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FY16 Q3 Quarterly Report

April-June 2016

Niger Development Food Aid Program “Sawki”

2012-2017



Adolescent girls participating in safe spaces programs received improved red-goats as a means of economic empowerment in Maradi region (2016)

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 and 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. Midwives and heads of health centers were trained on reception and referral guidance with respect to Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) services. The program conducted several trainings for lead mothers focusing on the signs of danger during pregnancy, Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF), and the referral system for pregnant women. It also carried out sensitization of lead mothers, health promoters and mentors on family planning practices. Community animations by a mothers’ care group through *Mu da Kanmu* (Change for ourselves) continued with home visits in which families were sensitized on appropriate nutritional behaviors, hygiene, and other socioeconomic issues. *Sawki* also conducted cooking demonstrations throughout its target villages and distribution centers to promote the consumption of nutrient-rich foods and animal products, as well as child growth monitoring.

Activities under SO2 also advanced as planned. They included preparation for the 2016 agricultural season by setting up new cowpeas and millet Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to promote the best agricultural technologies, and establishing a seed production scheme among farmer groups. The program also organized sensitization brigades and caravans on field phyto-sanitary measures and on animal feeding and herd management in target communities. The program continued its monitoring of livestock interventions, including the distribution of red goats under the *habannaye* system (which is a rotational way of transferring goats from the initial group of beneficiary girls to other waiting groups once the goats have reproduced) for adolescent girls and the distribution of Balami breed sheep. The program delivered technical assistance to herders via pastoral schools where they were coached on herd management practices, including feeding and animal healthcare. Furthermore, animal health workers trained and equipped by the program continued to provide veterinary services to livestock farmers under the guidance of private veterinary officers at the department level. The program continues to integrate cross-cutting gender activities across the two strategic objectives. Finally, during this reporting period the *Sawki* team was reinforced with the recruitment of new staff, including a WASH team (one WASH Manager and two wash Officers) and a Grants Administration Manager who will enhance the implementation and management of program activities.

Key activities achieved under SO1 (Health/Nutrition):

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

- Trained 34 midwives and heads of health centers on reception and referral guidance with respect to Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) services.

- Trained 24 lead mothers on the signs of danger during pregnancy, EBF and the referral system for pregnant women.
- Held monthly sessions to sensitize lead mothers, health promoters, and mentors on family planning practices.
- 216 meetings (led by community health promoters and lead mothers) were held during this quarter, focusing on the themes of Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and behavior change.
- Employed “Mu da Kanmu” in sensitization meetings as a key theme to promote ownership of project activities by community members across the two regions.
- Held ceremony with government technical services certifying 11 communities as open defecation-free.
- Conducted 124 cooking demonstrations to promote the consumption of locally-available nutrient-rich foods and animal protein; Conducted 2,295 cooking demonstrations at distribution sites using CSB+.
- Child growth monitoring: Out of 13,758 children screened, 790 children were classified as moderately malnourished, while 256 children were classified as severely malnourished and were referred to health centers for investigation and monitoring.

Key activities achieved under SO2 (Agriculture/Livelihoods):

- Held 216 sensitization sessions raising awareness on production and utilization of local, nutritious foodstuffs of animal and plant origin (milk, meat, eggs, and diversified vegetables), which reached over 7,000 people (activity reinforced through cooking demonstrations under SO1).
- Prioritized conservation and dissemination of orange fleshed sweet potato, with orange flesh sweet potato vines prepared for further multiplication at 15 sites, while production will be expanded during the rainy season.
- Trained 237 producers in vegetable gardening techniques and 96 producers trained on the management and sustainability of garden wells.
- WASH: Held ceremony with government technical services that certified 11 communities as open defecation-free. Signed contract for construction of six drip irrigation systems with a private enterprise, with construction making good progress. Completed analysis of vendors for 60 garden boreholes in Maradi and 120 garden wells in Zinder, and activity implementation will start next quarter after signing contracts.
- Set up 68 new Farmer Field Schools (46 for millet in Zinder and 22 for cowpeas in Maradi), with 1,700 farmer trainees facilitating, including 550 in Maradi and 1,150 in Zinder. The program provided 18,145 kg of millet seed (HKP), 10,850 kg of cowpea seed (IT99K573-1-1), and 187,650 kg of fertilizer (NPK and Urea) this agricultural season, supporting 5,476 farmers for replication of technologies learned in the FFS.
- Two producers’ brigade members from each of 62 villages were trained. The program organized two caravans on field phyto-sanitary measures and three caravans on animal feeding and herd management in target communities.
- Community members continue the construction of community grain stores at 18 sites using locally available materials.
- Animal health workers provided services to 713 livestock farmers and treated 787 cattle, 1,408 sheep, and 2,517 goats this quarter under the guidance of private veterinary officers at the department level.

Crosscutting Gender activities achieved during the reporting quarter include:

- In order to enhance the economic empowerment of 3,100 adolescent girls, signed six contracts with local NGOs/enterprises to offer professional vocational skills, including: sewing (310 girls);

embroidery and knitting (682 girls); production of traditional incense and henna (682 girls); production of soaps, cream, and other cosmetics (682 girls); and food processing of cowpeas, millet, milk, and peanuts (744 girls).

- Continued to work with 1,080 adolescents in 36 literacy centers to enable them to acquire literacy and numeracy skills.
- Continued to provide counselling and guidance to adolescent girls in Safe Spaces through a network of 190 mentors. Focus is on increasing the awareness of the importance of education, avoiding both early marriage and teenage pregnancy, the importance of hygiene, etc.

