

**United States Agency for International Development  
Bureau of Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian  
Assistance  
Office of Food for Peace  
Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Results Report**

**Awardee Name /Host Country**  
Catholic Relief Services (CRS) / Niger

**Award Number**  
FFP-A-00-07-00006-07

Submission Date: November 5, 2012

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CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc
CBC	Communication for Behavior Change
COSAN	Community Health Committees/Comité de Santé
CP	Community Plan
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSI	Centre de Santé Intégré (IHC)
CVA	Comite Villageois d'Animation
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
FFP	Food for Peace
FFT	Food for Training
FY	Fiscal Year
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GON	Government of Niger
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HKI	Helen Keller International
HN	Health and Nutrition
HP	Health Post
HQ	Headquarters
I.R	Intermediate Result
IHC	Integrated Health Center (CSI)
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses, see also PCIME
IR	Intermediate Result
ISCV	Initiatives pour la Sécurisation des Conditions de Vie
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice
LOA	Length of Activity
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	Metric Ton
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PD/Hearth	Positive Deviancy/Hearth
PITT	Performance Indicator Tracking Table
PO	Producer organization
PROSAN	Programme de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle
SCAP-RU	Système Communautaire d'Alerte Précoce-Réponses aux Urgences
SCRD	Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy
SFBW	Soy-Fortified Bulgur Wheat
SIMA	Système d'Information sur les Marches Agricole
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WARO	West Africa Regional Office
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

## **1. Introduction: Food Aid Program Implementation and Responsiveness**

In 2007, three non-governmental organizations (CRS, CARE, and HKI) submitted to USAID/FFP, a Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP) proposal to implement food security activities in three regions of Niger, namely Dosso (Loga, Dogondoutchi), Tahoua (Konni, Illéla) and Zinder (Tanout, North Mirriah). The Goal of the program, called *Nutritional and Food Security Program (PROSAN Rayuma)*, was to reduce food insecurity of rural Nigerien households from the most vulnerable communities in these three regions by 2012. The program, covering a five-year period (2007-2011) and then extended to June 30, 2012, follows the *Development Activity Proposal (DAP/Niger Food Security Initiatives, ISAN)* implemented by the three NGOs in the same area of intervention between 2000 and 2006. The PROSAN aimed at consolidating the achievements of the latter project.

Three specific objectives supported this program:

- SO1: protect and enhance livelihoods, improving conditions for increased agriculture production and improved agro-enterprise;
- SO2: protect and enhance human capabilities by improving household health and nutrition status, especially that of children under five and women of childbearing age;
- SO3: protect and enhance communities' resiliency by improving their abilities to identify and respond to crises and shocks.

These three strategic objectives were established to respond to the main behavioral and systemic constraints related to food supply, access and utilization. Aspects relating to gender equity, local governance and functional literacy for 8,100 community leaders were incorporated in a cross-cutting approach to prepare participants for the management of community initiatives.

This annual results report addresses issues relating to the achievement of targets as described in the IPTT, along with key assumptions, the impact of partnering and the potential for sustainability over a period of nine months (October 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012). Success stories and lessons learned are included as are the required attachments, financial report and monetization tables.

Key assumptions have largely held; these include a stable security situation within Niger; open access to targeted communities; mutually supportive relationships among consortium agencies and other actors; and the timely release of donor funding. Recent developments in Mali have resulted in cross-border refugee migration, but this did not directly affect program intervention zones. Security for program staff was heightened as a result of increased risks of kidnapping across Niger. Some of the programmatic assumptions including sufficient amount and distribution of rain and reduced pest attacks held for the 2012 growing season and therefore will result in increased per capita cereal production, similar to the 2010 growing season. According to FEWS NET, the growing season is well-established across the country, where extremely good rainfall suggests good harvest prospects, except in both Tillabéri and Dosso regions where reports of significant delays in the start-of-season could reduce crop yields<sup>1</sup>. Cereal prices have remained high in the program area, impacting economic access.

