This activity started late. The Care units will continue to organize Mu da kanmu but will not able to make-up for the lost visits since the next few months they will be engaged in farming activities. Therefore, the annual target will be revised to 7782.

Number of monthly home visits organized by care groups and health promoters.	10224	4607	8905	13875 persons were reached during the quarter by the home visits and facilitated the discussions around the different topics.
Evaluation of household ENA/WASH /FP practices to identify high performing household within each village	124	0	62	Planned for third quarter
Organize village ceremonies to recognize and reward the best households in each village	124	3	62	3 villages of Maradi represented the rest of villages that were supported for 3 years
Evaluation of inter-village achievements	6	0	0	The strategy was developed. Activity planned for next quarter
Organize ceremonies to recognize and reward the best performing villages	6	0	0	Planned for next quarter
Provide rations for leader mothers, and health promoters every six months	3400	0	1704	Distribution planned for next quarter
Sensitization of communities on community storage	426	0	83	This activity delayed due to the dry season. It will be relaunched during the rainy season when community members have mobilized food harvests. Meanwhile sensitization meetings continues
Technical guidance on establishing community stores	62	0	39	
Monthly radio broadcasts of messages focusing on the ENA-FP-WASH during the 6 months through local community radios.	1980	129	129	MOUs for broadcasting the messages have been signed with 5 community radios in Maradi and Zinder. In the next two quarters, the annual target will be achieved.
Awareness raising through radio broadcasts and discussions	16	0	3	Activity planned for next quarter
Follow up visits by health staff (nurses) every three months for support, answer questions, reinforce key ENA messages with community promoters, leader mothers, girls, husband schools	8	2	2	The staff from health centers took part in field visits organized by program team
Follow-up visits by DRSP staff every semester	4	0	0	The DRSP staff were engaged in the Government assignments.
<i>A 1.1.2: Provide supplementary feeding to pregnant and lactating women and children under 2.</i>				
Food distributions for pregnant and lactating women and children under 2	52476	5420	11793	There was over estimation of the annual target and this will be revised with the program exit strategy
Feedback after each food distribution (Commodity, SO1, M&E)	12	4	4	The post distribution monitoring were conducted and found that food commodities reached beneficiaires as planned.
<i>*A 1.1.3: Train HHs on the preparation and consumption of nutrient-rich foods and animal products</i>				

Cooking demonstrations at distribution sites	372	59	121	The cooking demonstrations with CSB+ were done in all villages except 3 villages Maradi that postponed it the next quarter.
Training of field agents on recipes using locally available products.	2	0	0	
Conduct cooking demonstrations at villages site	9360	2390	4412	Several culinary demonstrations were done using local food stuffs such niébé, green vegetables, tomatoes, peatnuts, and millet etc. by lead mothers.
<i>A 1.1.4: Rehabilitate/construct wells in communities</i>				
Rehabilitate water wells of first generation (i.e. planned in year 3)	32	7	19	7 wells were completed in Zinder and the work on other 13 wells starts next quarter
Monitoring for wells rehabilitation (32 wells of first generation: planned in year 3)	6	7	9	Monitoring the activity is in progress and the provisional reception of wells expected next quarter
Construction/drilling of boreholes (planned in year 3)	14	12	12	Of these, two boreholes were not successfully excavated and a private enterprise to do the work will be selected next quarter.
Monitor the construction of boreholes (for Y3) by staff from hydraulic department jointly with program staff	6	0	1	The boreholes were not equipped and there was no activity to monitor, but this is planned for next quarter.
Rehabilitation water wells (for Y4)	20	0	0	Tenders for selection of service providers were issued and the activity implementation starts next quarter.
Construction of boreholes (for Y4)	9	0	0	Tenders for selection of service providers were issued and the activity implementation starts next quarter.
Identification and training of persons for borehole maintenance	46	0	0	The activity implementation starts next quarter after installation of infrastructures.
<i>A 1.1.5: Establish and train gender-balanced water committees at each water point</i>				
Establish water-user committees (includes defining management roles and responsibilities, water use payment system, etc.)	29	0	0	The water-user committees will be established once the construction of water facilities for this year start.
<i>A 1.1.6: Identify, market and provide subsidies for cost-efficient individual solutions to improve water quality</i>				
Training of members of water management committee (WMC) on management and water purification	3	0	0	The three training sessions will be conducted once the water facilities installed during 4 th quarter
Purchase of Aquatabs kits for all communities	62	0	0	Activity is planned in 4 th Quarter
Sensitization of communities on water purification techniques by WMC	696	0	0	Activity is planned in 3 th and 4 th Quarter
Conduct monthly supply of community Aquatabs	24	0	0	A meeting with Anima Sutura is planned next quarter to identify the product selling centers in the project zone, and ways of drinking water treatment in general.
Discussion with Health center and Anima	8	1	1	