II. Program Activities and Progress against Targets

Coordination

Sawki continues to build collaborative relationships between consortium partners to improve outcomes. The Program Management Unit (PMU) comprised of senior Sawki staff from Mercy Corps and Helen Keller International (HKI) based in Maradi and Zinder, participate in all programmatic and administrative meetings. Weekly, monthly, quarterly and ad-hoc coordination meetings bring together all Sawki staff with partners representing the Ministries of Agriculture, Public Health, and Planning and INRAN. The regular meetings of the CoPs from three DFAPs also aim to maximize coordination within the intervention areas. Finally, program or consortium representatives regularly attend relevant cluster meetings, including the Nutrition Cluster meetings at the regional and national level organized by the Department of Nutrition and UNICEF. Coordination meetings are also held with RISE partners including REGIS-ER and REGIS-AG at the field community levels and national levels so as to identify synergies, share experiences/approaches, and avoid duplications of efforts. During this quarter, a coordination workshop was held in Niamey where RISE partners discussed the opportunities and needs for collaboration for the 2016-2017 period and developed priority actions to enhance resilience impacts in Niger. Some of the actions agreed to among DFAPs included improving coordination and sharing WASH interventions, as well as plans and activities for community early warning systems. The partners have reactivated staff technical committees and SOWs are in development for implementation in the next quarter. Finally, Sawki also continued meetings with REGIS-AG during this reporting period. As a result of these meetings, Sawki has finalized an MoU with REGIS-AG that it has shared with USAID/FFP, and the parties are ready to formalize their relationship to ensure sustainability and increase synergy.

During this quarter, the technical consultative group: Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) met in Maradi town and reviewed (a) the quality of nutrition data collected and (b) the community videos that have been produced for dissemination of nutrition messages. In addition, the Sawki program and other RISE partners held a national coordination meeting in Niamey with SPRING and Digital green in which all partners signed a letter of collaboration for a second phase. This second phase will focus on community video production to enhance community dissemination of nutritional messages and will run through September 30, 2016. Mercy Corps also continues to build partnerships and leverage resources with the private sector to support the program's objectives, such as with the Orange Foundation and Nike Foundation (SAFE Schools) to complement the implementation of *Sawki* activities in program target areas.

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

Program achievements during this reporting period (SO1)

Health and nutrition program activities continued in all 62 villages during this reporting period and include the following accomplishments:

- Training of midwives and heads of health centers on reception and referral guidance with respect to Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) services;
- Training of the lead mothers on the signs of danger during pregnancy, Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF), and the referral system for pregnant women;
- Training of community health promoters and integrated health centers health workers on family planning;
- Supervision and monitoring of community education related to Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and family planning 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 (government technical health services); and
- Organization of malnutrition screening at the community level.

The key achievements under SO1 during this quarter are summarized in the 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	21	57	On track to meet target
Participation in Nutrition Cluster Meetings	24	2	5	Two meetings were held in Zinder under the coordination of OCHA. Contact was also made with the Regional Directorate of Public Health in Maradi so that the meeting can be held next quarter
Activity planning and supervision with government technical services	24	6	18	Visits were conducted with the staff of technical services as way of gradually transferring the responsibilities.
Quarterly meetings with field implementation partners.	4	1	2	On track
SO1 team bimonthly meetings	4	0	2	The team spent time on PREP and NCE preparation and participation in other workshops. Meetings will resume in August.
Meetings with other DFAPs	12	2	5	In April 2016, Sawki participated in meetings with other DFAPs and REGIS-ER organized by USAID on experience sharing. Also the DFAPs/RISE partners met to discuss areas of collaboration.
Bi-annual meetings by the program with community leaders in each region	4	1	1	One meeting held in Zinder. The meeting in Maradi is planned for July.
Participation in consultative meetings at	3	0	1	Meetings in Maradi have not yet restarted.

department level				
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 on ENA (Essential Nutrition Actions)	72	1	72	One health promoter from Zinder was re-trained to meet the annual target.
Refresher training for lead mothers on Essential Nutrition Actions.	780	0	780	Rrefresher trainings were completed last quarter.
Training of lead mothers on the signs of danger during pregnancy, Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF), and the referral system for pregnant women.	124	24	120	24 lead mothers trained in Maradi.
Monthly meetings on themes of Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and behavior change by community health promoters / field workers with leader mothers	864	216	513	Themes included essential nutrition /health actions for first 1,000 days of a child's life, preventive measures against common childhood illnesses, and referral to health centers.
Monthly meetings on ENA themes and behavior change by lead mothers	9,360	2,702	6,839	
Number of sensitizations on ENA themes held by members of husband schools.	1,488	312	878	
Number of monthly home-to-home visits organized by CARE units "Mu da Kanmu"	7782	1715	2243	Care units continued to organize "Mu da Kanmu" visits to homes across the communities in the two regions.
Number of monthly home visits organized by care groups and health promoters.	10,224	4,339	13,244	4,339 persons were reached through home visits during the quarter, visits which facilitated discussions around different topics. Some health promoters made more than one visit per month.
Evaluations of household ENA/WASH /FP practices to identify high performing households within each village	124	0	62	Evaluation planned for fourth quarter.
Organize village ceremonies to recognize and reward the best households in each village	124	0	62	Ceremonies planned for fourth quarter.
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 lead mothers and health promoters every six months	3,400	0	1,704	Distribution planned for next quarter.
Sensitization of communities on mobilization of harvest for community storage	426	0	83	Sensitization sessions will be relaunched after harvests to ensure community members mobilize harvest stock that could eventually replace the food rations from the program given to volunteers.
Number of established community food stores in 62 villages	62	0	39	
Monthly radio broadcasts of messages focusing on the ENA-FP-WASH through local community radios.	1,980	360	489	New contracts are being drafted for three stations (one in Zinder and two in Maradi) to cover diffusion messages for all Sawki interventions to continue broadcasting messages.
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, to answer questions, reinforce key ENA messages with community promoters, leader mothers, girls, husband schools	8	1	3	The staff from health centers took part in field visits organized by the program team.
Follow-up visits by DRSP staff every semester	4	1	1	DRSP staff was engaged in 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	52,476	4,748	6,373	There was over estimation of the annual food distribution target. The exact number of beneficiaries for year four and annual food quantities distributed will be ascertained by end of FY16 (September). Due to limitations in the Last Miles Mobiles Solution (LMMS) System, where the date of graduation of beneficiaries is not indicated in the system. Instead, the commodities team updates the beneficiary database manually after each distribution event, at which eligibility dates are confirmed according to the “carnet de santé” and beneficiary card held by each beneficiary.
Food Distribution monitoring reports: Feedback after each food distribution (Commodity, SO1, M&E)	12	1	5	Food distribution monitoring was conducted and found that food commodities reached beneficiaries 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	124	183	Cooking demonstrations with CSB+ were done at all distribution sites.
Training of field agents on recipes using	2	1	1	The training of field agents was done in Zinder. Next training will be held in Maradi