The consortium also worked closely with other USG partners implementing in Niger (Africare and Counterpart International) to ensure complementarity across implementing areas as well as

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fews.net/pages/country.aspx?gb=ne&l=en>

to share lessons learned and best practices. The Consortium Coordination Body (CCB) continue to hold regular quarterly coordination meetings, field visit exchanges, internal data quality assessments and advocacy.

Partners focused on program sustainability, which was pursued vigorously during the close-out period. Success stories demonstrate a distinctly positive impact on PROSAN beneficiaries.

A program closeout plan submitted to and approved by FFP was rigorously implemented. Lessons learned from PROSAN were incorporated into the Development Food Aid Program (DFAP) proposal submitted to FFP, resulting in a cooperative agreement awarded to CRS for 2012–2017, although geographical focus and strategies of implementation have evolved based on the lessons learned.

### **SO1: Livelihoods Protected and Enhanced**

The purpose of this strategic objective was to help vulnerable and chronically food insecure producers increase their households' availability and access to food resources through a two-pronged approach addressing two key leverage points: increasing production and adding value. The program focused on the following results to achieve the strategic objective:

*IR 1.1: Households and communities have adopted agricultural processing and other value added practices promoted by the project.*

The PROSAN adopted a three-step approach to conservation and processing: 1) identify and select appropriate technologies for project areas for processing, gardening, fisheries, and animal products; 2) training small scale producers in these techniques; and 3) facilitating the acquisition of necessary equipment by communities. To achieve this result, it was important to improve producer's organizational skills, and as a result 42 agro-enterprise groups (of which six were newly created in FY12) received a one-week intensive training targeting their 1,131 members focusing on the basic principles of business planning and management. PROSAN also continued to work with an additional 389 groups formed and supported from the inception of the program. As part of the close out strategy, PROSAN intensified refresher trainings for these groups in bookkeeping, business management, and diversification strategies as well as accountability and transparency. Additionally, 10 grinding mills, 13 shellers, 12 oil presses, and 4 solar driers were provided to 42 agro-enterprise groups. A total of 46 mill operators received refresher training in milling techniques as well as maintenance and troubleshooting of the equipment provided, and 262 agro enterprise committee members were trained in improved business techniques and principles of cooperatives. The training focused on the seven principles of cooperatives with emphasis on business planning/management, capital sourcing, and transparency.

A total of 72 training sessions were held on bookkeeping and simple accounting. Eight business plans were developed for 42 agro enterprise groups.

The agro businesses formed focused particularly on food processing and value addition, as well as production. Processing techniques promoted included powdering, dough making, drying, oil extraction fermentation, salting, smoking, and more. According to quantitative data from the FY12 CAP assessment, about 39 percent of all surveyed households reported being engaged in some form of agro-processing, and slightly over 20 percent were engaged in group marketing.

To ensure good pricing decisions, PROSAN continued to work with SIMA (Système d'Information sur les Marchés Agricole). SIMA is a price information system for agricultural produce based on cell phone technology, allowing producers and consumers to access price information for informed decision making. During the implementation year, 84 reports were issued.

Physical access remains a major challenge in the implementation zone. To address this, 15.81 km. of farm-to-market roads (10.81 km in Doutchi and 5 km Zinder) were rehabilitated through Cash for Work (CFW) activities. The CFW activities improved access to markets and also reduce marketing transaction costs. A total of 2,297 households participated in the road rehabilitation CFW activity, receiving 59,723,000 FCFA. The CFW activity was organized during the hungry season, a period in Niger when most vulnerable households either do not have cash to purchase cereals in local markets, or prices are so high that they are unable to afford. This cash infusion helped vulnerable households to purchase food from local markets.



**Women with processing equipment donated by PROSAN**

Sensitization sessions also were conducted within beneficiary communities to ensure proper maintenance and sustainability of the rehabilitated infrastructures. Local authorities were included in discussions concerning road maintenance.