Sutura for supply channel of Aquatabs setup in each village				
<i>A 1.1.7: Implement Community Led Total Sanitation approach</i>				
Monthly mobilization sessions on hygiene (cleanliness, hand washing and use of latrines) conducted by community actors.	744	286	482	Cleanliness sessions that gathered together different members from different communities.
Establishment and monitoring of community action plans related to certification of villages with status of free from open defecation (CLTS)	34	0	34	
Joint monitoring of CLTS activities by the regional and departmental level committees	3	2	7	
Evaluation of villages the regional and departmental level committees on state of CLTS for certification (number of villages evaluated)	17	23	36	The cumulative of number of villages visited is 36 for evaluation for CLTS. Some villages were visited two times during the two evaluations
Number of communities certified free from open defecation (ODF)	17	11	15	Out 17 targeted, 15 have been validated as ODF. More follow-up on the remaining villages.
Establish contacts with Directorate of children Education and heads of schools in relation to WASH School	2	2	2	The meeting with officials Directorate of education was held. However, the training was shifted to October Year 5 to coincide with schooling calendar.
WASH School: Training of school teachers in project zone on hygiene topics	130	0	0	
WASH School: Install 3 handwashing devices/units in each school (55)	165	0	0	
WASH School: Construct latrines in 20 schools (2latrines of 2 blocks par school)	20	0	0	
Conduct monthly mobilization sessions organized for children and conducted by teachers and program staff	744	0	0	Activity planned for first quarter year 5
WASH Health: Install 3 handwashing devices/system at each integrated health center and 2 devices at health units (21 IHC et 19 HU)	101	0	0	Activity planned for first quarter year 5
WASH Health: Construct latrines in 20 health centers (2 blocks of 2 latrines)	20	0	0	Tender documents for selection of private enterprises are being prepared

Construction of boreholes in integrated health centers	10	0	0	Feasibility study to be done in quarter 3
<i>A 1.2.1: Sensitize communities on delayed child birth and the health and economic benefits of girls' education through influential male and female community members</i>				
Mobilize "bright spots" among religious and community leaders				Not target set for this activity. This activity is integrated within husband schools (42 maradi and 82 Zinder)
<i>A 1.2.2: Establish/strengthen Safe Spaces (Weekly Discussion Groups for adolescent girls on ENA practices and life skills)</i>				
Site visits for safe space by health promoters	864	587	835	A cumulative of 11379 participants in the meetings was recorded.
Regular site visits for girls by field workers/health promoters	744	186	365	The themes covered included reproductive health, hygiene, girl education, the consequences of early marriage etc.
<i>A 1.2.3: Promote family planning and contraceptives through trained peer educators and communication campaigns</i>				
Refresher training of Health promoters on Family Planning(FP)	72	3	71	Health promoters and lead mothers attended the sessions
Refresher training of leader mothers on FP	780	780	780	
Monthly sensitization sessions on FP by health promoters	852	216	425	The themes covered in group discussions include: Birth spacing, use of health services, the benefits of birth spacing for household economy
Monthly sensitization sessions on FP by leader mothers	9360	2182	3421	The program staff will joint review the monthly plan of action for these lead mothers and encourage them to increase the number of meetings held per month so as to reach annual target
Monthly sensitization sessions on FP by mentors	744	186	272	Each village mentor discussed with adolescents about the benefits of delaying the first pregnancy until age 18.
Identify community-based distributors of contraceptive products	2	2	2	In both regions, FP sites were set-up by community members who liaise with health centers for supply of products.
<i>A 1.2.4: Advocate the MOH and UNFPA to strengthen supply management of family planning supplies</i>				
Work with GON and UNFPA to strengthen and advocate for regular supply of contraceptives	4	0	2	Two meetings have been registered this year
IR 1.3: Counseling and care appropriately provided by health centers and other community actors				
<i>A 1.3.2: Coordinate the training and facilitation of health center and health post staff to provide Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) services.</i>				
Training of Midwives / Heads/staff of IHC and health units on the reception and referral guidance	40	0	0	Activity has been planned for next quarter
Support integrated health center and health unit with child delivery room kit and other logistics	40	0	0	This activity for next quarter
Fencing of the Integrated health Centers	8	0	0	This activity planned for next quarter
Annual Integrated Supervision of the National level (MoH and SO1 staff) to Districts covered	2	0	0	Planned in second semester of the year
<i>A 1.3.3: Coordinate the training and facilitation of health center and health post staff to provide IMCI services</i>				
Support MOH in organizing regular,	864	0	0	The MOH staff were reported busy with other assignments.

monthly outreach visits (growth monitoring and promotion, nutritional counseling, EPI, family planning)				Further contacts have been with districts staff to start this activity next quarter
<i>A 1.3.4: Establish an active screening and referral system for malnutrition at the community level</i>				
Organize monthly <u>community meetings</u> with all mothers and children under 5 for MUAC screening	744	186	372	A total of 15,032 children were weighed during the quarter of which 1190 were in yellow band and 250 in the red band.
Monitoring visits to children referred to health facilities by done program staff	252	63	96	Staff have continued visits to health centers to check on status of referred children. In addition, mothers are also referred to care units to participate in cooking demonstrations.
Sessions of child growth monitoring 6-36 months	744	185	371	12,541 children were weighed this quarter of which 1,834 were considered underweight.