locally available products.				next quarter.
Conduct cooking demonstrations at villages site	9,360	2,295	6,704	Several culinary demonstrations were done using local food stuffs such as cowpeas, green vegetables, tomatoes, peanuts, 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	1	20	During the quarter, 1 out of 7 village wells were rehabilitated in Zinder and provisional acceptance was made by program staff and government technical services.
Monitoring visits for wells rehabilitation (32 wells of first generation: planned in year 3)	6	1	10	Monitoring of the activity is in progress by the WASH team to ensure quality standards before provisional acceptance.
Construction/drilling of boreholes (planned in year 3)	14	0	12	Public tenders were issued for equipping the twelve boreholes that were drilled. Selection of contractors /vendors was completed. The contracts are being prepared for signature and the work starts in July 2016.
Monitor the construction of boreholes (for year 3) by staff from hydraulic department, jointly with program staff	6	0	1	This activity will start in July 2016 once the borehole construction work begins.
Rehabilitation water wells (for year 4)	20	0	0	20 village wells were identified for rehabilitation in Maradi (5) and Zinder (15). Tenders for selection of service providers were issued for five wells in Maradi and implementation starts next quarter. A contractor to carry out a diagnostic assessment for 15 wells for rehabilitation in Zinder and 5 wells in Maradi has been selected. Work will begin soon.
Rehabilitation of boreholes (for year 4)	9	0	0	Identification of 9 boreholes for rehabilitation is on track in collaboration with hydrological technical services at the department level. So far, out of 3 boreholes for planned for rehabilitation in Maradi, no borehole was identified, while 4 boreholes out of 6 boreholes were identified for rehabilitation in Zinder. After selection, a diagnostic study will be conducted to determine the bills of quantities and tenders issued during the next quarter.
Identification and training of persons for borehole maintenance	46	0	0	22 people will receive practical training next quarter for maintaining 12 existing drilled boreholes and the 10 new boreholes.
<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 activity was mainly focused on identification of 29 water points for rehabilitation. Out of 3 boreholes planned for rehabilitation in Maradi, no borehole was identified, while 4 boreholes out of 6 were

				identified for rehabilitation in Zinder. 20 village wells were identified for rehabilitation in Maradi (5) and Zinder (15). Establishing the bills of quantities for rehabilitation of these facilities will be done next quarter. Also, the SOW for training of water-user committees on these rehabilitation infrastructures will be prepared, and training starts next quarter.
<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	SOW for training sessions was approved and this training will be integrated into the training of eight water-user committees during the 4 th quarter.
Purchase of Aqua tabs kits for all communities	62	0	0	Activity is planned in 4 th Quarter
Sensitization sessions of communities on water purification techniques by WMC	696	0	0	Activity is planned in 4 th Quarter
Conduct monthly meetings for supply of community Aqua tabs	24	0	0	A meeting with Anima Suturas is planned next quarter to identify the product selling centers for aqua tabs in the project zone.
Discussion with Health center and Anima Sutura for supply channel of Aquatabs setup in each village	8	0	1	The program staff is exploring other alternative water treatment techniques to support community members including water boiling, solar treatment, and general hygiene practices during water transportation from the sources.
<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	395	877	Cleanliness sessions that gathered together different members from different communities.
Establishment and monitoring of community action plans related to certification of villages with status open defecation-free (CLTS)	34	0	34	Completed, monitoring ongoing
Joint monitoring visits on CLTS activities by the regional and departmental level committees	3	0	7	ongoing
Evaluation of villages by the regional and departmental level committees on state of CLTS for certification (number of villages evaluated)	17	0	39	The cumulative number of villages visited is 39 for evaluation for CLTS. Some villages were visited two times during the two evaluations
Number of communities certified open	17	11	14	Ceremony with government technical

defecation-free (ODF)				services for certifying 11 communities free of open defecation was held this quarter. More follow-up and sensitization of the remaining villages planned next quarter.
Establish contacts with the Directorate of Education and heads of schools in relation to WASH School	2	2	2	24 school teachers from Zinder and 16 teachers from Maradi were trained on principles and practices of WASH in Schools. This focused on school premises cleanliness, management of water points, handwashing with soap, and general hygiene, especially establishing school hygiene clubs and regulations. Further training will be conducted in October 2016 when schools reopen.
WASH School: Training of school teachers in project zone on hygiene topics	130	40	40	
WASH School: Install 3 handwashing devices/units in each school (55)	165	0	0	The SOW and purchase requests were approved. The purchase is underway for acquisition of 60 handwashing facilities for targeted schools. Tender for construction of 20 blocks of latrines was issued.
WASH School: Construct latrines in 20 schools (1 block of 2 latrines per school)	20	0	0	
Conduct monthly mobilization sessions organized for children and conducted by teachers and program staff	744	0	0	
WASH Health: Install 3 handwashing devices/system at each integrated health center (IHC) and 2 devices at health units (HU) (21 IHC and 19 HU)	101	0	0	The process of acquiring 101 hand washing facilities is in course: The tenders have been issued, and analysis/selection of a vendor will be completed next quarter.
WASH Health: Construct latrines in 20 health centers (1 block of 2 latrines)	20	0	0	
Construction of boreholes in integrated health centers	10	0	0	
<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				No annual target set for this activity. This activity has been taken in consideration during the ENA/EHA sessions that were held as indicated above.
<i>A 1.2.2: Establish/strengthen Safe Spaces (Weekly Discussion Groups for adolescent girls on ENA practices and life skills)</i>				
Site visits to safe space by health promoters	864	1102	1937	The cumulative number of participants recorded through these site visits is 13,156 persons.
Regular site visits for girls by field workers/health promoters	744	186	551	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	72	1	72	Completed for this year.