*IR1.2: HHs and communities have adopted natural resource management and agro-pastoral production practices promoted by the project.*

A poor harvest in the 2011/2012 agricultural season, coupled with increasing food prices and the effects of political instability in the sub-region, negatively impacted targeted populations whose resilience is extremely fragile. In the intervention area, PROSAN's response was proactive providing comprehensive package of activities that contributed significantly to mitigating the expected negative effects on food and nutrition security. PROSAN activities aimed at improving farming practices by promoting appropriate techniques of biological and mechanical restoration and conservation of soil and water. These techniques improved environmental protection and increased production even under drought and climate change conditions. As an immediate response to the crop failure and increasing food prices, and subsequent reduced access to food suffered by the targeted households, PROSAN undertook CFW activities targeting land restoration in Zinder and Doutchi targeting a total of 10,610 vulnerable households who recuperated 1,314.37 hectares. Targeted households for this activity received 112,087,000 FCFA.

Over the past four years, PROSAN continually sensitized communities on the advantages of soil and water conservation techniques. At total of 12 water and soil conservation techniques promoted by the program resulting in over 7,000 households adopting at least one of the techniques promoted. An additional 1,451.86 hectares were recovered through their adoption of the techniques.

A total of 1,115 ha of reclaimed land was seeded with grasses at 16 different sites to be used as pasture land. A total of 54,581 tree seedlings such as *Acacia Senegal*, *Acacia Nilotica*, *Rufensis Balm*, *Adensonia Digitata* and *moringa oliféri* were produced in 26 nurseries through support from PROSAN and successfully transplanted onto recuperated land. This activity will enhance the re-greening initiative promoted by the Government of Niger.



Vegetable plots supported by PROSAN

Under small scale irrigation, 2,638 producers benefited from infrastructure and facilities which aimed to promote continued availability of food necessary for a balanced diet, and also to improve the living conditions of the beneficiary households by increasing their income, especially during the dry season. A total of 88 hand-dug wells equipped with manual pumping devices (Niya Kokari Da-NDK) were developed in four sites. Three dams and one mini-dam were also constructed to promote water infiltration and retention.



As mini barrage under construction to increase water infiltration

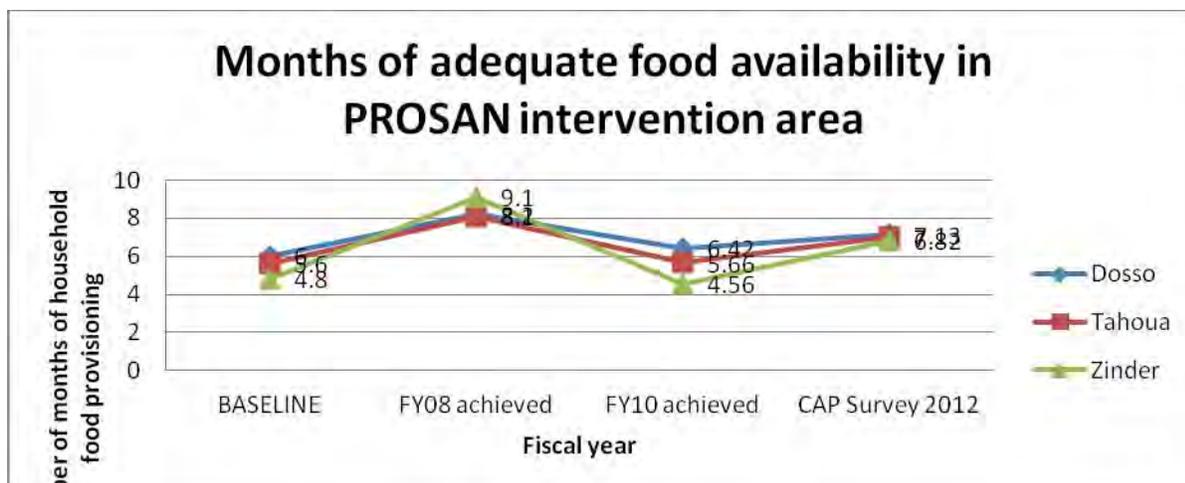
In Dosso and Zinder regions, 1,840 drip irrigation kits were distributed to small scale producers, giving households a sustainable way to obtain food without relying on rain-fed crops. A total of 26.75 hectares of vegetable crops were irrigated in FY12 as a result of PROSAN interventions.

