

**Advancing Reconciliation and Promoting Peace in Northern Mali (ARPP)
Annual Progress Report, October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017**



Opening circle in Sport for Change activities with girls dance club in Bourra, Ansongo

Program Information

Grantee: Mercy Corps

Project Title: Advancing Reconciliation and Promoting Peace in Northern Mali (ARPP)

Grant Number: AID-688-A-16-00004

Country: Mali

Funding Amount: \$1,143,670

Grant Dates: 7/1/2016 – 6/30/2018

Period under review: 10/01/2016 – 09/30/2017

Date Progress Report is submitted: 30 October 2017

Program's Scope of Work:

Following the signature of the Peace Accord between the Malian government and northern rebel groups in June of 2015, the last year has been a critical period for the country in the attempt to secure lasting peace. Mercy Corps' Advancing Reconciliation and Promoting Peace (ARPP) program aims to support this process by enhancing understanding of the key tenets of the peace process among the local population, reinforcing local conflict mitigation mechanisms and engaging youth in initiatives to promote non-violence. Working closely with the Coordination of Women's Associations and NGOs of Mali (CAFO) and the Association for Youth and Development of Mali (AJDM), ARPP will establish inter-ethnic peace committees to help build and strengthen social cohesion among project participants, as well as support traditional, elected and religious leaders to promote reconciliation and resolve disputes within and between ethnic communities. Additionally, ARPP will work with local youth associations to create sports clubs for adolescent boys and girls most at-risk of engaging in violence and who are most vulnerable to the effects of the conflict in Northern Mali. Through intercultural dialogue and other activities that bring together women, men and young people across Bamanan, Tuareg, Arab, Fulani and Songhai ethnic communities, ARPP will help secure broad-based popular support for lasting peace in Gao, Timbuktu, Ménaka and Ansongo – areas directly affected by the conflict – and provide participants with the skills to resolve conflict and address social and economic issues in peaceful and effective ways

Acronyms

ADC	<i>Agent de Développement Communautaire</i> (Community Development Agent)
AEN	<i>Aide de l'Eglise Norvégienne</i> (Norwegian Church Aid)
AJDM	<i>Association Jeunesse et Développement du Mali</i> (Association for Youth and Development of Mali)
ARPP	Advancing Reconciliation and Promoting Peace in Northern Mali
CAFO	<i>Coordination des Associations et ONG Féminines du Mali</i> (Coordination of Women's Associations of Mali)
CMA	<i>Coordination des Mouvements de l'AZAWAD</i> (Coordination of AZAWAD Movements)
CMM	Conflict Management and Mitigation
EWER	Early Warning and Early Response system
GBV	Gender-based Violence
LSAC	Local Security Advisory Committees
MOC	<i>Mécanisme Opérationnel de Coordination</i> (Operational Coordination Mechanism)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
TOT	Training of Trainers
WISE	Women Investing in more Secure Environments

Executive Summary

The overall goal of the ARPP program is to **help Malians secure a more peaceful future** through a people-to-people approach that brings together women, men, and youth across the Bamanan, Tuareg, Arab, Fulani, and Songhai ethnic communities. Working with ethnically diverse communities in conflict-affected areas in northern Mali to educate community leaders on conflict mediation and interest-based mediation techniques, the program will reduce violence and promote reconciliation within and between ethnic communities.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, by objective, major accomplishments were as follows:

Program startup activities

- General startup activities: Mercy Corps recruited the program team and held training on the principal program objectives and methodologies. Mercy Corps finalized the process of signing sub-grant agreements. Mercy Corps also completed design of the project's M&E framework and carried out baseline data collection, including selection of target communes and villages for the project, and refined its detailed implementation plan. These activities ensured a strong start for field implementation.
- Official launch of ARPP program: On 28 April 2017, Mercy Corps organized the official launch of the ARPP program, in partnership with the Ministry of National Reconciliation.