Family Planning (FP)				
Refresher training of leader mothers on FP	780	0	780	Completed for this year
Monthly sensitization sessions on FP by health promoters	852	216	641	Health promoters and lead mothers attended the sessions: The themes covered in group discussions include: birth spacing, use of health services, and the benefits of birth spacing for household economy.
Monthly sensitization sessions on FP by leader mothers	9,360	2,182	5,738	The lead mothers were encouraged to increase the number of meetings held per month so as to reach annual target
Monthly sensitization sessions on FP by mentors	744	186	372	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	0	2	In both regions, FP sites were set-up last quarter by community members who liaised with health centers for a supply of products.
<i>A 1.2.4: Advocate with the MOH and UNFPA to strengthen supply management of family planning supplies</i>				
Meetings held with the government of Niger (GON) and UNFPA to strengthen and advocate for regular supply of contraceptives	4	0	2	Two meetings held this year. Next meeting to be organized during next quarter.
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 and heads of staff of IHC and health units on reception and referral guidance	40	34	34	34 midwives and heads of integrated health centers were trained.
Support integrated health centers and health units with child delivery room kits and other logistics	40	0	0	The procurement process is underway for acquisition of these materials for the two regions. A meeting was held by staff from the Directorate of Infrastructure and biomedical equipment at the Ministry of Health in Niamey, and the program staff received technical specifications for the kits, a price list, and a list of approved vendors.
Fences constructed at IHCs	8	0	0	This activity is planned for next quarter
Annual integrated supervision at the national level (MoH and SO1 staff) of districts covered	2	0	0	This activity is planned for next quarter
<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, monthly outreach visits (growth monitoring and promotion, nutritional counseling, EPI, family planning)	864	138	138	This activity was done in both regions of Maradi and Zinder. However, these meetings are not held on a regular basis because the MOH staff is engaged in other conflicting government assignments
<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>	744	186	558	A total of 13,758 children were weighed

with all mothers and children under 5 for MUAC screening				during the quarter. 790 were in yellow band (moderate under-nourished) and 256 in the red band (severely under-nourished).
Monitoring visits carried out by program staff for children referred to health facilities	252	186	282	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 for children from 6-36 months	744	186	557	10,874 children were weighed this quarter. Of these, 1,510 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 this quarter, sensitization activities for wider adaption of good nutritional practices included messages for behavior change. Activities were carried out primarily by community structures (health promoters, lead mothers), with the supervision of the staff from the health technical services and program staff. The first 1,000 days of a child's life remain an opportunity window which is prioritized during community meeting discussions with different categories of beneficiaries. Various topics were addressed during awareness sessions, including support and care during pregnancy, prevention of childhood diseases with referral to health centers, exclusive breastfeeding, techniques of care and feeding the sick or healthy child, the negatives of child marriage, the importance of girls' education, workload reduction for women in the household, the importance of birth spacing, etc. During the quarter, care group members conducted 1,715 home visits through a "Mu da Kanmu" or "we change by ourselves" approach, which is a cornerstone for sustainability. Through the care unit, women make household visits to their peers to monitor the performance of the family with respect to different nutritional and health practices promoted by the group, and congratulate and encourage their peers, while discussing weaknesses/constraints and appropriate solutions. As part of inter-village and intra-villages competitions, the SO1 team launched an activity called "Moringa Contest" to enhance the production and utilization of Moringa products by care units and communities at large. The SO2 field technical team will support beneficiaries for technical guidance related to cultivation of these plants. Regarding WASH activities, a ceremony was organized during the quarter which declared 11 villages free from open defecation. In addition, 40 school teachers were trained on WASH initiatives at their schools. The WASH team continued to monitor activities at various water points, and an accelerated plan to ensure timely completion of water infrastructure is in place.

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

During the reporting period, care groups, safe spaces, and husband schools continued to receive regular follow-up visits from health promoters, field agents, and partner staff. The visits promote continued functioning of these groups and the sustainability of their activities. The involvement of religious leaders in communication efforts is essential in changing the beliefs of community members towards the different recommended family planning practices. During the quarter, the SO1 team initiated semi-annual meetings with community leaders in the Zinder region to advocate for family planning and develop consensus agreements on the use of FP services, the importance of delaying the age of first pregnancy, and other topics related to reproductive health. Religious leaders who are members of village development committees will continue advocacy within communities on a regular basis. Furthermore, 2,503 awareness sessions on FP were conducted by lead mothers and mentors in Zinder and Maradi to support adolescents' girls. Themes included: the importance of girls' education, prevention of early marriage, proper birth spacing, and the roles and responsibilities of men and women at the household and community levels.

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

At the community level, the program trained midwives on the dangerous signs during pregnancy and the value of a system of referrals for pregnant women to health centers. The midwives have become the first line of contact for pregnant women in villages before referral to health centers. Out of 13,758 children screened for malnutrition, 790 were classified as moderately malnourished, while 256 children were classified as severely malnourished, less than 2% of all screened children. Field agents monitored the progress and recovery of these children at health centers in the project areas of intervention.

SO2: Increase the local availability of and households' access to nutritious food by diversifying agricultural productivity and 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):

- Sensitization of community members on utilization of diverse and nutritious foodstuffs;
- Training of farmers on vegetable gardening techniques;
- Training of members of water point committees on management and sustainability of garden water points;
- Purchase of agricultural inputs (improved seeds, fertilizers) and tools for the establishment of 68 FFS field plots and farmers' group seed multiplication gardens for millet and cowpeas and benefited 3,576 farmers;
- Follow-up and technical assistance to pastoral schools;
- Organization of producer brigades and caravans on field phyto-sanitary measures;
- Organization of sensitization caravans on animal feeding and herd management in target communities;
- Monitoring of the activities of the Livestock Value Chain Coordinators (LVCC), including records keeping, feeding, treatment, and care of improved red goats and improved male Balami sheep;
- Monitoring of the goats *habanayé* system (which is a rotational way of transferring goats from the initial group of beneficiary girls to other waiting groups once the goats have reproduced) for adolescent girls in safe spaces groups, including the groups' adherence to established bylaws, animal husbandry practices, and the increase in the number of goats through reproduction;
- Supporting farmers in the fabrication of multi-nutrient blocks and urea blocks for animal feed;
- Support in structuring and organization of village savings and loan association (VSLA) groups.