To improve the capacity and management skills of vegetable producers, 673 new local experts were trained through 13 training sessions in Dosso and Zinder on water conservation, soil protection, and surface/drip irrigation systems.

Under *habbanaye*, a traditional livestock restocking system, CRS and its local partner, ISCV, continued to follow up with beneficiaries who received 4,000 small ruminants for restocking in the Tahoua region. The follow up involved sensitizations on animal health and appropriate care as well as transparency, as beneficiaries pass along the animals after they have bred.

### **Overall impact of the activity**

The involvement of poorer households and the participation of a large number of women in the implementation of these activities helped to reduce household vulnerability and significantly improved their nutritional status, especially for children aged 6 to 59 months and pregnant and lactating women. This was done in particular through the production of a variety of foods from dry season garden sites, livestock and small ruminants. The use of revenues from CFW also helped to bring the average number of months of adequate food supplies to 6.98 months in FY12, despite the fact that the year was considered to be particularly difficult for rural Nigerien households.



The figure above shows that the number of months of household food provisioning increased from 5.5 at baseline to 6.98 during the CAP 2012 survey although a peak of 9.1 months was observed during the final evaluation in FY11. This trend shows a close link of this indicator with the rainfall, therefore with the production of rain-fed crops.

*IR 1.3: Local POs have demonstrably enhanced their administrative, managerial, leadership and accountability skills.*

As part of PROSAN's close-out strategy, intense awareness raising activities were conducted, targeting members of community-based structures and village development committees as well as agro-enterprise groups. The major theme discussed was transparent management of public goods and good citizenship. A total of 147 sessions were held targeting 6,126 participants, and an additional 123 sessions on natural resource management and conflict prevention were conducted targeting 4,179 participants. The sessions served as avenues for information sharing and sensitization campaigns for communities to consolidate the gains made by the program in ensuring sustainability, while at the same time serving as a conflict prevention strategy.

The sensitization sessions also allowed PROSAN and community members to identify and work with potential partners for successful continuation of activities. Under the leadership and supervision of PROSAN extension agents, agro-enterprise groups further improved their performance in the administration and management of communal goods through field exchanges organized by PROSAN staff and GoN partners. Refresher trainings not only allowed an expansion of community initiatives and skills, but also helped in developing relationships with external structures, such as other NGOs and microfinance institutions.

The linkages created with external structures led to the opening of 18 new bank accounts, identification of new investment opportunities, and the diversification of income generating activities. Twenty-seven forums were organized by PROSAN to provide a framework for different communities to evaluate investments received through the program. The forums brought together municipal authorities, traditional leaders, beneficiaries, GoN technical services and the PROSAN team. A total of 240 community development plans were reviewed during the forums to enable communities to consolidate program gains and ensure the sustainability of investments.

## PROSAN performance towards Mission indicators:

PROSAN achieved its objectives on the three USAID Mission indicators selected for economic growth.

The number of additional hectares on which natural resource management techniques promoted by PROSAN were adopted include recuperated and protected areas as well as areas under irrigation. A total of 2,766 ha was put under improved technologies or management practices in FY12, resulting in a 90.13% achievement rate over the life of activity. Techniques such as the use of organic manure, natural regeneration, mulching, composting, improved farming practices, and fallow.

