



FY12 ANNUAL REPORT
RESILIENCE PLUS: A CLIMATE-FOCUSED RESPONSE TO THE
FOOD CRISIS IN NIGER

MAY 1 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

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SPONSORED BY THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT'S
OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA) & IMPLEMENTED BY
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF (LWR) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
UNION HADIN KAI

SUBMITTED BY:
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I. Executive Summary

With support from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), LWR and Union Hadin Kai are working to help ensure that the most vulnerable populations in Niger are more resilient to the current and future food crises by responding to the immediate needs of 64,800 people in 60 villages of Niger's Tahoua region, while helping to lay the groundwork for long-term food security. *Resilience Plus: A Climate-Focused Response to the Food Crisis in Niger* seeks to provide immediate income for households affected by Niger's latest food crisis through cash-for-work (CFW) and high-quality, certified millet seed for the 2012 planting season; and promote resiliency to future crises through improved soil and water conservation and nutrition.

II. Accomplishments

In May 2012, LWR finance and programmatic teams from Niger, Burkina Faso and the US held a project kick-off and training event in Tahoua with Hadin Kai project staff and Board members. The purpose of the two-day session was to develop a common understanding of roles and responsibilities in project management, key project implementation strategies, expected results and financial and administrative procedures to ensure compliance with US government regulations.

Two project Animators (one male and one female) and a female Nutrition Advisor were recruited to facilitate project implementation and reported to service on July 1, 2012. These project staff as well as other members of the project team, Hadin Kai leaders and local officials worked to raise awareness of *Resilience Plus* project activities around CFW and nutrition promotion, in particular, in all four of the target communes during the project's second quarter. Awareness-raising community meetings provided important opportunities to respond to community questions and concerns, as well as introduce project operations and strategies in a very open and transparent manner. An estimated 8,560 community members attended these awareness-raising community meetings.

Following a competitive bidding process, the project purchased, transported and distributed 15 tons of certified, R1 HKP variety millet seed at thirty project sites. At each project site, a Seed Distribution Committee, trained by the project team during a one-day session on vulnerability assessment and distribution management, received and distributed the seeds to 3,000 vulnerable households. 78% of these households were female-headed, and each received 5kg of certified millet seed each, enough to plant an estimated .5 hectares of millet.

A total of 7,104 people participated in CFW activities to date. Beneficiaries were enabled to purchase food and other much-needed household goods while reducing their dependence on asset sales and debt to meet their basic needs. 71,142 individuals benefitted from CFW as a result of a household member's participation in the project activities. CFW participants recovered 842 hectares (2,083 acres) of communal land through soil and water conservation interventions.

275,125 mature tree saplings that were grown and maintained by *Resilience Plus*' trained tree nursery managers were also replanted on community recovered land to leverage project gains in soil and water conservation. These trees will play an important role in guarding against soil erosion and will help control future flooding in the region.

The project made important headway in its efforts to train community leaders with improved knowledge and skills to promote behavior change for optimal nutrition behaviors in their communities. In addition to the Hadin Kai project team, 56 women from all four of the communes participating in *Resilience Plus* were trained to provide nutritional health education to others. This training will continue in the project's third quarter and will target an additional 64 women selected as community volunteers.

The project workplan and terms of reference for project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) were drafted during the reporting period. In addition, in August 2012 the project's Performance Baseline Data Report was submitted to OFDA.

Details on these achievements over the course of project quarters one and two are detailed in the following table.