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	Cumulative 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	216	304	216 sensitization sessions held, reaching 1,028 women and 329 men this quarter.
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	12	27	Multiplication of orange flesh sweet potato vines is being carried out at 27 sites. These vines will be shared with farmers groups engaged in vegetable gardening by the end of September for further propagation.
A 2.1.1.6 Village Garden Coordinator training by master trainers				
A 2.1.1.6.1 Training of garden producers on vegetable production techniques	450	397	432	On track
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	156	96	131	During the quarter, 96 members (85 men and 11 women) of eight water management committees have been trained on water point maintenance and linked to skilled local technicians in Zinder for difficult repairs. Members from five committees in Maradi will be trained next quarter.
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 vegetable crop and fodder producer groups	180	0	0	180 suitable sites with high water tables to support small size vegetable garden wells were identified. Completed an analysis of tender documents for 120 sites in Zinder and 60 sites in Maradi. Contracts for construction of these wells by private enterprises will be signed during the next quarter. In process.
A2.1.4.2.2 Site identification, feasibility study, DAO, analysis	2	2	2	The tender and analysis were completed for Zinder and Maradi for the year 4 infrastructure.
A2.1.4.2.3 Installation of Drip Irrigation and system of water purification	6	0	0	Contract was signed with private enterprise (Tech-innov Niger). The construction of water reservoirs is in progress at different sites.
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	124	86	86	591 compost pits were established of which 21 pits were for FFS. Sites visits for training farmers on composting did not take place on 60 sites that lacked water.
A 2.2.1.1 Follow up visits on pastoral field schools by government technical staff	288	160	160	Installation of pastoral schools was completed in all 62 villages. 2,885 people (1,046 men and 1,839 women) participated in sensitization sessions that focused on proper animal feeding, animal health care, cleanliness of housing, deworming, and vaccinations.
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 ended April 15, 2016. However, the key technical staff at INRAN with experiences on the FFS approach left the research institute to join Maradi University. Sawki is engaging the technical staff in charge of agricultural extension with agricultural technical services to supervise the FFS during the next quarter under the existing MOU with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).
A 2.2.1.2 Establish learning plots on volunteer farmers' land				
68 FFS demonstration and learning plots were established during the quarter. The program purchased 18,145 kg. of improved varieties of millet, which benefitted 4,866 farmers through FFS, group seed multiplication gardens and individual farmer gardens. In addition, the program purchased 10,850 kg of improved varieties of cowpeas, benefitting 4,186 producers. 187,650 kg. of inorganic fertilizers were distributed to enhance cowpea and millet productivity.				
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 the inauguration of the FFS. Instead of training five volunteer farmers per village, the strategy changed, and the project trains now an average of 25 farmers per FFS. The supervision of FFS will be done by technical staff from the MoA during the next quarter.				

A 2.2.1.4 Training of farmers by AVCC on production techniques and FMNR.				
Note: The best performing farmers (average 10 per FFS) and two individuals per village for field phytosanitary techniques will be trained once the FFS are established during the next farming season. Two phytosanitary brigades per village were selected and in total, 124 persons were trained. Caravans were not conducted in villages of Baban Kori because REGIS-ER has already trained similar brigades there.				
A 2.2.1.5 Extension workers conduct supervision monitoring visits				
Seventeen agricultural extension workers made regular monthly visits to monitor the progress of agricultural interventions (small ruminants, animal feed processing machines, technologies for work-load reduction) in all 62 villages.				
A 2.2.1.6 Exchange visits to model farmers				
This activity is planned for the fourth quarter when FFS are active.				
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	3	3	Three caravans were conducted and covered 13 villages. Themes included: health and animal production, environment, VSLA, agricultural production, and the responsibilities of local authorities and community members.
A 2.2.2.1.1 Organization of radio messages on animal feeding, herd management, use of enabling technologies in agriculture	8	0	0	TDR and DA were completed and approved. Discussions are in progress with two community radios to finalize the contracts for the dissemination of messages for all program interventions.
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)				
Training/sensitization of farmers on other appropriate storage techniques is planned for next quarter during FFS learning sessions.				
A 2.2.2.5 Livestock value chain coordinators will train 15 herders or animal owners				
A 2.2.2.5.1. Support in the structuring and organizing of the groups of animal breeders in 62 villages	62	42	42	Structuring and organization were carried out in 42 Livestock Field Schools (LFS) out of 62 by putting in place LFS management committees.
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 the 4 th quarter.
A 2.2.2.5.3 Support in inputs to LVCC for the fabrication of urea blocs	62	21	21	Activity was completed in 21 villages in Maradi. The process of procuring the ingredients for urea blocs for Zinder is on-going.
A 2.2.2.6 Training for para-vets at GON veterinarian training (10 days)				
A 2.2.2.6.1 Refresher training of	39	0	39	Activity already completed.

