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**Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Results Report
Single-Year Assistance Program**

**Save the Children Federation, Tajikistan
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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1	Standardized Annual Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ)
Attachment 2	Tracking Table for Beneficiaries and Resources
Attachment 3	Supplemental Materials (photos, etc.)
Attachment 4	Completeness Checklist

List of Acronyms

ARI	Acute Respiratory Infections
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CDH	Community District Hospital
CHW	Community Health Worker
CoES	Committee of Emergency Situation
CS	Cooperating Sponsor
DDR	Districts of Direct Rules
DIP	Detail Implementation Plan
FFW	Food for Work
FY	Fiscal Year
HF	Health facility
C-IMCI	Community-Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IYCF	Infant and young child feeding
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
LOA	Life of award
MCH	Maternal and child health
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOH	Ministry of Health
MT	Metric Ton
NSG	Nutrition Support Group
REACT	Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team
SAPQ	Standardized Annual Performance Questionnaire
SYAP	Single-Year Assistance Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
MC	Mercy Corps
SC	Save the Children
SO	Strategic Objective
SYAP	Single Year Assistance Program
ToT	Trainings of Trainers
VDC	Village Development Committee
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction: Annual Food Aid Program Results

Save the Children (lead agency) is implementing the SYAP in partnership with Mercy Corps in 102 villages across 14 *jamoats* of the Khatlon Region, which is located in southern Tajikistan, bordering northern Afghanistan. Mercy Corps, the sub grantee, is operating in 62 villages across three *jamoats* of the Rasht district and five *jamoats* of Jirgatol district.

The goal of the SYAP is to reduce acute food insecurity for rural Tajikistan households through timely distribution of commodities and appropriate nutrition messaging. The strategic objectives are:

SO1 To assist families to be able to maintain the nutritional status of their vulnerable members while recovering from a series of shocks, and;

SO2 To assist mothers to adopt appropriate infant and young child feeding practices to assure that children under two have a nutritional status that will enable them to withstand some shock without serious deterioration of their nutritional status.

Effective dissemination of information about the SYAP was key to its success thus far. To lay the groundwork for the program, both SC and MC staff first collaborated with local governments and then identified volunteers who were well known and trusted in their villages. With these leaders and volunteers, Mercy Corps conducted community-wide meetings about the SYAP and its goals in public spaces that involved all stakeholders. After the first food distribution, families were motivated to participate in the seminars.

SO 1: Families maintain nutritional status of vulnerable members while recovering from series of shocks

The months of May to September were dominated by the first round of commodity distributions, with most of the staff and field coordinators (MC) participating. Before distribution, the SYAP Program Managers met with district governments, presenting them a letter detailing the food distribution in all 22 *jamoats* covered by SC and MC.

SC and MC completed baseline surveys in coordination with the spring food distribution. In total, 10,385 vulnerable families with children ages six months to two years, pregnant and lactating women were targeted directly within the Rasht Valley and Khatlon Region. Distribution covered 164 villages. Program staff visited *jamoats* to discuss with village authorities the date and place of distribution. Staff also met with volunteers who then informed the beneficiaries and assisted with distribution.

MC staff oversaw warehouse activities, solved problems in the field and acted as the primary points of communication between the warehouse and the field teams. They did not participate directly in distributing commodities, but observed in order to ensure transparency of the system. Program staff acted as team leaders in the field, working with field coordinators and leaders to manage and organize the actual physical distribution of goods. Each distribution point included a team leader, two field coordinators, three loaders, and a member of the distribution department. Nearly all of Mercy Corps' Garm-based staff participated in the distribution of commodities. Overall, community and government leaders were extremely supportive, helping to organize the distribution, hosting lunches, and expressing their gratitude and willingness to work with MC.

Each family was provided with rations of 100 kg of wheat flour, 50 kg of yellow peas, and 14,6968 kg of vegetable oil in June. A total of 489 community volunteers received food for work rations, bringing the total number of households benefiting to 10,874. SC also used SYAP food resources to support 166 families directly affected by the flooding and mudslides in Kulob and Khuroson districts between April and May 2009. In coordination with the local and national REACT team SC distributed 7.07 MT of commodity to an additional 996 beneficiaries. The total amount of commodities distributed up to September 30th, 2009 by SC and MC is 1,780.33 MT reaching a total of 71,166 beneficiaries.