Sector:		<i>Agriculture and Food Security</i>			
Objective 1:		<i>Provide households with immediate access to cash through cash-for-work to meet short term food security needs and protect and rehabilitate land assets</i>			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
	<i>(Projected) increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed systems/agricultural inputs for beneficiaries(Indicator1)</i>	<i>The average number of days of food self-sufficiency based on 2011 harvests ranged from 2-22 days among farmers surveyed in the project zone.</i>	<i>(Projected) 2 month increase</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Data revealing progress against this indicator is forthcoming.</i>
<i>Provide certified millet seed for planting to vulnerable families</i>	<i>Number of people benefiting from seed systems/agricultural inputs (Indicator 2)</i>	<i>5% of the individuals surveyed had saved seed for planting in 2012.</i>	<i>600 people</i>	<i>3,000 households (78% headed by women) and 24,774 individuals (62.5% women and girls) received certified seed</i>	<i>The project team trained Seed Distribution Committees (90 men and 60 women) in all thirty project sites during a one-day session on vulnerability assessment and distribution management so as to effectively work with community leaders in setting criteria to identify the poorest, most vulnerable households, ranking households by vulnerability and selecting the most vulnerable households to benefit from emergency seed rations. Seed Distribution Committees were also responsible for the reception and distribution of seeds at each site accordingly. In total, 2,337 female-headed households and 663 male-headed households benefited from 5kg of certified millet seed, reaching 24,774 community members (15,493 female and 9,281 males).</i>
<i>Train partner staff and community members in soil and water conservation</i>	<i>Number of people trained in soil and water conservation (Indicator 3)</i>	<i>126 of the 1,102 individuals surveyed (11%) reported mastery of soil and water conservation techniques prior to the start of the project.</i>	<i>100 people</i>	<i>100 individuals trained (33% women)</i>	<i>100 CFW management committee members attended training in land restoration techniques and soil and water conservation (CES/DRS) July 19th – 23rd, 2012. In addition to covering topics related to land restoration techniques and CES/DRS, CFW management committee members were trained in how to organize implementation and management of CES/DRS efforts in compliance with the project's CFW manual as well as in community sensitization and messaging approaches to communicate the project goals and strategies. These trained CFW management committee members, and 50 committee members trained through a previous LWR-supported project (150 members in total, including 50 women), sensitized and provided technical support on soil and water conservation techniques to 7,104 CFW participants.</i>

Sector:		Agriculture and Food Security			
Objective 1:		Provide households with immediate access to cash through cash-for-work to meet short term food security needs and protect and rehabilitate land assets			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
Mobilize community leaders	Number of community mobilization sessions	0	4 (at least one per commune)	4 communes and 30 project sites sensitized	The project team, Hadin Kai leaders and local officials worked to raise awareness of Resilience Plus project activities around CFW and nutrition promotion, in particular, in all four of the target communes during the project's second quarter. Awareness-raising community meetings provided important opportunities to respond to community questions and concerns, as well as introduce project operations and strategies in a very open and transparent manner. An estimated 8,560 community members attended these awareness-raising community meetings.
Construct soil and water conservation structures and riverbank protection	Amount of money distributed to cash for work beneficiaries (Indicator 4)	25% of individuals surveyed (at 2 of the 6 sites surveyed) reported previously benefitting from CFW programming. These individuals reported 75% of the CFW income earned was used for food purchases.	\$289,417	\$193,222 distributed	Beneficiaries earned \$192,417 in total for construction of CES/DRS structures and \$805 was paid to members of the management committees as remuneration for their oversight and technical support services. Each beneficiary earned 1,000 FCFA (approximately \$2) per day. Focus group discussions revealed that CFW programming has had a considerable positive impact on local communities. According to CFW beneficiaries, the timing of this intervention was very much appreciated, allowing those most vulnerable to secure a means of subsistence not only to get through the lean season but also avoid getting into debt. CFW beneficiaries also reported buying food with their income earned and cultivating their own fields, rather than having to work for others.
	Number of cash-for-work beneficiaries		32,800 women; 32,000 men	47,417 Women & Girls; 26,710 Men & Boys	Of the 7,104 <u>direct</u> beneficiaries of CFW activities, all of them were adults between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five (4,119 women and 2,985 men). A total of 96,978 man-days were worked, an average of 13 days per participant.
	Number of hectares rehabilitated	0	approximately 1,200 hectares	843 hectares	CFW participants recovered 843 hectares (2,083 acres) of communal land through soil and water conservation interventions. The Regional Office for Rural Engineering is collaborating with the project by providing oversight and monitoring of CES/DRS efforts. Each project site is visited by a Rural Engineering Technician at least once a week. Technicians are charged with ensuring CES/DRS work being implemented complies with quality assurance standards and norms that govern soil and conservation efforts.