para-vets				
A 2.2.2.6.2 Training of women poultry vaccinators	44	0	44	Activity completed. The PREP year 4 had anticipated training 2 vaccinators in each of 62 villages. However, only 44 vaccinators were trained in the last quarter. No more vaccinators could be trained since Regis-ER had also trained and installed other vaccinators in the same zone of intervention.
A 2.2.2.6.3 Equipment of women poultry vaccinators	44	0	44	44 female poultry vaccinators were trained and given start-up kits.
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 to associations in the structuring and organization of VSLA groups	No annual target in DIP	140	140	Out of 225 VSLAs, village agents monitored and coached members of 140 groups on key themes such as the roles and responsibilities of committee members as well as other VSLA members, recordkeeping, etc.
A2.2.2.8.2 Training for VSLA groups by village agents on principles of association	100	0	225	Many more groups are interested in creating VSLAs than previously anticipated. Larger groups (50 members) were also divided into 2-3 smaller VSLA groups.
A 2.2.3.1 Identification of seed multipliers per region				
After a program review in February 2016, the program team decided that in order for improved seeds to reach more beneficiaries, the program needed to establish 15 community seed multiplication sites (2-5 ha for each crop—millet or cowpeas) during the next agricultural season.				
A 2.2.3.5 Subsidized input packages				
Eight animal feed processing machines and a kit composed of protective clothes, knapsack sprayer, and protective eye glasses and mask, gum boots, hand gloves) will be purchased and offered to each of 124 field phytosanitary brigades during the next quarter.				
A 2.2.3.9 Subsidy of \$35 to producers				
A 2.2.3.9.1 Grant extension producers are part of the replica of technologies learned at the farmer field schools	3553	3576	3576	3576 farmers are receiving technical assistance on agronomic techniques. Each FFS graduate farmer (evaluated from previous FFS) trains other 4 new farmers for agricultural technologies adoption at their own fields. The program has supported each FFS farmer trainer with 5 kg of improved millet seeds, 3 kg of cow pea seeds and 50 kg of fertilizers (NPK+Urea).
A 2.2.3.9.2 support to the construction of local warehouses for harvested agricultural products	18	0	0	Eighteen communities who showed the most commitment to mobilizing and stocking harvests were prioritized for warehouse construction subsidy support. Community members have mobilized materials for construction of six storage sites in Maradi and 12 in Zinder. The selection of service provider(s) to supply in-kind (materials) support to the program for completion of these facilities is underway.
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 <i>habbanayé</i> for adolescent girls of safe space	3,100	3,100	3,100	Four service providers were contracted and supplied 3,100 improved red goats. These benefited 1,550 adolescent girls participating in safe spaces, with each girl receiving two goats. In each village, beneficiaries were organized into groups and management committees put in place for each group of girls. Bylaws and succession lists (for recipients of the second generation of goats) were also established.
A 2.2.3.11.2 Support communities with improved male goats	310	310	310	310 improved male goats were distributed to the groups of adolescent girls who received female goats. A group of 25 adolescent girls was reorganized into sub-groups of five members, with each sub-group receiving one male goat to ensure effective care and management.
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 and urea blocks for marketing	8	3	3	In Maradi, three farmer groups received inputs for the fabrication of multi-nutrient blocks, and the village of Kalgo has already produced these blocks, which are being piloted for marketing. In Zinder, the process of procurement for fabrication of inputs for multi-nutrient blocks is in course.
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: Activity planned for the fourth quarter.</i>				
A/CCA 2.2 Contests to recognize greener villages (yearly grants of \$2,000) 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	Individual private tree nursery operators have been identified in Zinder and Maradi to supply 110,708 tree seedlings. The modalities of procurement, supply, and payment for seedlings are being discussed. The supply and planting of seedlings will take place in the month of August to meet the annual target.
A/CCA 2.2.1 Transportation and planting of seedlings	110,708	0	0	The supply, transportation and planting of seedlings will take place in the month of August

SO2: Description of Activities and Analysis of the results

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

The program conducted 216 sensitization sessions on the use of products of animal and plant origin (milk, meat, eggs, and diversified vegetables) this quarter, reaching over 7,000 persons. The program team also trained 237 producers in vegetable gardening techniques and 96 producers on the management and sustainability of garden wells. As part of measures to increase vegetable production in Sawki's target villages, the program identified 180 garden well sites (120 in Zinder and 60 in Maradi) and selected local

construction enterprises to begin construction on this infrastructure for small-level irrigation. During the quarter, provisional reception of 27 garden wells completed in Zinder took place, and initial construction work has started on six drip irrigation systems, with parallel water purification systems for domestic use.

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

Preparation for the agricultural season and implementation of the cowpea (niébé) and millet Farmer Field Schools (FFS): As part of the promotion of improved agricultural technologies, the Sawki program established 68 new Farmer Field Schools (46 for millet in Zinder and 22 for cowpeas in Maradi) for the 2016 agricultural season. A total of 1,700 farmers have been enrolled and are being trained at FFS demonstration and learning plots, including 550 farmers in Maradi and 1,150 farmers in Zinder. These farmer trainees will conduct various agricultural technology tests including fertility trials, varietal trials, crop protection tests, and tests on yield comparisons using integrated crop management practices vs. traditional farmer practices. Each of the 46 FFS for millet received 4 kg of millet seeds varieties (HKP and Zatib) and each of the 22 FFS for cow peas received 3 kg of basic seeds for cowpeas (six different varieties). In addition, each millet FFS received 25 kg of NPK and 25kg of urea fertilizers, while each cowpea FFS received 25 kg of NPK. Field data from these farmer field schools is being collected by 13 facilitators/interns, with support from existing program staff. In order to increase access to improved seeds in target communities, 12 farmer groups have been identified to undertake seed multiplication (six groups each for millet and cowpeas). Each millet farmer group received 50 kg of improved millet seeds (G4) of variety HKP, as well as 250 kg each of NPK and urea fertilizer in order to establish five hectare seed multiplication gardens. Each of the cowpea groups was supported with 20 kg of improved basic seeds (G4) cowpea variety (IT99k573 1-1), and 50 kg of NPK fertilizer to cultivate one hectare of land. In total, for the current agricultural season, Sawki has provided 18,145 kg of millet seeds (HKP) and 10,850 kg of cowpea seeds (IT99K573-1-1), along with 187,650 kg of fertilizer (NPK and Urea), benefiting 5,476 farmers.

Construction of community grain stores: As part of its contribution to the construction of 18 community grain stores, the Sawki program is in the process of procuring non-locally available materials. Each of the stores has dimensions of 4m x 5m, with a storage capacity of six tons.

Mobilization of stock for the purchase of agricultural inputs: Farmers from 49 villages mobilized 88.04 tons of harvested millet that is being sold to generate cash that has enabled farmers to purchase agricultural inputs (fertilizers) to enhance crop productivity.

Pastoral Schools and Livestock program: Program staff held meetings in 42 of 62 pastoral schools, where livestock owners were coached on herd management practices, including feeding and animal healthcare. The monitoring of livestock interventions (including the groups' adherence to established bylaws, animal husbandry practices, and the increase of goats numbers through reproduction) continued during the reporting period, with a focus on red goats distributed to adolescent girls under the *habannaye* mode and Balami breed sheep. During the quarter, 111 newborn Balami improved sheep were born, and 80 red goats gave birth as well.