## Progress towards USAID mission indicators

Indicator	FY 12			Life of Activity		
	FY12 Target	FY12 Achieved	%	LOA Target	LOA Achieved	%
1.2.1 Number of individuals who have received MYAP supported short term agricultural sector productivity training	672	1361	202.52%	9,015	10,092	111.95%
1.2.4: Number of additional hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of MYAP assistance (MI USAID)	2160	2766.231	128.06%	22,500	20,280	90.13%
1.3.1: Number of producers organizations, water users associations, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving MYAP assistance (MI USAID)	0	6	600%	376	431	114,63%

PROSAN-supported short term agriculture sector productivity trainings ranged from agro enterprise training, vegetable production techniques, extension techniques and nursery management. These trainings laid the foundation for sustainable development in the targeted communities by developing the human resources needed to promote innovation and learning.

Over the past five years, PROSAN supported 431 producer organizations, community based organizations and groups. The supports provided include: training in organizational skills, management, internal functioning, monitoring and evaluation, resource diversification, external relations and advocacy. PROSAN also provided these groups with the materials and tools needed to undertake their activities.

## **SO2: Human Capabilities Protected and Enhanced**

During the implementation period, PROSAN continued to address health and nutrition needs, especially among women of childbearing age and children under five, to access quality healthcare services in all targeted areas while improving health and nutrition practices at the HH level. The bad harvest during the 2011/2012 cropping season negatively impacted many households across the country. This led households to adopt negative coping mechanisms to deal with the shock. Some negative coping mechanisms includes eating less food, eating lower quality food, selling non-productive assets (such as household goods and jewelry), selling livelihood assets, and requesting help from others. It is important to note that these coping mechanisms particularly impacted children under 5 years old and pregnant and lactating mothers. PROSAN continued to address these issues by providing additional capacity building to community health workers on integrated management of childhood illnesses and increasing community outreach in order to reach vulnerable groups such as pregnant women.

*IR 2.1: Households within target population have improved access to primary health care.*

Improving households' access to primary healthcare and nutrition was a key objective of PROSAN. This element focused on strengthening the capacity of community health structures. As part of PROSAN's exit strategy, Community Health Committees (COSANs) were assisted with the development of action plans to enable continued service provision to their communities without external support. PROSAN led the development of 142 action plans in conjunction with COSANs and Ministry of Health staff in the three regions. At the community level, 394 community health workers (including 118 midwives, 176 positive deviant mothers and 100 members of growth monitoring teams) received refresher trainings on key subjects centered around maternal and child health. PROSAN also upgraded the infrastructure at four basic health centers to improve beneficiaries' access to better health services. The four health centers were renovated and equipped in Dosso and Zinder with the participation of 541 households who participated in aspects that required local labor through a CFW scheme; they received a total of 1,374,500 FCFA.

During fiscal year 2012, community health workers equipped with the support of PROSAN received 26,495 prenatal visits. PROSAN also continued to work with health centers on outreach to pregnant women who lived 10 km or more from health centers and therefore did not have easy access to the centers. The outreach strategy, coupled with increased sensitizations on the benefits of prenatal consultations, significantly increased the number of pregnant women routinely seeking health services. The 26,495 prenatal visits supported by PROSAN greatly surpassed the target of 15,000, resulting in an LOA performance rate of 104.88%.

*IR 2.2: Health workers use new knowledge and skills to improve implementation of IMCI within target locations.*

Capacity building of health workers and community health workers (CHWs) to improve the implementation of IMCI was mainly conducted in previous years. However, in 2012, 21 community health workers new to PROSAN were identified and trained in community-based growth monitoring. This strategy was to allow for the continuation of community-based growth monitoring introduced by PROSAN over the past five years. Additionally, 629 people trained in the areas of Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses, and 239 members of community based structures were also trained on Essential Nutrition Actions to improve the quality of integrated management of childhood illnesses.