SO1:

Description and Analysis of Results

IR 1.1: Appropriate nutrition practices during a child's first 1,000 days adopted by pregnant women, mothers and caretakers

During the quarter, several nutritional behavior change activities were conducted aimed enhancing wider adoption of nutrition practices. This included refresher training of community nutrition volunteers in order to enhance their nutritional knowledge and capacities. These volunteers assist in knowledge transfer to members of the community so that there is increased mass utilization and adaption of best nutrition practices and methods by the beneficiaries. The first 1000 days period of a child life remains an opportunity window which is prioritized during community meeting discussions with different categories of beneficiaries that were met. Topics such as: care during pregnancy, prevention of early childhood illness through consultations at the health centers, the use of exclusive breastfeeding, feeding of healthy and sick child, the dangers and consequences of early marriage, the importance of educations for girls, relative duties and responsibilities of men and women in a household, etc. were addressed. Furthermore, "Mu da Kanmu" has become a central inspiration message to promote ownership and stimulate the implementation of project activities by themselves without much focus on external support. This approach has an essential goal to attract and boost enthusiasm among the household members of executing and adapting project activities.

IR 1.2. Appropriate nutrition practices and healthy timing of first pregnancy adopted by adolescent girls and their partners.

The care groups, the safe spaces and husband schools received regular follow-up visits during the quarter by the health promoters, field agents and partners staff. The importance of these visits to promote continued functioning of these groups and the sustainability of activities were discussed by program staff, beneficiaries and the visiting teams from government technical services. 773 village meetings in Zinder and Maradi regions involved over 11,379 participants (teenagers) in safe spaces were held. The topics discussed at these safe space meetings include: reproductive health, essential nutrition actions, the

importance of girls' education etc. During the quarter, the refresher training of the lead mothers and health promoters was completed and the family planning products distribution sites were set-up.

IR 1.3 Counseling and care appropriately provided by health centers and other community actors.

At community level, midwives were trained on danger signs of pregnancy and the value of women's referral system to health centers. The midwives become first contact women in villages before referral to health centers. Out of 15,032 children that were screened, 1,190 children were in the yellow band (moderate malnutrition) band while 250 children were in the red band (severe malnutrition) representing almost 10% of suspected cases that were referred to health centers for investigation and quality monitoring. Also, the field agents monitored the progress and recovery these children at the health centers in the project area of intervention.

SO2: Increase the local availability of and households' access to nutritious food by diversifying agricultural productivity, rural households' income and increasing resilience to shocks

During this reporting period, the following activities were implemented in support of the agriculture and livelihood strategic objective (SO2):

- Completion of the evaluation of Farmer Field Schools
- Training of trainers on vegetable gardening
- Monitoring and supervision of sites and activities of vegetable gardening
- Monitoring the performance of fodder crops and para vets
- Monitoring of activities of the Livestock Value Chain Coordinators (LVCC) (Improved red-colored goats, improved male genitors of sheep (Balami), local poultry)
- Monitoring the performance of improved male goats, and Balami sheep
- Initial activities on goats promotion under Habbanayé (animal rotational system) for adolescent girls in safe spaces.

Implementation of SO2 activities for each intermediate result

The key program achievements under SO2 during the reporting period are outlined under each intermediate result in the table below:

Description of Activities	Progress Against Targets (quantitative information, disaggregated by sex where applicable)			Narrative
	Targeted	Reached this quarter	Cumulati ve reached	
IR 2.1: Household consumption of diversified nutritious food increased from agricultural and pastoral production				
A 2.1.1.1 Sensitize community (including men) on value of nutrient-rich production and importance of access to land				
A.2.1.1.1.1 Sensitize community on the utilization of local food stuffs (animal and vegetables)	558	74	88	74 sensitization sessions were held and reached 1028 women and 329 men. During the last quarters, field staff were more preoccupied with evaluation FFS activities. During the next quarters, the staff will double the number of sensitizations per village per month so as reach the annual target.