The SYAP food distributions ensured that:

- 69,450 persons in eight districts of Rasht and Khatlon were food secure for four months of the year
- 10,874 households (1,484 pregnant women and 8,901 families with children up to two years) were able to recover from the effects of shocks
- 166 families (996 individuals) affected by natural disaster were food secure during the emergency period

A second distribution will take place in October/November with the remaining 2286.30 MT of commodity.

SO2: To assist mothers to adopt appropriate infant and young child feeding practices to assure that children under two have a nutritional status that will enable them to withstand some shock without serious deterioration of their nutritional status.

The health and agriculture activities were implemented by SC and MC staff in partnership with village volunteers and input from medical health staff. Village volunteers provided assistance to identify and confirm beneficiaries.

SC's and MC's SYAP health and nutrition activities focused on the promotion of key behavior changes through formal trainings, discussions and workshops using interactive methodologies, such as competitions and role plays. The topics were suitable for the level of education and health knowledge that exists in Rasht Valley villages, and some of the most remote areas of Khatlon. Each topic was initially introduced to the community health volunteers by SC and MC staff. The volunteers were then responsible for repeatedly conducting trainings on these topics for men and women in their communities.

Additionally, SC staff established 571 Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) support groups in 102 target villages. These groups consisted of active women of the community including mothers-in law, health workers, religious leaders, female teachers, school directors, and traditional midwives. All IYCF groups were trained in early recognition of diseases, prompt healthcare seeking, effective management of childhood illnesses and compliance with treatment protocols. The members of these groups were involved in Community-Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses C-IMCI training and conduct awareness raising activities together with community volunteers among the communities mainly with women with children under two years. The main topics addressed by them were breastfeeding, child feeding and weaning practices, healthy feeding, cooking, providing care to children at home, hygiene practices and information about diarrhea, acute respiratory infection, and vaccinations.

The first topic introduced by MC staff in May was entitled Safe Motherhood, which covered the key subjects of pre-natal care, post-natal care, proper breastfeeding and when to see a medical provider while pregnant. The second topic, given in July, was on Complementary Feeding and Water Borne Diseases, including diarrhea, and preparation of oral rehydration salts. Over the course of the last six months, volunteers continued to hold sessions with beneficiaries and other key family and community members.

Another component of the SYAP program that has provided a support system to pregnant women and young mothers is the Mother's Fund implemented by MC: locally managed funds collected from the households of a village for use by pregnant and other women in case of emergencies. As of the end of the fiscal year, in 62 communities, a total of 5,183 Tajik Somoni were pooled by the women involved in the program and were being held in the Mother's Funds. The funds have been used by women to seek either emergency care from a distant doctor, hospital or health clinic, or in some instances, to bring doctors to the village in order to provide examinations to pregnant women facing concerns. This pool has been used widely and is reported by women to be a valuable and helpful tool to assist them in times of crisis as it has saved the lives of women that were struggling through labor to give birth.

The use of greenhouses at the household level helps to extend the production season and provides additional nutritious foods. Greenhouses are especially useful for the mountainous populations in Rasht and some districts of Khatlon, who normally have a very short growing season. To improve the diversity of food consumption within households, SC and MC provided information, materials and demonstration on the construction and use of greenhouses. SC provided 400 households with plastic sheets and seeds for such crops as onion, coriander, dill, and parsley. The process of selection of beneficiaries for greenhouses was conducted along with *jamoat* authorities. At least 75% of community members participated in the meetings and almost 95 % of meeting participants were females. SC program staff gave a brief presentation to beneficiaries of the SYAP program interventions, as well as selection criteria and procedures. The main criteria by which the beneficiaries for the greenhouses were selected were beneficiaries who had land for greenhouse installation, had some experience preserving vegetables and fruits, families with up to four children and willingness to cooperate with the program. MC targeted all 309 health volunteers were selected for greenhouse construction. During September, 120 greenhouses were constructed in Khatlon by SC. By the end of July, MC recorded 1,073 greenhouses constructed among beneficiaries who had not received plastic sheets, but who, on their own initiative, purchased plastic sheeting from local vendors.