**MUAC measurement of a child during community growth**

*IR 2.3: HH health and nutrition practices are improved.*

PROSAN continued to conduct community outreach as a method to encourage the beneficiaries to improve their health and nutrition practices. The outreach efforts involved sensitizations on key nutrition and health practices. PROSAN continued to use its “communication for behavior change” (CBC) strategy as a guide to promote the desired behaviors in health and nutrition. A total of 152 CBC sessions were conducted, reaching 28,827 people.

To achieve high coverage levels, the following strategies were adopted by the program:

- Use CBC techniques which move beyond message dissemination to supporting individuals and communities in making the transition to healthier practices;
- Reach children and women through multiple sectors such as health, agriculture and adult literacy;
- Disseminate messages through multiple channels, including interpersonal counseling, women’s and community group discussions, educational talks at health centers, community events, and mass media, especially radio.

PROSAN continued to emphasize the following key messages as the program came to an end:

- Optimal breastfeeding of infants during the first 6 months of life;
- Optimal complementary feeding beginning at 6 months old, with continued breastfeeding to 24 months and beyond;
- Nutritional care of sick and malnourished children;
- Improved nutrition for pregnant and lactating women;
- Control of vitamin A deficiency and optimal breastfeeding;
- Integrated control of anemia in pregnant women and children;
- Promoting the use of iodized salt.

In addition to community outreach activities, all 240 communities continued to conduct growth monitoring of children from 0 to 59 months. In total, 26,429 children aged 6-59 months were monitored at the community level by village health promotion teams, and 1,115 severely malnourished children (MUAC < 160mm) were referred, in conformity with the national

protocol governing community based growth monitoring. In addition, 55 PD/Hearth sessions were conducted in 49 communities for 656 moderately malnourished children 6-59 months old. This was unprecedented, as 2012 was a difficult year for most rural household with little or no availability of local foods. A total of 475 children in the 49 communities were successfully treated during the hearth sessions. The remaining children were referred to health centers for treatment of other underlining causes of malnutrition. Malaria, acute respiratory infections, and diarrhea were the main causes of non response to treatment at the Hearth sessions. The results of the 2012 CAP survey shows 80.20% of the households surveyed had adopted at least one health nutrition practice promoted as a result of the trainings and sensitization session conducted by PROSAN.



**Community Health worker weighing a child during community outreach**

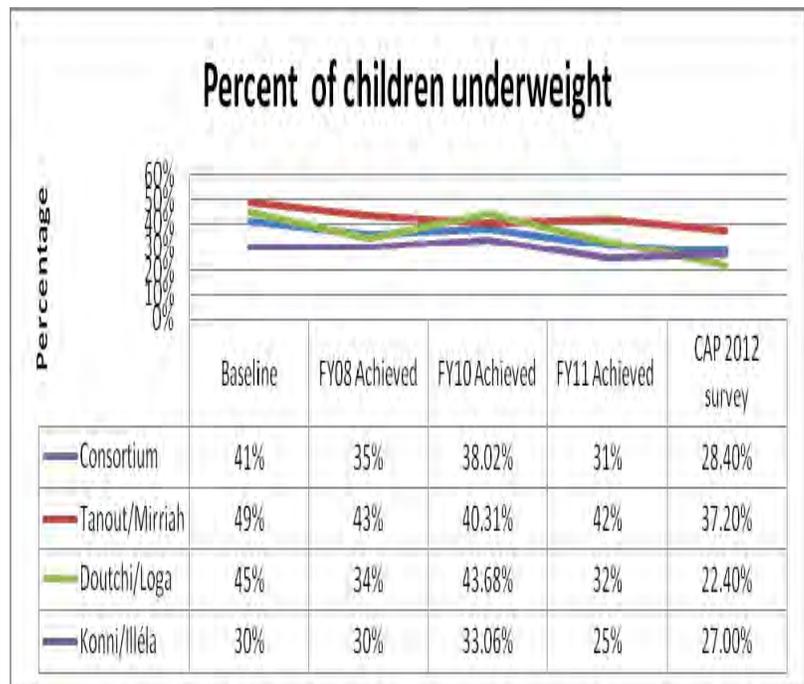
To improve sanitation and hygiene, the program continued to use the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach: an innovative methodology for mobilizing communities to completely eliminate open defecation (OD). The project assists communities to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of OD and take their own action to become open defecation free (ODF). Overall, communities have taken charge of constructing their own latrines and adoption has generally improved.