A 2.1.1.3 Distribution and multiplication of orange-fleshed sweet potato				
A 2.1.1.3.1 Conservation and dissemination of orange fleshed sweet potato cuttings at gardening sites	38	15	15	15 sites out 37 sites had orange flesh sweet potato vines: the low rate is due to dry spells that limited water access at propagation sites.
A 2.1.1.6 Village Garden Coordinator training by master trainers (2.1.1)				
A 2.1.1.6.1 Training of gardening producers on the techniques of vegetable production	750	35	35	35 vegetable farmers were trained at 2 sites that had water access. Training has not been done on other vegetable garden sites because irrigation systems have not yet been installed to provide water for vegetable gardening. Construction of 65 wells are in progress towards completion and this will provide water for vegetable farming
A 2.1.1.6.2 support to vegetable growers in improved seed and orange flesh sweet potato	750	0	0	Support to farmers with improved vegetable seeds and sweet potato farming will be commenced in quarter after accessing water for irrigation.
A 2.1.1.6.3 Follow up / supervision by staff from government agricultural departments	150	24	48	Monitoring and supervision by government agricultural staff was done only Maradi region at some vegetable garden sites. There is limited government agricultural staff in Zinder Region and thus no supervision as per the signed MOU between the two parties.
A 2.1.4: Facilitate the rehabilitation/construction and maintenance of gardening wells and rainwater harvesting techniques				
A 2.1.4.1 Training on management and Sustainability of garden water points	750	35	35	7 committees were set up and trained on water point maintenance and linked to skilled local technicians for difficult repair works. A private enterprise has signed a contract to construction the infrastructures for water irrigation, and relevant trainings for the committees are planned for next quarter to maintenance these water facilities
A 2.1.4.1 Establishment of gardening wells user committees and maintenance plans				
A 2.1.4.2 Rehabilitation or construction of gardening wells and rainwater harvesting techniques				
A2.1.4.2.1 Construction of hydraulic infrastructure and equipment for producer groups of vegetable crops and fodder	195	0	0	65 wells which are being finalized. The process of equipping 5 deep boreholes among the 45 boreholes for Maradi is underway including the drilling of 3 boreholes that have been contracted to a private enterprise under the signed drip irrigation contract
A2.1.4.2.2 Site identification, feasibility study, DAO, analysis	2	0	0	This activity is planned for next quarter.
A2.1.4.2.3 Reception of infrastructures	195	0	0	Reception will be done in quarter 3. This refers for the infrastructure planned for year 3 where in Zinder 65 vegetable garden wells are at advanced stages of completion and 45 boreholes for vegetable

constructed/rehabilitated				gardening in Maradi.
IR2.2 Land and Livestock productivity increased at household and community levels				
<i>A 2.2.1. Provide crop, livestock and soil conservation technical assistance</i>				
A 2.2.1.1 Follow up visits on composting by the program technical officers	190	0	0	Activity planned for next quarter.
A 2.2.1.1 Follow up visits on pastoral field schools by government technical staff	288	0	0	Activity planned for next quarter.
A 2.2.1.1 Contact with INRAN to enhance farm productivity				
A 2.2.1.1.1 Contract with INRAN for farmer fields schools	1	0	0	There is an existing contract with INRAN on FFS that ends April 15,2016. Discussions are in progress for renewal of the contract.
A 2.2.1.2 Establish learning plots on volunteer farmers' land				
Due to the dry season, there were no learning plots (FFS) established. Learning plots are being planned for coming agricultural season that starts with month of June 2016.				
A 2.2.1.3 Extension workers/STA etc. responsible for training 5 volunteer farmers per village as pilot Agricultural Value Chain Coordinators (AVCC). This activity was modified after consultation with technical staff from INRAN at initiation of the FFS approach. Instead of training 5 volunteers farmers per village, the strategy changed, the project trains now an average of 25 farmers per FFS. There are no training activities of FFS during this quarter (dry period)				
A 2.2.1.4 Training of farmers by AVCC on production techniques and FMNR. Activity not planned for this quarter. Note: The best performing farmers (average 10 per FFS) and 2 persons per village for field phytosanitary techniques will be trained once the FFS are established during the next farming season.				
A 2.2.1.5 Extension workers conduct supervision monitoring visits The 17 agricultural extension workers made regular monthly monitoring visit on progress agricultural interventions (small ruminants, animal feed processing machines, technologies for work-load reduction (grain mills, grain threshers etc.,) in all 62 villages				
A 2.2.1.6 Exchange visits to model farmers				
This activity is planned during 4 th quarter during the period of FFS.				
A 2.2.2.1 Development of Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) to improve animal feeding and herd management				
A 2.2.2.1.1 Organize sensitization caravans on animal feeding, herd management, use of enabling technologies in agriculture	4	0	0	Activity planned for next quarter. TDR has been completed.
A 2.2.2.1.1 Organization of radio messages on animal feeding, herd management, use of enabling	8	0	0	Activity planned for next quarter. TDR has been completed