Sector:		<i>Agriculture and Food Security</i>			
Objective 1:		<i>Provide households with immediate access to cash through cash-for-work to meet short term food security needs and protect and rehabilitate land assets</i>			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
<i>Plant trees</i>	<i>Number of trees planted (Indicator 5)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>270,000 trees</i>	<i>275,125 trees</i>	<i>According to an evaluation conducted by the Environmental Department at the end of August 2012, 60 tree nursery managers successfully raised 275,125 seedlings (of the 300,000 seedlings planted) which had reached the necessary maturity to be replanted. Replanting of saplings began shortly after the evaluation at all of the project sites and continued through September. At the end of the month of September, there were 2,129 saplings that remained in tree nurseries, to be planted in October.</i>
<i>Train producers on improved agricultural techniques for food and cash crops</i>	<i>Number of people trained in improved agricultural techniques (Indicator 6)</i>	<i>Among the 1,102 individuals surveyed, 304 community members interviewed (28%) have used at least one improved agricultural technique. However, this varied by gender; among those applying improved techniques, only 17% were women.</i>	<i>60 people</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Implementation planned for FY13</i>
<i>Train producers in post-harvest business management, institutional strengthening for farmers associations and marketing</i>	<i>Number of people trained in farm management (Indicator 7)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>160 people</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Implementation planned for FY13</i>

Sector:	Nutrition				
Objective 2:	Leaders have improved knowledge and skills to promote behavior change for optimal nutrition behaviors in their communities				
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
Behavior change communication	Number of beneficiaries receiving nutritional education (Indicator 1)	1% of women surveyed previously benefitted from formal nutritional education.	600 people	N/A	Implementation planned for FY13
	Percent change in practice and/or knowledge pertaining to nutrition education topics (Indicator 2)	1% of men and 1% of women (0% of girls and boys) surveyed had prior knowledge on exclusive breastfeeding for children <6 months. 1% of men, 1% of women, 1% of girls and 0% of boys surveyed had prior knowledge on balanced and adequate nutrition. 1% of women surveyed reported knowledge on food safety. 1% of men, 9% of women 0% of girls and 1% of boys surveyed had prior knowledge on when and where to seek medical care.	50%	N/A	Data revealing progress against this indicator is forthcoming.

Sector:		<i>Nutrition</i>			
Objective 2:		<i>Leaders have improved knowledge and skills to promote behavior change for optimal nutrition behaviors in their communities</i>			
Activity	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Progress against Indicator	Notes
<i>Disseminate messages through IEC campaign materials</i>	<i>Number of participants reached by sensitization activities (radio emissions, posters and other materials)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>30,000 participants</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Implementation planned for FY13</i>
<i>Training in behavior change communication techniques and nutrition</i>	<i>Number of providers (health care and/or community volunteers) trained in the provision of nutrition education (Indicator 3)</i>	<i>Aside from health care workers, baseline research indicates that no other community volunteers or leaders have been trained in the provision of nutrition education</i>	<i>120 women trained</i>	<i>56 women trained</i>	<i>120 women, representing all four of the project communes, were nominated during community meetings as volunteers to be trained in the provision of hygiene and nutritional health education to others. At the end of September, 56 of these 120 women were trained in behavior change communication techniques and essential family practices by the project Nutrition Advisor. This five-day training was the first round in trainings which ultimately will be offered to all 120 of the community volunteers. Resilience Plus project Animators will be reinforcing the work of these female volunteers by organizing community meetings concerned with hygiene and nutritional health messaging. Utilizing these two approaches, Resilience Plus seeks to reach both women and men with this important information.</i>

III. Project Difficulties/Constraints and Proposed Solutions

At the start of the project, Hadin Kai, LWR's implementing partner, suffered a seven-week delay in receiving project funds due to a problem with the transfer to the local branch of the bank. As a result, some project activities were adjusted or delayed, but most were able to be completed as planned. Nevertheless, Hadin Kai was able to purchase certified millet seed, as the project team successfully negotiated with the seed supplier that an advance payment not be made. As a result, the seeds were able to be secured, transported and distributed to vulnerable households in time for the planting season.

In addition to the delay in receipt of project funds, the major difficulty encountered during the implementation of CFW activities was the inaccessibility of some project sites once the rainy season started. Villages that compose project sites on one side of the Adouna Valley are often inaccessible for two to three weeks due to flooding. For this reason, fourteen of the project sites, (two sites in the commune of Keita, three in the commune of Kalfou, six in the commune of Tamaské and three in the commune of Bambaye), were paid every other two or three weeks. In the event that the project team was not able to reach the sites in question, a call was placed to the village chiefs as well as the president of the management committees so as to inform them and that the message is shared with the beneficiary populations. More recently, village chiefs have been of great help to the project team by alerting them first of the accessibility or inaccessibility of their sites.

