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Voucher distribution for the NFI fair in Bambari, September 2016

Program: Reinforcing and Empowering Communities to Overcome the Effects of Conflict in Bambari and Surrounding Areas (RECOVER II)

FY16 Q4 Report: July 1st–September 30th, 2016



A. Summary of Achievements

The Reinforcing and Empowering Communities to Overcome the Effects of Conflict (RECOVER II) project is the progression of a previous OFDA grant (Award No: AID-OFDA-G-13-00174) and aims to mitigate the negative effects of persistent conflicts and to strengthen community resilience in Bambari and its surrounding areas.

Goal: Internally displaced households in Bambari access support to meet their basic needs, recover livelihoods, and return to their former neighborhoods.

In June 2016, the project was extended with a no-cost extension of two months from July 31 to September 30, 2016 to ensure the original objectives of the program are met effectively.

During this reporting period, the project achieved the following results:

- The Listening Center responded to 121 cases of conflict-related violence and gender-based violence (GBV), supporting 12 men, 94 women, and 15 children.
- 14,640 people (2,984 men, 4,644 women, 3,699 girls, and 3,313 boys) participated in community-based GBV prevention activities organized to address the themes of “physical violence,” “gender-based violence: forms and consequences,” and “what to do when affected by violence.” Awareness-raising was also conducted addressing the theme “rights and responsibilities of parents towards their children.”
- 127 houses were repaired (60 for male-headed households and 67 for female-headed households).
- 24 community wells were identified and purified (emptied, cleaned, treated with chlorine, and fitted with a suitable cover) to provide potable water to the returnee population.
- 2 NFI fairs were held serving 1,007 households (649 male-headed and 358 female-headed)
- An international consultant was recruited for the final project evaluation and the evaluation was completed.
- 42 representatives of project stakeholders (13 women and 29 men) including community counselors, Play Therapy coaches, protection committee members, project beneficiaries, and local authorities (among them the mayor of Bambari) participated in the project closure meeting on September 29, 2016 in Bambari.

B. Security

The security situation remained unstable in the Ouaka Prefecture during this period. Security incidents increased in the areas just outside of Bambari town, beginning in the month of July in Ngakobo village. Armed groups demonstrated hostility towards both MINUSCA as well as international NGOs during this period, including attacks on humanitarian convoys, robberies, and the placement of illegal barriers. During the month of September, armed herders were reported to have entered several villages on the Grimari-Lihoto road as well as the Bambari-Grimari road. The herders were subsequently pursued by Anti-Balaka militia, which resulted in exchanges of gunfire between the two sides that heightened tensions throughout the zone. Despite these security obstacles, MINUSCA, OCHA, Mercy Corps, and other humanitarian partners worked together during this period to support returnees.

C. Progress against work-plan

1. Vulnerable IDPs returning home restart livelihoods activities

SECTOR #1 Economic Recovery and Market Systems	<i>Objective:</i> Vulnerable IDPs returning home restart livelihoods activities				
Geographic Area(s)	<i>Ngouandji: Akpé and Mbrepou neighborhoods of Bambari</i>				
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: 200	IDP: 200			
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 200	IDP: 200			
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 200	IDP: 200			
Subsector: Livelihoods Restoration					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Period Reached
Number of people assisted through livelihood restoration activities, by sex	Male : 53	Yes	53	53	53
	Female: 147	Yes	147	147	147
	Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent of beneficiaries reporting their livelihoods restored within three to six months after receiving support	N/A	Yes	70%	96%	96%



During this reporting period, Mercy Corps continued to provide livelihood support to 200 beneficiaries. The 10 VSLAs organized among these beneficiaries were in the 5th-6th month of their 9 month cycle. The average amount saved per member is 16,545 XAF (\$26.57 USD), the average amount accessed in credit is 17,704 XAF (\$28.43 USD), and the average reimbursement rate was 70%. The following quote from Mr. Ketembi Toussaint, a member of the VSLA “I YE TI MAI,” illustrates the beneficiaries’ satisfaction with the program: “*Previously, our vision*

was different. We participated in traditional savings associations that led to conflict, and there often were problems with reimbursement and misuse of funds by certain members. Mercy Corps has truly helped us by training us in the VSLA system. The livelihoods grants that members received have allowed us to exercise economic activities and then make our VSLA contributions. We are very grateful towards Mercy Corps.”