technologies in agriculture				
A 2.2.2.2 Training on preserving the quality of crop by-products and storage of dry-season feeding (during cropping season and after harvest in Sept/Oct (n=15 STD)				
Demonstration of use of PIC bags for storage of cowpeas was completed in 1 st quarter. PIC bags-selling stores in communities have not been established as previous planned. From the issue letter of PREP FY4, FFP team suggested to MC to let the existing vendors sell PIC bags to communities instead of MC setting up community PIC bags selling stores that were less sustainable.				
A 2.2.2.5 Livestock value chain coordinators will train 15 herders or animal owners (planning and ToR completed and activity is planned for next quarter)				
A 2.2.2.5.1.Support in the structuring and organizing of the groups of animal breeders in 62 villages	62	0	0	The first two quarters, activity was focused on community discussion on formal establishment Livestock Farm Schools (LFS) for animal breeders. The LVCC will be included within LFS. The structuring and organizing the new LFS by putting in place LFS management committees is planned for next quarter.
A 2.2.2.5.2 Training of groups of animal breeders in association system and management	186	0	0	This activity is planned for 4 th quarter
A 2.2.2.5.3 Support in inputs to LVCC for the fabrication of urea blocs	62	0	0	Activity for next quarter to be conducted within the LFS.
A 2.2.2.6 Training for para-vets at GoN veterinarian training (10 days)				
A 2.2.2.6.1 Refresher training of para-vets	39	39	39	Activity already completed
A 2.2.2.6.2 Training of women poultry vaccinators	124	44	44	44 female poultry vaccinators were trained
A 2.2.2.6.3 Equipment of women poultry vaccinators	124	44	44	44 female poultry vaccinators were trained and offered start-up kit
A 2.2.2.8 Assist in accessing credit and other financial services(organizing farmer groups into a network and linkage to financial services provider)				
A 2.2.2.8.1 Training and support of associations in structuring and organization of the VSLA groups	30	0	20	Assessments still being made with VSLA groups to understand their capacities.
Training for VSLA groups by Village Agents on principles of association movement	100	0	225	No activity planned for this quarter. 225 groups were trained in last quarters. Many groups are interested in creating VLSA than previous anticipated. Larger groups (50 members) got divided into 2-3 smaller size VSLA groups.
A 2.2.3.1 Identification of 30 seed multipliers per region				
After program review of Feb 2016 for improved seeds to reach more beneficiaries, the program has planned to establish 15 community seed multiplication sites (2-5ha each crop - -millet or cowpeas) during next agricultural season.				
A 2.2.3.5 Subsidized input packages				
The purchase of eight animal feed processing machines and 124 kits for field phytosanitary teams will be purchased in next quarter.				
A 2.2.3.9 Subsidy of \$35 to producers				
A 2.2.3.9.1 Grant extension producers as part of the replica of	3 553	0	0	Planned for 3 rd quarter through 4 th quarter.

technologies learned at the schools field. Ten trainees performance evaluated by CEP will train other 4 volunteers for technology adoption in their own fields				
A 2.2.3.9.2 support to the construction of local warehouses for harvested agricultural products	49	0	0	Activity for next quarter. 18 communities showed greater commitment by mobilizing and stocking harvests and hence will receive first priority for warehouses construction subsidy support.
A 2.2.3.11 Subsidy to cover 50% of price of 3 goats				
A 2.2.3.11.1 Support communities with improved red goats as habbanayé for adolescent girls of Safe Space	3 100	0	0	Four service providers have been selected and contracted. Delivery will be done during next quarter.
A 2.2.3.11.2 Support communities with improved male goats	310	0	0	Four service providers have been selected and contracted. Activity to be carried out next quarter.
IR 2.3. Household incomes increased				
A 2.3.1: Identify key value chains & develop buyer/seller relationships				
A 2.3.1.1 Support for the implementation of multi-nutrient blocks, marketing units and urea block	8	0	0	Planned for next quarter.
Cross- cutting IR: Household and community resilience to shocks improved through community development and good governance				
<i>A/CCA 1.2: Train EWS committees in data collection for climate-related disasters</i>				
A/CCA 2.2 Contests to recognize greener villages (yearly grants of \$2000) for up to 10 winners to implement soil and water improvement projects				
A/CCA 2.2.1 Production of forest plants	110 708	0	0	6 tree nursery sites have been identified. TDR for purchase of tree seeds have been prepared.
A/CCA 2.2.1 Transportation and planting of seedlings	110 708	0	0	Planting of seedlings will be done during rainy season.

SO2: Description of Activities and Analysis of the results

IR 2.1: Household consumption of diversified nutritious food increased from agricultural and pastoral production

Analysis of results from vegetable gardening:

As part of the diversification of agricultural production, the program has supported vegetable gardening of 2,776 women (2,296 in Zinder and 483 in Maradi) and operated 36 vegetable gardens out of 38 planned. Below is the summary of results from evaluation of crop yields at these sites:

Zinder region: 30 gardens where vegetables were harvested at full maturity. Results from 12 locations show variation in yields from site and type of vegetable. The average yields were as follows: 10.5 to 35 t / ha for cabbage; 3 to 26 t / ha for lettuce; 6.25 to 24 t / ha for tomatoes and 7.96 to 13 t / ha for potatoes.

Maradi region: Results from 6 garden sites were as follows: 28.6t / ha for cabbage; 13.6t / ha for lettuce; 26.5 t / ha for potatoes; 55.6t / ha for onion; 12.7t / ha for carrots and 31.4t / ha for tomatoes.