SC and MC trained beneficiary households about postharvest preservation and food storage. During the month of May, SC provided 5,948 beneficiary households with 46,560 glass jars and lids and trained 5,948 beneficiaries in canning methods. MC trained their volunteers in July on proper canning methods and dehydration of fruits. As of September, MC volunteers reported that they, along with other beneficiaries, have canned a total of nearly 60,500 jars, primarily tomatoes, cucumbers, apricots, pears, apples, wild sour cherries and king's mulberries. Beneficiaries were also provided with leaflets on food processing including preservation of vegetables and preparation of jam.

SC has also supported selected beneficiaries in constructing cold storage facilities. Sixty beneficiary families were provided with construction materials including bricks, timber, paint, hinges, nails, and ventilation pipes.

Last year, under the DAP Mercy Corps created an educational demonstration video containing five segments based on two of the key health topics: breastfeeding and complementary feeding; and five agriculture topics: composting, greenhouse construction and planting, safe canning, fruit dehydration, and botanic potato seed production. The DVD includes short instructional videos based on the messages promoted through the SYAP, and enables families to refresh their acquired knowledge. The DVD was approved by the Ministry of Health, which is interested in using the segments on breastfeeding and supplementary feeding in their own campaign. Under the SYAP, the DVD was copied and distribution of the DVD will occur in November to all volunteers and beneficiaries. The DVD has been translated into Kyrgyz language as well, for the ethnic Kyrgyz population in Jirgatol.

2. Success Stories

Reaching vulnerable populations at the local level

Jamoliddin, is a young health assistant working in the rural health facility in Ghalaba and Guliston villages located in a remote mountainous area of Dusti Jamoat in Jomi district. Due to the remoteness of his residence and financial problems he never attended any health seminars or trainings to enhance his knowledge and skills to render better health care services for community. The rural health facility, where he works serves more than 3,600 people of two villages.

“It is worthwhile to mention that by participating in a four-day training on Community-IMCI organized by SC at my district for health staff and community volunteers gives me a chance to increase my knowledge and skills on C-IMCI related issues mainly on a new way of diarrhea treatment by using of zinc tablets,” said Jaloliddin. “Also during the training I was provided with materials and hand-outs in Tajik language that is easy enough to understand for all types of audiences mainly for mothers with small children.”

In March 2009 specialists from the Ministry of Health distributed zinc tablets to the rural health facilities in Galaba village. Jamoliddin did not know the ways of using these tablets, as the usage instruction was in a foreign language, and MOH staff, due to remoteness of the village and the bad conditions of the road, could not access this village and disseminate the information about zinc tablets and its usage. Jamoliddin didn't distribute these tablets to the patients and stored them at the health facility centre.

Upon completion of the training he started to distribute zinc tablets to the community, and to disseminate information on their benefits and usage.

Jamoliddin is grateful to SC SYAP program for this training. He also mentioned that he will directly work with mothers visiting his health facility and educate them on breastfeeding, proper child feeding, and promote healthy feeding. Now he is sure that he can save the lives of infants and children within these two villages, making the service of their health facility centre one of the best for the whole population in the area.

Reaching beneficiaries beyond borders

Not only are the USAID-sponsored greenhouses assisting hundreds of families in Tajikistan, the technology is now spilling over the border into Kyrgyzstan.

A resident of Ulkaramik village in Kyrgyzstan, 73 year-old Hajjalimbai Tashtanbekovich, came to visit his relatives in Achighalma village of Alga *jamoat* in the district of Jirgatal on June 26th of this year. On the way he stopped at the house of Almakhan Bekmuratova to have some rest. Almakhan Bekmuratova is a resident of Achighalma village and a volunteer for the SYAP. She has six children: four daughters and two sons, and has no education beyond high school. Her husband used to be a teacher, but because of their poor living conditions he left his job and went to earn money in Kyrgyzstan. Almakhan Bekmuratova is a real gardener; she loves to work in the garden and has quite a pretty one. Knowing her interest and abilities, her community elected her as the agriculture volunteer for the SYAP program. Almakhan first receives training from Mercy Corps staff, and then she in turn is responsible to train and teach nearly 35 other women who are beneficiaries of the program. On the 26th of June she was leading a discussion with beneficiaries near her greenhouse. Seeing that, the guest, Hajjalimbai became interested and attended the discussion during which he saw the greenhouse for the first time. When he entered he was amazed to see cucumbers and tomatoes. He said: "This is the first time I've seen cucumbers and tomatoes in June up here so high in the mountains."