**Overall impact**

PROSAN’s efforts to improve the nutritional status of children aged 6-59 months were numerous and varied, including significant activities with capacity building of Health Services and Community Health Structures. The percentage of underweight (SD<-2) children aged 6-59 months was reduced to 28.40% which is the lowest level since the start of PROSAN and its baseline of 41%.

On the other hand, stunting remains a great challenge. Tanout/Mirriah (Zinder) consistently performed poorly compared to other regions; it should be noted that malnutrition in Zinder is not solely an access issue but rather deeply-rooted negative childcare practices as well as poor access to potable water, especially in Tanout. Boys are more underweight compared to girls in all three regions. One lesson learned is that the 1000 Days approach is more adapted to conditions in Niger and will provide a long term solution to stunting observed across the country.

Over 77% of children are now



exclusively breastfed, compared to 26% at baseline. The increased number of children exclusively breastfed reflect the diverse strategies used by PROSAN to effectively communicate the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding work.

### Progress towards USAID mission indicators

PROSAN met two out of three targets for the main indicators selected for investing in people. Through the use of growth monitoring cards introduced by the program, many caregivers who were initially reluctant to bring their children for screening have become interested. More importantly, non-program communities have also begun to bring their children to participate in the activity on the day set aside for screening, which explains the over achievement in the indicator number of children reached by the USG-supported nutrition programs. In terms of the number of people trained in child health and nutrition through PROSAN-supported health programs, PROSAN decided not to train new beneficiaries in the last year of the program unless it was necessary. PROSAN focused instead on refresher trainings to ensure that individuals trained in previous years are able to conduct the activities on their own at the end of the program.

Indicator	FY 12			LOA		
	FY12 Target	FY12 Achieved	%	LOA Target	LOA Achieved	%
2.1.2 : Number of antenatal care (ANC) visits by skilled providers from MYAP assisted facilities (MI USAID)	15,000	26,495	176.63%	103,330	108,380	104.89%
2.2.1 : Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through MYAP supported health programs (MI USAID)	1,221	629	51.51%	10,892	9,654	88.63%
2.3.3: Number of children reached by USG-supported nutrition programs (MI USAID)	3,920	26,429	674.21%	22,444	101,370	451.66%

### SO3: Resiliency Protected and Enhanced

To move chronically food insecure and vulnerable communities from relief to development, PROSAN interventions integrated immediate relief response, preparedness, prevention and mitigation activities, as well as long-term development efforts.

Vulnerability monitoring was a key activity during fiscal year 2012, partly as a result of the poor harvest experienced in FY11 and partly because of the unusual phenomenon of returning Nigerien expatriates from Libya and Mali due to security crises in these countries.

All 240 SCAP/RU (Community-level Early Warning and Emergency Response Systems), committees (which are the four to seven people selected by their community and trained by PROSAN to identify and respond to early-warning signs of food security emergencies), continued to monitor local early indicators.

Overall a total of 175 monitoring reports/situation reports (SitReps) on the vulnerability of households were released. Analysis of the monitoring carried out by the SCAP found that the food situation was alarming three months after the 2011 harvest. A total of 107 awareness sessions on health and natural shocks were organized for 6,508 participants in Dosso and Zinder. In order to strengthen the capacity of communities to prevent shocks and respond quickly, 91 contingency plans were developed in 2012 in Doutchi and Zinder. PROSAN also supported the development and implementation of nine plans in the region of Tahoua. As part of its closeout strategy in its areas of intervention, PROSAN supported the organization of forums through 27 OSV in which participants came together to discuss issues surrounding natural resource management and the sustainability of PROSAN's achievements.