During the quarter, animal health workers trained and equipped by the program provided services to 713 livestock farmers and gained an estimated income of 932,800 CFA francs (US\$1,608) from the sale of their veterinary products and services. They treated 787 cattle, 1,408 sheep, and 2,517 goats. The 44 project-trained and equipped women poultry vaccinators vaccinated a total of 39,176 poultry against Newcastle disease this quarter, in collaboration with Regis-AG and the government technical services.

IR 2.3: Household incomes increased

Organizational and Financial capacity of VSLAs: An internal assessment revealed that 87 out of 115 VSLAs (composed of 2,352 total members—all but seven are women) currently have documents for internal regulations, while management committees are effectively functioning in all but seven groups. Ongoing monitoring visits to VSLAs ensure that their governing regulations are well understood and respected by a minimum threshold of at least 80% of their members. Monitoring further showed that members are mobilizing savings and have saved in total 5,451,600 FCFA, or an average of 47,405 FCFA per VSLA. VSLAs are also extending credit to their members, with 2,023,160 FCFA extended this quarter to 578 members with an average loan size of 3,500 FCFA. Overall, the VLSA scheme is working well in targeted communities. Members of VSLAs have gained a positive experience by mobilizing savings that have assisted members of these women’s groups in initiating income-generating activities or providing social safety nets for their families. The collaboration of VSLA members has brought positive changes to communities, including promoting harmony and social cohesion and improving access to small loans that are otherwise difficult to access for women.

IV. Gender

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

Literacy for adolescent girls: The program continued to aid 1,080 adolescents in gaining literacy and numeracy skills across 36 literacy centers.

Vocational training for adolescent girls: In order to enhance the economic capacity of adolescent girls, the program contracted with six local NGOs/enterprises to organize professional trainings for 3,100 beneficiaries who participated in one of five modules: sewing (310 girls); embroidery and knitting (682 girls); production of traditional incense and henna (682 girls); production of soaps, creams, and other cosmetics (682 girls); and processing of cowpeas, millet, milk, and peanuts (744 girls). After completion of the trainings, the adolescents will use their newly acquired skills in establishing and managing small businesses of their choice and responding to market demand. The girls will also be provided with start-up kits (materials and equipment) to continue with an income-generating activity. Program staff, government technical services, and communal authorities will assess their progress through regular monitoring visits. Safe space mentors will continue to provide counselling and guidance to the girls on the usual topics.

Reducing women’s workloads: The program carried out 28 follow-up visits for technical assistance to the women groups that benefited from grain mills, peanut oil extractors, stalk-threshers, and rickshaws. This support has helped group members to reduce their workloads and save time that can now be used to participate in VSLAs, farming, and other activities supported by Sawki. The program also coached 160 members of the committees of these groups on the management of income generating activities and on their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that equipment and machines are maintained and function properly.

Husband schools: In an effort to enhance gender equality, 124 husband schools (62 for youth and 62 for adults) were put in place and are active in 62 communities. During the reporting period, field agents facilitated discussions with husband schools on equity and equality principles among men and women. The themes for discussion included the reduction of women’s workload, prevention of early or forced marriage, and hand washing with soap.

V. Monitoring & Evaluation

During the reporting period, several activities were conducted, including: field monitoring of program activities; data collection for the SAFE Schools project; monitoring food commodity distribution; and others.

Monitoring environmental impacts: Four monitoring missions were carried out in the quarter. These missions assessed environmental impacts in connection with the construction/rehabilitation of water points and community-led total sanitation. Monitoring was conducted in two villages where construction/rehabilitation of water points was being carried out. Work was done following recommended engineering practices and no negative environmental impacts were noted at the sites. CLTS' activities focused on public education and awareness on the construction of latrines with locally available materials and hand washing with soap.

SAFE Schools project: During the reporting period, the Sawki program M&E team carried out an assessment in 15 villages using individual interviews to collective quantitative information as well as seven focus group discussions to obtain qualitative information. 754 individual gatekeepers (mothers, fathers, village leaders, religious leaders, etc.) were interviewed in these 15 villages to assess their attitudes with respect to the education of adolescent girls using a Likert scale technique. The final report will be ready during the next quarter.

Food commodity Distribution Monitoring (DM): DM was conducted during the delivery of food rations for the supplementary feeding of pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under two. It was conducted at 11 distribution sites with an average of ten beneficiaries interviewed at each site. This monitoring effort found that the right quantity and quality of food rations reached intended beneficiaries, but that the program should increase culinary demonstrations and nutrition education at all distribution centers, as well as awareness on the importance of consuming the CSB+ for pregnant and lactating women and children 6-23 months of age, particularly in the Maradi region.

RISING Research II: This is a continuation of the research initiatives on Sawki's adolescent safe spaces conducted by Mercy Corps in partnership with Population Council. The second phase of RISING research will be operational in the six Sawki targeted villages and will focus on the mentors' experience; the safe space participants' experience; the experience of parents/ps/family members of safe space participants; and the experiences of non-participants. During this reporting period, Sawki program staff, together with the HQ consultant developed the RISING research phase II work-plan. This will start in August 2016, the data collection is scheduled for November 2016 and the final technical report is scheduled to be completed in May 2017.

Video production on program achievements: As part of improving the visibility of the program, a second version of the video documentary about the Sawki program achievements under each of the interventions during the last four years was produced. This draft film was viewed by Sawki program staff who provided comments and input. The final copy will be ready for use and will be disseminated through national TV channels during the next quarter.

Technical support to Sawki's monitoring and evaluation system: During the quarter, the program team received technical support from a consultant hired by MC headquarters. The consultant assisted the M&E team in reviewing the monitoring and evaluation system, focused on detecting areas of deficiencies in data collection (particularly in qualitative field data collection) and proposed solutions for improvement, which included the revision of field data collection tools. In addition, plans for staff capacity building and data analysis were developed. The implementation of these action plans will improve the use of data produced by the monitoring and evaluation team.