IV. Project Collaboration and Partnerships

Hadin Kai's Project Coordinator participated in all of the weekly Tahoua Food Security Cluster meetings during the reporting period. This forum is spearheaded by the Secretary General of the regional government and is attended by local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations operating in the region. Currently Concern, Qatar Charity, the Red Cross, World Vision, Action against Hunger, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Program (WFP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regularly participate. The purpose of the Food Security Cluster's weekly meetings is for local actors to share information and experiences for more effective humanitarian interventions. This forum has also proved to be an important opportunity to harmonize planning and operational strategies and avoid duplication.

Hadin Kai's Project Coordinator also participated in six meetings with other humanitarian agencies at the prefectural office of Tahoua. These reoccurring meetings provide the chance for agencies to brief the District Commissioner, local mayors, departmental directors of decentralized state services and other government officials on the progress of their activities.

A Hadin Kai delegation, composed of the Project Coordinator, the Finance Officer and Animators held a meeting on May 5, 2012 with the mayors of Tamaské and Keita communes. The objective of this meeting was to explain the project goal, objectives and activities. During the course of this meeting, both mayors also validated Hadin Kai's selection of sites for the project.

In addition, Hadin Kai successfully negotiated an agreement with the Environmental Department outlining the roles and responsibilities of the latter in monitoring land restoration activities and cultivation and planting of trees.

V. Success Story : Boosting Food Security

Idrissa Alkassoum, is a married, 47 year old father and the head of a twelve person household in Awanchala, a village that is part of Bambaye Commune in the Tahoua Region of Niger. As a smallholder farmer, he relies on subsistence farming to nourish both himself as well as his family. In addition to the difficulties the hungry season itself brings to farming families, the end of the dry season and start of the rainy season is also often a time of vulnerability for Idrissa, his family and other households like his. Food provisions from the previous harvest are typically low or have been completely exhausted by this time of year and sometimes oblige the neediest households to assume debt in order to purchase necessary foodstuffs until their next harvest. Idrissa has had to rely on this kind of strategy for years to nourish his family. This year the situation became even more severe as a result of the food crisis that millions across the Sahel, including Idrissa, were forced to face. These factors together conspire to lock Idrissa and other farmers like him in a continuous cycle of acquiring and repaying debt, instead of finding themselves in a position to effectively store surplus portions of their harvest, thereby boosting their self-sufficiency and food security.



With support from OFDA, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Union Hadin Kai are working together to address the present food crisis and build local household resilience by assisting families like Idrissa's through cash-for-work, providing high-quality, certified millet seed for the 2012 planting season to vulnerable households and helping to improve soil and water conservation and nutrition in four communes in Tahoua. LWR and Hadin Kai are targeting thirty sites of community-held land in the Tahoua region for soil and water conservation improvements. In order to protect 1,200 hectares (2,965 acres) of land, local villagers are being employed by the *Resilience Plus* project to construct soil and water conservation structures designed to minimize erosion and facilitate regeneration of the land. Project beneficiaries are paid 1,000 FCFA per day for their work and even more importantly, learn soil and water conservation techniques that can also be applied to their own fields to boost their harvests - despite changing rainfall and weather patterns.

This approach has proven to be highly successful in assisting hungry families to access cash to meet their immediate food and household needs, protecting them from the necessity to incur debt, and helping to assure improved food security for vulnerable families in the future. Recovered communal lands also promise greener pastures for village livestock, soil conservation through reforestation, and a source of fodder, gum arabic and local trees and plants with healing properties for local villagers. Idrissa attests, "This is the only year since 2008 that I did not take out a loan to cover the food needs of my family while we cultivate our fields. Through cash-for-work, my household receives 1,000 FCFA each day. This assistance came at the right time and I sincerely thank the sponsors of this support."

VI. Activities Planned for the Third Project Quarter (FY13)

- Complete CFW activities (18 days of work remaining)
- Hold official project launch ceremony
- Continue training of hygiene and nutritional health volunteers
- Train producers on improved agricultural techniques for food and cash crops
- Cooking demonstrations on use of locally available, nutritious foods
- Purchase IEC materials
- Monitor harvest production among R1 HKP millet seed recipients
- Monitor recently replanted tree seedlings