

Mitigating the Food Security Shock in MOPTI & DJENNE CIRCLES

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT for USAID/FFP

JULY - SEPTEMBER, 2012

Date: October 2012

I. Introduction

NAATA, which means “hope” in the Sonrhail language, is an Emergency Food Security Project funded by USAID/FFP and Latter-Day Saint (LDS) Charities, Inc. Food vouchers were funded by USAID/FFP through agreement AID-FFP-G-12-00024; Title II commodity distribution through AID-FFP-A-12-00003; and seed vouchers through LDS. It is implemented by CRS-Mali and implementing partner AMPRODE/SAHEL. The project aims to alleviate the effects of the poor 2011/2012 growing season for 7,525 vulnerable households located in the 62 intervention villages of the 9 communes in the Circles of Djenné (Djenné, Niansanari, Fema, Kewa, Fakala, Madiama, and Nemabadeyakafo) and of Mopti (Dialloubé and Koubaye) in the Mopti Region.

The project aims at improving:

- Access to food for 7,525 vulnerable households through food voucher coupons (grain) exchanged with traders at planned fairs over 4 months (completed prior to this quarter);
- Access to seeds for 7,525 vulnerable households through seed voucher exchanged with traders at fairs in June;
- Access to food for 4,900 vulnerable households of the 7,525 through direct distribution of Title II commodities over 3 months of 25 kg of rice, 25 kg of peas and 5 liters of oil imported from the USA (completed from July-September).

Project activities were initially planned for the circles of Djenné, Tenenkou and Youarou, but NAATA had to reorient geographically to Mopti after rebels occupied Tenenkou and Youarou; fortunately, the reorientation was accomplished before activities began in April. Nevertheless, the NAATA Project has the same number of beneficiaries and covers 62 villages in 9 Communes from 2 Circles (7 communes in Djenné and 2 communes in Mopti).

II. Project Activities & Outcomes

During the reporting period (July-August-September 2012), no Food Voucher activities were conducted as they were planned for the previous quarter and completed in that quarter. The Food Vouchers were designed to cover beneficiary needs immediately (April-June) and to fill the gap until Title II food would arrive and be available for distribution in July-September. The two mechanisms also take into consideration the reality that vouchers are not always the best mechanism for food transfer during the rainy season as rains can inhibit some markets and the participation of some merchants.

While one project was designed, two separate budgets were submitted. One budget covered operations and salaries for 4.5 months for Food Vouchers during the first half of the project (this agreement), and one budget covered 4.5 months for Title II distribution during the second half of the project. Support costs, evaluations, etc., are shared between the two budgets.

The following Title II activities were achieved during this quarter:

- Identified the 4,900 Title II beneficiaries according to severe vulnerability criteria;

- Distributed ration cards to 4,900 Title II beneficiaries ;
- Established and operationalized 26 of 26 village distribution committees ;
- Trained members of village distribution committees on roles and responsibilities ;
- Planned the distributions of Title II food ;
- Informed the beneficiaries of the schedule for the 3 food distributions;
- Distributed and monitored the food distributions at the sites;
- Reached 8,558 people (65% women) through 52 through Information Education Communication (IEC) sessions on hygiene practices and pea preparation ;
- Collected data on indicators for the project's targeted beneficiary households ;
- Ensured regular monitoring of project implementation;
- Conducted a Real-Time Evaluation (results currently being analyzed);
- Held 3 monthly and 1 quarterly coordination meetings.

The Food Voucher activities accomplished during the April-May-June 2012 period included:

- All the agreements were signed to enable the implementation of NAATA project activities in Mopti region;
- The project staff were recruited and made trained;
- The information and awareness campaigns around the project reached 1921 individuals (1403 males and 682 females); communities approved the project's approach and mobilized around its activities;
- 100% of village-based committees (62 of 62) were established;
- 7525 beneficiaries were identified, of which, 3763 live in 43 villages of the 07 communes of Djenné Circle, and 3762 live in 19 villages of 02 communes in the Circle of Mopti ; there are 42,734 individuals (49.37% male and 50.63% female);
- 95.5% of the 7525 beneficiaries are above 18 years old (7522 /7525) with the greatest majority living in Mopti; 0.05% (38/7525) are under 18 years of age;
- 7525 households received their ration cards and were mobilized to attend the fairs;
- 7449 (99.65%) beneficiaries received food and seed vouchers out of 7525 registered (26 absences, of which 16 were in Mopti and 10 in Djenné) ;
- 101 venders participated in the fairs (74 males and 27 females) and supplied cereal grains (rice, maize, millet, sorghum), legumes, oil and shea butter.
- 4507MT of food were offered at the different fairs and 1849MT were purchased with vouchers. These food supplies included cereal grains, legumes, oil and shea butter.
- 584MT of seeds, including both conventional and improved varieties, were supplied to the fairs and 327.39 MT were purchased with vouchers.

III. Challenges

One of the biggest challenges was vendor repayment due to the fact that the fairs coincided with a period of insecurity in the intervention zones, and banks in the zones were closed. This created a challenge for timely vendor repayment because CRS was obligated to handle the cash and repayment. If the repayment amounts surpassed 100,000FCFA, the internal policy states that the repayment must be handled at the Sevare or Bamako offices; if it surpasses 1 million FCFA, the check must be signed by the Country Representative; and, as happened in 1 case, if it surpasses 50 million FCFA, the Regional Director must sign the check. Thus,



because of the bank closures due to insecurity and CRS' internal financial controls, some vendors had to wait 10-15 days for repayment.

IV. Looking Forward/Planning

From October-December, the project will continue to work with the beneficiary population and monitor programming, a final evaluation will be conducted in December/January, and a final report will be submitted after December 31st.

V. Conclusion

Food Voucher distributions were conducted successfully during the last quarter (April-June), and 7,449 (99.65%) beneficiaries received food and seed vouchers out of 7525 registered beneficiaries (26 absences, of which 16 were in Mopti and 10 in Djenné). Distributions were appreciated by beneficiaries, with many stating so in-person others expressing their gratitude by calling the hotline.