### **TR: Transversal Intermediate Result**

In FY12 no literacy activities were conducted. However, PROSAN monitored centers supported in previous years. It was interesting to note that 170 centers functioned in FY12 without support from PROSAN. The literacy activity has proven to be sustainable, despite the fact that at the onset many questions were raised concerning the strategy of compensating participants with Title II commodities.

#### **1. Success story**

##### **From Housewife to Business Woman**

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world. The majority of people in this large, arid country depend on subsistence farming for their food; however, year after year, successful livelihoods are severely limited by a number of factors. Roughly half of the people in Niger do not have enough food to eat on a regular basis. Life is especially tough for the women of Niger. Only 15% of Nigerien women are literate and women carry the responsibilities of childcare, food preparation, and water collection, but have less access to and decision making power over resources such as income, agriculture, and land.



**Safia and the women of her agro enterprise group in Boubaram.**

Safia Ousman, a 40 year old housewife and mother of seven, lives in a small rural village called Boubaram.

Boubaram is one of many villages in Niger that is regularly hit by devastating food and nutrition crises. However, thanks to Catholic Relief Service's Programme for Food Security and Nutrition (PROSAN), funded by USAID's Food for Peace program, Safia's life has changed.

With support from PROSAN, Safia and a large group of women in her village joined together to form an agro enterprise group. PROSAN helped Safia and her group successfully process and market peanut products and gain complete decision-making power over their production, sale,

and income. In a short period of time, Safia sold all of the cakes and oils that she had made as part of the women's group.

*"At first I thought it was a joke, but I can assure you that this was the best decision of my life...I was able to start another business from the profits already generated by this activity. Our household production will be high this year, as I was able to hire labor to make my own farm,"* explained a happy Safia. *"It is with great pleasure that I now contribute alongside my husband to family expenses."* Thanks to the joint efforts of USAID and Catholic Relief Services, Safia learned concrete skills that will help her generate income and feed her family for years to come.

## **2. Lessons Learned**

- Integration of the other components of PROSAN (infrastructure, water and sanitation and agriculture) with the health component is key to ensuring the fullest possible impact of the program. During the reporting period, the consortium placed greater emphasis on ensuring the integration of SO1 and SO2. The consortium observed significant improvements in the communication and collaboration between the sectoral staff implementing the projects, which translated into stronger integration of activities in the communities. The agriculture and health staff worked closely together to ensure that farming groups trained in improved vegetable production are in communities where the health/nutrition team also implemented PD/Hearth and Behavior Change activities.
- Introduction of individual malnutrition screening cards into communities is a motivation factor for each caregiver to participate in the activity. The use of the colors green, yellow and red to represent well-nourished, moderate and severely malnourished children respectively helps caregivers to understand the nutritional status of their children and encourages them to work towards a better nutritional status. Communities are able to discuss openly the nutritional status of children in the community, mobilize the needed food resources to rehabilitate malnourished children locally, or seek outside help.
- Strong staff capacity is the cornerstone to success. Field staff capacity to understand the monitoring and evaluation plan and indicators is key to improving program implementation. Staff is able to plan appropriately, implement and report on activity that feed into the indicator performance tracking table. This improves ownership, quality, and timeliness of M&E processes and information.
- Consortium-wide quarterly coordination meetings improve M&E practices. Though they were introduced late in the implementation process, consortium-wide quarterly review coordination meetings – hosted by different agencies within their implementation areas – provided an opportunity to learn from each agency's experience and improve the program, M&E and commodity management practices. Quarterly coordination and interagency field visits facilitated the evaluation of achievements against targets and provided important opportunities to brainstorm about how to incorporate lessons learned into all agencies' programs.
- Integrating distribution of Title II and locally manufactured complementary food into programs such as PROSAN and targeting the 1000 days window has great potential to reducing stunting in the targeted zone.