2. Children, women, families and survivors of violence and/or displacement are identified, referred and have increased access to holistic services (psychosocial, health, and socio-economic)

SECTOR #2	<i>Objective: Children, women, families and survivors of violence, abduction and/or displacement are identified, referred and have increased access to holistic services</i>	
PROTECTION		
Geographic Area(s)	<i>Ngouandji: Akpé and Mbrepou neighborhoods of Bambari</i>	
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: NA	NA
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 121	Beneficiaries served by the Listening Center and provided with holistic support.
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 686	Majority of which are IDPs, however, includes returnees and other vulnerable community members.

From July to September 2016, Mercy Corps conducted 320 awareness-raising sessions and reached 14,640 community members: 2,984 men, 4,644 women, 3,699 girls, and 3,313 boys. Community counselors and protection committee members led sessions on the following themes: child protection and combatting violence against children, emotional abuse, and rape and what victims can do to get help, care and treatment. These awareness-raising sessions facilitated the reference of 121 cases (12 men, 94 women, and 15 children) to the fixed and mobile Listening Centers to receive services according to their needs. In total, 686 cases have been served throughout the duration of the project (530 women, 73 men, and 83 children).

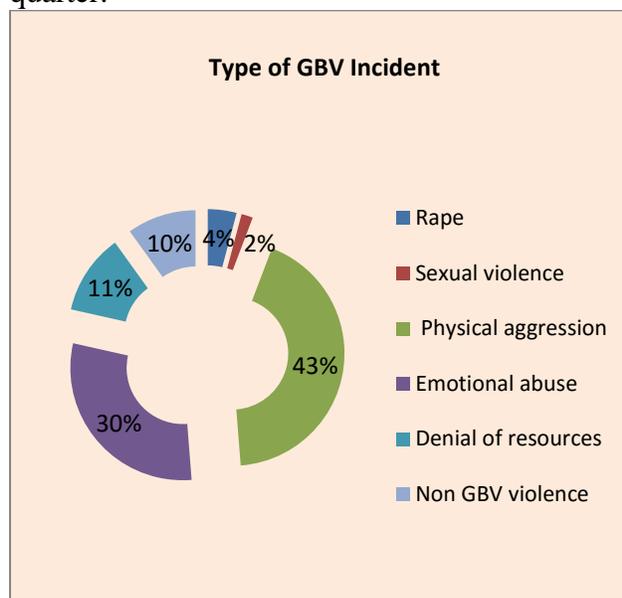
Subsector: Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
Number of individuals benefitting from GBV services, by sex	Male	Yes	12	12	73 survivors
	Female	Yes	N/A	94	530 survivors
	Other (children)	Yes	N/A	15	83 survivors
Number of people trained in GBV prevention or response, by sex	Male	Yes	18	00	70
	Female	Yes	99	00	81
	Other	No	0	00	48

Number of people trained in psychosocial support, by sex	Male	Yes	0	0	0
	Female	Yes	15	2	17
	Other (children)	Yes	0	0	0
Play therapy: Number of children enrolled	Boys	Yes	240	0	302
	Girls	Yes	240	0	418
	Other	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response

Bambari’s Listening Center received 121 new cases of GBV and conflict-related violence during the reporting period (12 men, 94 women, 4 boys and 11 girls) in addition to serving 119 previously-identified cases (8 men, 106 women, 2 boys, and 3 girls). These 240 individuals received psychosocial support and referrals to locally available services as needed (21 dignity kits distributed, 29 food kits distributed, 24 hygiene kits distributed, 47 participants in group counselling, and 119 home visits).