The yield in Zinder as compared to Maradi are below average national reference yields of 20 kg / ha for carrots; 20-40 kg / ha for potatoes; 30 kg / ha for tomato and 20 to 50 kg / ha for cabbage. The low yields in Zinder can be explained by limited access irrigation water, poor soil fertility and pests attacks.

IR 2.2: Land and Livestock productivity increased at household and community levels

Analysis of Results from Farmer Field Schools (FFS):

The Sawki program established 67 farmer field schools (FFS) in the past agricultural seasons. The implementation, supervision and monitoring of the performance of FFS is done in collaboration with staff from national Institute of Agricultural Research of Niger (INRAN). A summary of the results from FFS is outlined below:

Millet Farmer Field School:

Three agronomic technologies were tested at FFS.

1. **Varietal performance:** The average yield of 897 kg/ha for local millet variety was registered in both Maradi and Zinder regions as compared to the yields of improved millet varieties whose average yields across the two region were 1308 kg/ha for HKP variety and 1282 kg/ha for *Zatib* variety. Results shows the local varieties in the two regions were less performing and therefore, the program should expand the cultivation of these improved varieties to reach more farmers.

2. **Yields comparisons** with plot farmers applying traditional farming practices (PP) and the plot where farmers applied integrated crop agronomic practices (GIPP). It was observed that applying a package of integrated crop management practices more than doubles the millet yield in the two regions of Zinder and Maradi at the FFS plots as well as on individual farmer's farms.

3. **Fertilizer application trials.** It was observed application of different fertilizers especially the combination of organic and inorganic fertilizers greatly enhanced the crop performance and yields as compared to plots where there was not fertilizer application. Therefore, support should be given to farmers to have access and apply the farmers in their gardens. In Maradi, the application of NPK in combination with urea and manure produced the highest millet crop yields (1,115kg/ha) as compare to the use of manure only (9882kg/ha), NPK only (1061 kg) and the control plot (487kg/ha). Equally, in Zinder, the application of NPK in combination with urea and manure produced the highest millet crop yields (923kg/ha) as compare to the use of manure only (514kg/ha), NPK+ manure (770kg/ha) and the control plot (417kg/ha).

Cowpeas (niébé) Farmer Field School:

The results were summarized as follows:

1. **Varietal trials:** In Maradi, the two most promising varieties (out of the six varieties) compared to the local varieties were IT90 (1093 kg/ha) and NT5 (888 kg/ha) as compared to local variety 431kg/ha. In Zinder, the two most promising varieties in relation to the local varieties (out of the six varieties) were IT90 (743 kg/ha) and IT 99 (712 kg/ha) as compared to local variety (398

kg/ha). The variety IT90 showed the best performance across the two regions and should be promoted for the benefit of more farmers in the target area.

2. **Soil fertility trials:** In Maradi, the application of NPK in combination with manure produced the highest crop yields (1002kg/ha) as compare to the use of manure only (591kg/ha), NPK only (775 kg) and the control plot (352kg/ha). Equally, in Zinder, the application of NPK in combination with manure produced the highest crop yields (984kg/ha) as compare to the use of manure only (407kg/ha), NPK only (585 kg) and the control plot (166kg/ha). Therefore, project beneficiaries across the two regions should be encouraged and supported to access inorganic fertilizer and combine it with the available manure from cattle and small ruminants in order to optimally boost their crop yields.
3. **Traditional farming practices compared to integrated crop management practices:** In both Maradi and Zinder regions, the application of integrated crop management practices (GIPP) produced higher yields (587kg/ha average for the two regions) as compared to the use of traditional methods (PP) (228 kg/ha average for the two regions). The use of application of NPK in combination with manure produced the highest crop yields (1002kg/ha) as compare to the use of manure only (591kg/ha), NPK only (775 kg/ha) and the control plot (352kg/ha).

Evaluation of performance of FFS farmer participants: An evaluation was made to assess the performance of FFS participants in relation to the themes that were taught. Out of the 1,631 FFS trained farmer participants, a total of 1,555 learning farmers were assessed. 1,125 farmers were able to apply the learned agricultural technologies and able to pass the knowledge to other farmers. These best FFS graduate farmers will be used by the program during the next agricultural season to train more farmers in their communities.

Mobilization of stock of harvested crops in preparation for purchase of inputs (improved seeds and inorganic fertilizers): Farmers have appreciated the importance of use fertilizers on their field from the initial support that they received from the program. In context of sustainability of this activity, farmers were encouraged to mobilize own resources for purchase fertilizers and improved seeds. To-date, farmers have mobilized and kept 76,616 kg of cereals in their stores and these will be sold to generate money for purchase of these inputs at the start of agricultural season. The program plans to further enhance this activity by supporting the construction of community stores that can serve as depot for agricultural inputs.