Achighalma village of Alga *jamoat* is one of the most remote points of Rasht valley. It is situated 60-70 kilometers from the centre of Jirgatal district and lies on the border with Kyrgyzstan. The main road which connects Tajikistan to Kyrgyzstan goes through this village. The climate here is cold and winter lasts for six months from November until April with storms blowing from Oloy in Kyrgyzstan, bringing much snow. This causes a lot of difficulties for people to travel anywhere during winter. Even getting to a market, which is 16 kilometers far from the village, is very difficult. Spring lasts for only two months. In May and June people normally plant their vegetables like tomatoes and potatoes. Because of the short summer, tomatoes do not turn red and in the fall people collect them and put them in plastic bags to turn them red. Cucumbers are not widely planted; only a few people ever grew them.

"More people are coming to see the greenhouses from Kyrgyzstan and asking for the technology to build them," says Almakhan Bekmuratova. According to her, another resident of Kyrgyzstan, Saltanat, who is 55 years old, saw the greenhouses in Sarghoi village of this *jamoat* during a visit to her relatives. She was excited when she saw the greenhouse and requested a training module that illustrated the construction. The module has been translated into Kyrgyz language and therefore can easily be read and passed along to villagers in Kyrgyzstan.

People like Hajjalimbai and Saltanat from the neighboring country are going to implement the greenhouses in their villages also. Hajjalimbai said: "I used to grow cabbage in my garden and when it became cool I covered them with plastic sheeting. Now, by constructing a greenhouse, I see that I can grow any vegetable and obtain a harvest – even in June. I am planning to build two separate greenhouses: one for cucumbers and one for tomatoes, because they like different temperatures."

Long Live SYAP – a conversation with a young woman in Algha Jamoat of Jirgatal District

"In May, I had been a daughter-in-law for only five months. At that time I didn't know anybody here in this village and all of my time I was at home, doing only heavy work which was very difficult and boring. I was also four-and-a-half months pregnant. One day, a Mercy Corps volunteer came to our house and invited both my mother-in-law and me to the

community center for lessons on safe motherhood. From that point on I participated in sessions for pregnant women once a week in the community center. As a result of these sessions, my mother-in-law now doesn't allow me to do heavy work such as making bread dough or carrying water from 200 meters away from our house. I wish the SYAP program would last 10 years! Thanks to SYAP and USAID that support us so much with this help. I am very grateful.”

3. Lessons Learned

- Prior to initiating the program, meetings held between the SYAP program managers and senior program officers in both the most remote and the largest villages in each *jamoat*, together with representatives from the *jamoats*, Mullahs and village chiefs, was a key to a successful launching of the program, in particular with projects of a short-term nature such as the SYAP. It is believed that participation and acceptance of the program came much more quickly than was expected as a result of this work.
- Building good relationship with the respective national ministries through the signing of an agreement with them is very important in ensuring effective implementation of the project.
- Involvement of the community members and representatives of local Hukumats from the beginning of the project helped to demonstrate to local authorities that transparent and open process are the most effective means of delivering support to communities. The joint implementation of beneficiary selection promotes open and transparent process among local authorities.
- The complementary components of agriculture trainings – which provide visible, tangible results – with the health and nutrition training is an excellent combination. When the two components begin simultaneously, the program meets with greater success, and gains greater interest from the people.
- Distribution was originally to begin in May, but the identification, registration and documentation of such a large number of new beneficiaries in new operational areas pushed the distribution to June. Originally, the baseline was to be conducted simultaneously with the distribution in order to facilitate access to women. Although the distribution was pushed back, the baseline should have been conducted in May anyway, in order to avoid skewing data as a result of the beneficiaries completing the first training on safe motherhood and breastfeeding.
- The vast amount of time and resources dedicated to translating all of the educational materials into Kyrgyz language greatly contributed to the program's success and scope of reaching greater numbers of direct and indirect beneficiaries. Many participants commented that this was the first time an organization had provided materials for them in a language other than Tajik or Russian.