The graph below shows the breakdown according to the type of GBV cases in Bambari for this quarter:



Physical aggression remains the most recurrent type of GBV registered during the reporting period. This type of GBV represents 43% of all the cases received in the Listening Center. The number of cases of physical violence increased this reporting period with the perpetrators almost exclusively being domestic partners. The sites where the violence occurred are primarily in the home of the victim, and they primarily occur in the evening/night.

Play Therapy:



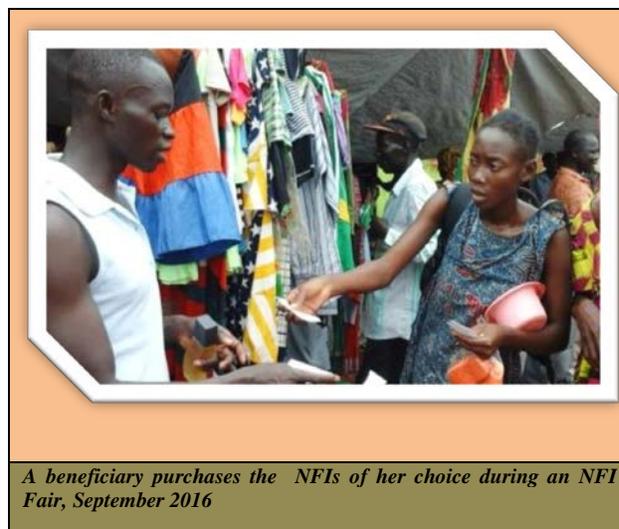
During this reporting period, routine activities continued for the 17 Play Therapy clubs. Mercy Corps trained the 34 coaches in “Sport for Peace” and “Sport for Development” methodologies. A final championship match took place in August 2016 between the GAMO BA Club from the Sangaris 2 IDP site and the CHARITE Club from the return neighborhood of MBREPOU. There was significant active participation of girls in the championship match, with each team having 4 girls among 11 total team members. “I am very happy to have

participated in the final competition with the boys on my team,” declared a girl from the GAMO BA Club after they won the match. A total of 207 Play Therapy sessions were conducted with 4,053 children (985 girls and 3,068 boys). Of these 4,053 children, 720 were members of Play Therapy Clubs and 3,333 were other children from the community.

3. Vulnerable IDP households are able to return home and meet basic household needs

SECTOR #3		<i>Objective: Vulnerable IDP households are able to return home and meet basic household needs</i>			
Logistics Support and Relief Commodities					
Geographic Area(s)		<i>Akpa, Mbala, and Saint Joseph neighborhoods of Bambari</i>			
Beneficiaries Targeted		Total: 1,000	IDP : 0		
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)		Total: 1,007	IDP: 0		
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)		Total: 1,007	IDP: 0		
Subsector: NFIs					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
<i>Total number and per item USD value of cash/vouchers distributed for NFIs, by type (e.g., plastic sheeting, flash tarpaulin, blankets, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, water containers, other)</i>	Male	Yes	500	649	649
	Female	Yes	500	358	358
	Other (children)	N/A	NA	NA	NA

In September 2016 in Bambari, two NFI fairs were held. Each beneficiary received vouchers worth 118,000 XAF (\$200 USD) in total, representing a total amount invested in the community of 118,826,000 XAF (\$201,400 USD). These vouchers supported 1,007 returnee households from the town of Bambari and the surrounding villages of LIWA 1, LIWA 2, ATONGO, BALEKA, NGRAMBIZOU, ZOUKOSSI, MAIPOUTCHOU, LENGOUADE, KITIYI, FERME D'ETAT, NGERENGAKOLA, and TOGO. Beneficiaries selected NFIs of their choice to support their return.