Advanced training workshop on resilience monitoring and evaluation: The Sawki M&E manager participated in an advanced training workshop on resilience monitoring and evaluation of resilience in June 2016, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The training was organized by USAID and facilitated by TANGO. The workshop aimed to build the capacity of RISE partners in monitoring and assessing resilience.

Strategic Resilience Assessment (STRESS): During this reporting period, Mercy Corps Niger’s final STRESS report was published in May 2016 in French and English, and the Sawki program organized one-day meeting where the findings were presented to the USAID team and RISE partners. The presentation focused on the major shocks and stresses within social, economic, and ecological systems that affect agro-pastoralism and food security in Maradi and Zinder and the republic of Niger in general. The Sawki team plans to continue presenting the findings to a wider audience, including GON officials and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the Sawki team reviewed and refined country-level measurement strategies for the national resilience theory of change that emerged from the recently completed STRESS process, and developed a strategy for integrating resilience measurement into Sawki’s existing M&E plan.

VI. Commodity Management

Commodities received during the quarter: During the reporting period, the Sawki program received a total of 9,961.712 kg in vegetable cooking oil that had been loaned to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) during the last quarter.

Commodities distributed during the quarter: During the quarter, the program team completed the food commodity inventories for the two warehouses of Zinder and Maradi and updated and validated the list of beneficiaries for the nutrition and safe spaces distributions. Thereafter, 76.064 MT of food commodities were distributed to 4,754 beneficiaries under the PM2A program in 62 communities/villages in Zinder and Maradi regions, which can be summarized as follows: 55.840 MT of commodities to 3,490 beneficiary children under two, 9.328 MT to 583 pregnant mothers, and 10.896 MT of commodities to 681 lactating mothers. After distribution, the warehouse was fumigated as part of regular preventive measures against potential insect infestations. The program hosted the USAID/FFP team during their regular commodities management monitoring visit. The team witnessed food commodity distributions in some villages and also visited the food commodity warehouse in Maradi. The team was impressed with the overall management and level of documentation within the warehouse, and the effective delivery of food rations to beneficiaries. During distributions, the Sawki team also sensitized beneficiaries on the preparation of distributed rations.

Food commodity balance at the end of June 2016:

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

	CSB(kg)	BULGUR(kg)	LENTILS(kg)	VegOil(kg)	TOTALS(kg)
Opening Balance Warehouse	400,849	33,494	6,277	15	440,635
Closing balance at the end of June 2016	324,786	33,508	6,281	9,976	374,551

Preparation of PREP FY 17 and Program Exit Strategy

During the reporting period, the program team prepared and submitted the PREP FY17 to the USAID mission. Under SO1, the program activities will focus on empowering communities, government

agencies, and other partners to continue promoting healthy behaviors as the program gradually exits. Under the agriculture/livelihoods component, the program will emphasize linking producers with private sector markets and capacity building of existing community structures to help participants carry forward gains achieved by the program during the past four years. During FY17, there will be a gradual phase out and transfer of responsibilities to communities so that they take ownership of program successes in conformity with the designed sustainability and exist strategy matrix. Furthermore, a one year no-cost extension up to August 31, 2018 was submitted to the USAID mission. This extension will allow the Sawki consortium to consolidate gains achieved over the program's four years of implementation.

Challenges and Constraints

- Delayed completion of irrigation infrastructures that were planned for year 3. Action: the program has hired a WASH team to spearhead, fast-track, and monitor WASH activities for years 4 and 5. All tendering documents for pending water infrastructure have been completed. However, the onset of the rainy season will likely render certain sites inaccessible for construction teams and also may reduce the availability of community labor as people concentrate their time on farming activities. In addition, the water table will rise following the rainy period, rendering some sites not feasible for construction during the next quarter. All unfinished water infrastructure during year 4 will be completed during year 5, as indicated in the PREP.
- Slow pace of community structures in taking ownership and independently implementing the activities initiated by the Sawki program. Actions: Increase awareness and intensive coaching of committees to assume their roles and responsibilities in owning development activities. Also, organizing learning/exchange tours for members to share experiences on management of program activities.
- Difficulty of community members in accessing and forging partnership with Animas Sutura for sustained supply of Aqua tabs to rural villages for purification of water. Action: Explore other solutions in supporting communities in water treatment such as boiling water, using solar techniques, training on improved hygiene awareness, etc.
- Many volunteer mentors for safe spaces are only available to work with safe spaces members during evenings and over the weekends, thus some program field agents are not able to participate in these meeting sessions. Action: Assigning safe spaces-specific field agents and adjusting their working hours to include weekends.

Success Story: Mothers in Angoual Gao village embrace the Mu Da Kanmu (“We Change Ourselves”) approach, which is increasing the adoption of essential nutrition actions.

Before Sawki, the community of Angoual Gao in the Zinder region of Niger was characterized by high levels of malnutrition among children, as well as sub-optimal hygienic conditions. In spite of the program's early efforts through village meetings, the adoption of Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) remained low among target households. To enhance nutritional status in this community, Sawki adapted the use of Mu Da Kanmu (“We Change Ourselves”), an approach to improve the acceptance of ENA. Through Mu Da Kanmu home visits, mother care groups supported target families with social and behavior change (SBC) techniques to promote the adoption of optimal practices such as exclusive breast feeding for a baby's first six months and complementary foods enriched with animal source foods after six months. Special emphasis was given to interpersonal counseling (supporting individual mothers, especially in the context of their daily routines, to anticipate and overcome barriers to new practices), which was reinforced by mass media, community festivals, and other social mobilization events.



Mother care groups helped spread these practices across each community. These young volunteers, “Leader Mothers,” learned together about ENA and were asked to share their new understanding with peers in 10–15 neighboring households. In Sawki, the concept is taken a step further with Mu Da Kanmu. In order to move their neighbor mothers from knowledge to action, each Leader Mother organizes rotating visits to each of these women’s households. The mothers participate together in an activity, such as a cooking demonstration, led by the host mother, observe their families’ efforts to incorporate new actions in their daily routines, applaud

positive changes, and share solutions to challenges. Each woman in turn has an opportunity to demonstrate her knowledge and is honored for her efforts. These group visits are providing Leader Mothers with mutual support as well as friendly competition to motivate even greater changes.