Livestock program: Monitoring the progress of this intervention continued during the reporting quarter. 9 newborn 'Balami' improved sheep were recorded. From a total 1,527 goats, the program staff recorded 268 goats that gave birth and other 363 goats were pregnant.

Activities of para-vets and women poultry vaccinators: 19 new para-vets were trained and equipped with tool kits. During the quarter, the para-vets provided services to 1,979 livestock farmers and obtained an estimate of 732,940 FCFA (US\$1,264) from the sale of their veterinary products and services. The para-vets were also solicited by government technical services and supported the REGIS-AG in the animal vaccination campaign in the region.

Transformation of crop residues into animal feeds: Farmers used program provided machines to transform 7,734 kg dry bulky forage crop residues into smaller refined pieces of animal feed, making farmers better positioned to adequately feed their animals throughout the pasture scarce periods. Furthermore, the LVCCs from Magaria Tounkour have been trained on how to formulate and multi-nutritional blocks and 32 pilot blocks were produced.

IR 2.3: Household incomes increased

During the quarter, 18 village agents from Zinder and Maradi sensitized 20 farmers groups on improved farming practices and management of farmer associations including the understanding the associative movement, mobilization and management of savings, leadership, relations and conflict management, and work-planning for their income generation activities. The Village agents facilitated establishing bylaws for 20 farmer groups and setting up of the 7 management committees and this activity will continue into the next quarter.

Challenges and constraints met

Two major challenges emerged during implementation of activities during the quarter. First, farmers graduating from the farmer field schools adequately gained knowledge such as the control of leaf-miners, however many more farmers in the communities need to acquire the technologies that are taught at these FFS. Action: The program plans to use cascade training using the FFS graduate farmers to scale out and reach many more farmers. Another challenge is the delayed completion irrigation infrastructures that were planned for year 3. Action: the program in hiring a WASH team to spearhead, fast track, and monitor the WASH activities for year 3 and year 4. In fact, water access continues to be a formidable challenge. Due to the dry season, there is over-exploitation of vegetable garden wells, some being source of drinking water that led to drying up of wells, notably at Mazoza and kourko sites.

IV. Gender

During the reporting period, the program achieved the following gender activities:

Vocational training for adolescent girls: Private enterprises were identified, two in Maradi and four in Zinder. Contracts are being prepared the management to allow them to start implementing this activity that will involve the training of adolescents in income-generating activities such as sewing, embroidery, knitting, crochet, cosmetics.

Training in gender, GBV and rights: During the quarter, 188 mentors were trained gender-related issues (69 Maradi and Zinder 119). Mentors were trained on gender concepts, gender-based violence and women's rights. At the end of the training, the mentors developed their monthly action plans that allow conduct gender discussions with adolescents.

Adolescent literacy: Four trainings for literacy teachers were conducted during the quarter. Two start-up trainings conducted with 36 animators from literacy services centers of Guidan Roumji and Mirriah.

Husband schools: The sensitization of members from husband schools is a continuous process. During the quarter, 29 communities with husband schools were supported in the development of their action plans to address the gender related problems that had been identified.

Gender related challenges/constraints:

Limited access to productive assets by women and youth. To overcome this, the program plans next quarter to strengthen and assist women to acquire some productive tools and inputs by organizing and training them through Village and Saving Loans (VSLA) to mobilize and save some financial resources and invest in assets that enhance household economy.

Limited business skills and management for women: Action: Sawki will organize additional training on business and financial management skills, marketing and negotiation skills as well as support women to build relationships with private sector and microfinance institutions for input and services provision and trade.



mills obtained from Sawki.

V. Monitoring & Evaluation

During the reporting period, the project M&E team carried out key activities including six field mission activities in response to the observations and recommendations obtained from mid-term review report, supported in data collection and development of M&E tools, and carried out Post Food Distribution Monitoring. During the quarter, the Sawki M&E Manager participated in a Tops training workshop that was organized in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso from 21 to 23 March 2016 to share experiences related to technology in data collection. The M&E team has also summarized the program results realized over the past 3 years and consolidated the results into a brochure for sharing with implementing partners and key government ministries. 500 copies of this brochure have been printed.

Other M&E Activities:

Barrier analysis: A barrier analysis was conducted in Zinder involving 23 field staff to examine barriers to behavior change around improved agricultural practices, use of animal health services, use of latrines for defecation, and delaying pregnancy to 18 years. The data is now being analyzed and the report will be completed next quarter.

Orange Project: In the framework of Mercy Corps partnership with Orange Foundation, the project focuses on educating households on appropriate behaviors in maternal and child health. It specifically targets pregnant women, lactating mothers and those at age of reproductive in 15 villages in Maradi, Niger regions mainly through the establishment of community clubs (clubs d'écoutes), support community structures, design and implement specific visual tools to guide the community discussions, sketches and behavior communication messages etc.