A beneficiary purchases the NFIs of her choice during an NFI Fair, September 2016

Subsector: Vulnerable Households Repair their Homes					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
<i>Total number of houses repaired, by head of household's sex</i>	Male	Yes	NA	60	95
	Female	Yes	NA	67	107
	Other (children)	N/A	NA	NA	NA
	Total Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Yes	200	127	202



Before Rehabilitation



After Rehabilitation

During this reporting period, Mercy Corps rehabilitated 127 houses (67 female-headed and 60 male-headed households) that had been pillaged and burned during the conflict. A returnee beneficiary declared, *“I am happy to have rediscovered my dignity sleeping in my own home after 2 years of suffering in the Sangaris/FED IDP site.”*

Subsector: Safe Drinking Water					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
<i>Number of household drinking water supplies with FRC >0.2 mg/L</i>	Male	Yes	NA	653	653
	Female	Yes		236	236
	Other (children)	N/A	NA	NA	NA
	Total Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	yes	NA	889	889

In order to make potable water available to returnees in the Ngoundji community, the project intended to distribute Aquatabs to 1,000 households. However, the WaSH sub-cluster in Bambari suggested that a more sustainable solution would be purifying the wells in returnee neighborhoods. Of the 43 community wells identified in the project zone, 24 were selected to be purified. Mercy Corps selected wells that met SPHERE standards, ensuring sufficient distance from sources of contamination (e.g. latrines, cemeteries, etc.), and also based on the number of people the wells were serving to ensure the greatest impact.

After the wells were identified, they were purified with the support of a WaSH technician recommended by the WaSH sub-cluster. Mercy Corps provided the required tools and materials for well purification to returnees who participated as laborers during the purification process. All technical activities were carried out by the technician. The purification process included: measuring the wells’ volume, emptying the wells, measuring pH and chlorine levels, treating the wells with a 1% chlorine solution according to well volume, and finally conducting a “Jar Test.” Approximately 889 returnee households benefited from the increased access to potable water.

			
Measuring well volume	Emptying wells	Well purification via chlorine	Use of purified water and verification of residual chlorine

D. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Due to persistent insecurity, return of IDPs was timid and thus not all of the rehabilitated homes were occupied at the project's end. While Mercy Corps did not push households to return, leaving this decision to their discretion, Mercy Corps did advocate with MINUSCA and local security forces to increase patrols and surveillance of return neighborhoods so that beneficiaries would feel more confident to return.
- After the first NFI fair, it was determined that merchants increased prices for high demand items. For the second NFI fair, Mercy Corps increased the number of merchants was from 52 to 150. A week-long interval between the two fairs was designed to facilitate the movement of traders and their goods from Bangui.
- Definitive identification of returnees was problematic, as back-and-forth movements between IDP sites and return neighborhoods was common. Mercy Corps worked closely with CCCM partners to verify returnee status.
- The participative approach used in rehabilitating houses and the freedom of choice provided to beneficiaries via the NFI fair served to promote beneficiary ownership of project activities.

E. Coordination

Mercy Corps is a permanent participant in humanitarian meetings in the Ouaka prefecture, particularly in the sub-prefecture of Bambari. We participate in: coordination meetings of the GBV working group; regional protection cluster coordination meetings led by UNHCR; shelter-NFI working group meetings with UNHCR, ICRC, Triangle, and ACTED; child protection working group meetings led by UNICEF; health working group meetings led by WHO; WaSH sub-working group meetings with UNICEF and Triangle; and humanitarian coordination meetings with UNOCHA. Mercy Corps is also present in all safety meetings organized by INSO. With our permanent presence in the area, we are a key partner in implementing coordinated humanitarian interventions in Ouaka.

During the reporting period, UNHCR supported the NFI fair by providing tarps for the set-up of merchant stands. In addition, COOPI and Caritas – as site managers – shared lists of returnees to facilitate beneficiary identification for the NFI fair. Mercy Corps also worked with UNOCHA to increase MINUSCA patrols on the days of the NFI fair and thereby diminish any protection risks for beneficiaries, as well as facilitate the participation of Muslim merchants.

F. Monitoring and Evaluation Activities

During the reporting period, monitoring and evaluation activities included:

- Monitoring the quality of house rehabilitation and information collection
- Ensuring a complaint mechanism was in place for NFI fairs and post-distribution monitoring
- Monitoring of VSLAs
- Compilation of project data
- Organization of the final project evaluation via an external consultant

Attachments:

1. *Required: Updated PMP*