SAFE School Project: Regarding the SAFE project that is funded by the Nike Foundation, the accelerated learning school sessions for 542 adolescent girls continued in the 20 learning centers in Zinder and Maradi. A SOW for conducting a baseline study is being finalized. The data collections tools are being designed in the format for the enumerators to use CSPro tablets. This study will provide complementary reference information for certain indicators where the related data cannot be obtained from secondary data sources. This study will be done during next quarter by the program M&E team for the two regions.

Strategic Resilience Assessment (STRESS)

In February 2016, Mercy Corps wrapped up a Strategic Resilience Assessment that had begun in October 2015. The STRESS analyzed the social, economic and ecological systems that support agropastoralism in Niger in relation to major shocks and stresses that affect food security across the country, including Maradi and Zinder. Eight overarching resilience capacities were identified in a long-term theory of change for resilient food security. Sawki team members participated in the STRESS process along with local partners, who together build their capacity to understand dynamic systems, systemic constraints such as gender inequity, and how to strengthen resilience capacities of individuals, communities and

systems for improved food security. Key activities in Sawki—including strong focus on women’s empowerment, access to water and facilitative approaches to strengthen governance at the local level—stand out in the STRESS results as particularly relevant and valuable to be further strengthened. The results continue to be interpreted vis a vis the Sawki program, with support planned in Q4 to review opportunities for integrating aspects of resilience measurement. The final STRESS report is being published in May 2016 in French and English and widely shared with RISE partners and GoN.

VI. Commodity Management

Commodities received during the quarter: During the quarter, 248.900 MT of food commodities were delivered by ship to Port of Cotonou and was an additional excess of 1.175 MT as per the bill of lading documents. From the Survey report at the Port of Cotonou, Benin, under supervision of Baltic Control Niger company, the program received 1,618 bags each of 25kgs of CSB+ that were loaded on trucks destined to the warehouses in Zinder and Maradi in Niger for Sawki Program. However, at arrival at Zinder and Maradi warehouses, ten bags (251kg) were reported missing during the inland transportation and MC is following up with the transport contractor to take accountability and responsibility of the commodity losses.

Commodities distributed during the quarter: During the quarter, the food commodity team consolidated and updated commodity reports, conducted physical inventories at the distribution centers and the two warehouses at Zinder and Maradi. After completion of the commodity inventories in the program area, the team worked on updating and validation of list of the beneficiaries for the nutrition and safe space distributions. During the reporting period, 43.592 MT of food commodities were distributed to 5,420 beneficiaries in 62 communities/villages under the PM2A program in the two regions of Zinder and Maradi and an additional 0.155 MT were distributed for culinary demonstrations. Also, during the reporting period, a total of 9,961.712 kg vegetable cooking oil was loaned out to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for immediate distribution because it had the ‘best utilized before date’ (BUBD) of June 2016 and will be reimbursed in the next quarter with the commodities of longer period of BUBD.

Food commodity balance at the end of March 2016:

Below is the summary of the food commodity status for the program as of the end of March 2016.

	CSB(kg)	BULGUR(kg)	LENTILS(kg)	VegOil(kg)	TOTALS(kg)
Opening Balance Warehouse	194,524.500	33,369.540	4,704.200	9,325.325	241,923.565
Closing balance at the end of March 2016	400.849	33.494	6.277	0.015	440.635

Success Story: Mothers' vegetable gardening in Baourataoua village restores the health and nutrition conditions for Naffisa's two year old child

Mariam, aged 36 years with four children, is one of the women residing and work with the Sawki program in Baourataoua village in Zinder region. Before the program started, she had challenges to feed her children and her two-year old child had developed signs of malnutrition, including swelling of the feet. Like other members in the village, she had limited alternative sources of income for her family. One day, she was approached by and advised by the lead mother from Sawki Program and encouraged to enroll with the Baourataoua village mothers care group, and from there she got weekly advice on how to feed her children. Further, she joined a group of 10 women that had interest in vegetable gardening. What was remarkable was also her participation in vegetable gardening where a variety of vegetables (cabbages, carrots, tomatoes, etc.) were produced. She was able to get nutritious vegetables for family consumption and also obtained some



money after the group sold the harvest to a nearby hotel in Zinder town. Before the intervention, the women's group had little: no food and no money, but since last season, the women were able to cultivate a variety of vegetables on part of their 0.5 ha of land with support from Sawki. They were able to adequately feed their families and had a surplus harvest of 753 kg that was sold, which provided 443,751 FCFA (US\$800). With this money shared from the group, Mariam was able to buy additional nutritious food stuffs for her child including eggs and fish that had been lacking in the child's diet. Mariam's child's nutrition status has reversed and the child no longer has sign of malnutrition.



Mariam says: *'I am very proud for the Sawki program, without vegetable gardening support from the program to our group, the health status of my child would not have improved'.*

Mariam and other members of her group, in Baourataoua, in Zinder region, harvesting and later weighing the vegetables ready for sale.

Photos: Mercy Corps