Objective 1: Community leaders advance the peace process

Activities under the program's first objective are implemented by CAFO, and focus on empowering women's peace committees to educate diverse communities about the peace process and advocate at higher levels for meeting local needs, in order to increase public support for the accord and enhance the ability of development institutions to address community grievances. Activities carried out this year included:

- CAFO conducted a participatory mapping activity which resulted in the creation of 20 inter-ethnic committees of in the 20 target municipalities.
- 2 trainings of trainers on effective communication about the Peace Agreement were carried out, using tools created by the Ministry of National Reconciliation and its partner GIZ.
- 5 training sessions of 20 inter-ethnic women's peace committees on the content of the Peace Agreement were completed.
- 48 peace dialogues were led by the women's peace committees, supporting communities to formulate more than 100 recommendations.
- 60 women were selected to serve as psychosocial counselors to provide the first level of support to victims of violence and trauma in communities.

Objective 2: Traditional, elected, and religious leaders reduce violence and promote inter-ethnic reconciliation within communities

Under the program's second objective, Mercy Corps is taking the lead to enhance the conflict resolution capacity of key local stakeholders and support their efforts with early warning systems, resulting in increased stability and inter-ethnic reconciliation.

- Mercy Corps completed 43 community leader training sessions on interest-based mediation
- 20 conflict resolution workshops were held with the community leaders to share experiences and lessons learned on conflicts resolution.
- Mercy Corps developed the strategy for the establishment of an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system and recruited a consultant who produced the operational parameters of the system and trained ARPP staff on the EWER system.
- To implement the early warning system, 60 monitors were identified (three per commune) within communities, and community leaders, authorities and instructors were trained on the EWER system.
- 18 conflict resolution committees were strengthened and two new committees created in Banikane and Gao. The committees will be the first level of response to alerts that will be transmitted by the Early Warning System.

- Pilot testing of the EWER system undertaken in two communes

Objective 3: Reduce youth involvement in violence and armed groups

AJDM is leading the activities under Objective 3, which act as a way to restore social relationships and serve as a bridge between at-risk youth and their communities, thereby reducing youth vulnerability to violence. Activities implemented under this objective over the course of FY2017 included:

- Mercy Corps selected, translated and finalized the first round of training modules to be used for Sport for Change activities, which have been launched by AJDM field staff during the third quarter.
- AJDM finalized the identification of 100 coaches for Sport for Change activities, created 100 sports clubs and identified more than 2,000 girls and boys to participate the clubs.
- Mercy Corps trained ADJM staff on the eight first modules of Sport for Change.
- AJDM organized five training sessions of the coaches on the first modules of Sport For Change.
- 16 Sport for Change sessions held in each of 100 sport clubs addressing the 8 first training modules during 8 weeks.

Program Achievements

Contextual Information

During the first year of the ARPP program, the socio-political context was dominated by difficulties in the implementation of the Algiers Peace Accord and by political tensions. Indeed, two years after the signature of the Peace Agreement, its implementation faces many difficulties as insecurity grows and inter-communal clashes in the central part of the country become more frequent. Currently, only the MOC of Gao is operational. While most of the interim authorities are established, their power remains weak. Partial municipal elections continue to be postponed and are set for the 17th of December, 2017. Concerning the DDR process, the cantonment sites are empty due to security concerns and the definition of criteria for former combatants' integration into the army. Because of this delay, the United Nations Security Council has passed a sanctions regime for Mali against those who block the implementation of the Peace Agreement

More recently, certain progress has been observed despite the blockages. The Coordination of AZAWAD Movements (CMA) and the Plateforme signed a peace agreement on September 20, 2017 after several clashes in July 2017, and in Kidal the arrival of the governor, who made his first visit on August 2 and returned for a longer visit on September 19, was symbolic of the restoration of the role of the state in that region.

This first year was also marked by social tensions in the country. More than fifty protests and demonstrations were noted in the northern regions (Gao, Menaka, Kidal and Timbuktu) and also in Bamako. They were organized by political opposition parties and civil society organizations. These demonstrations resulted in the suspension of the draft constitutional revision on August 18 and the dismissal of the governor of Gao on August 21, 2017.

Program Start-up Activities

The ARPP program began implementation in July of 2016. For start-up activities, the program completed the recruitment, training and orientation of program staff, the planning of activities for the first year of implementation, preparation and execution of the program baseline study, and the development of M&E and programmatic tools. We also finalized sub-agreement signing process with local partners CAFO and AJDM.

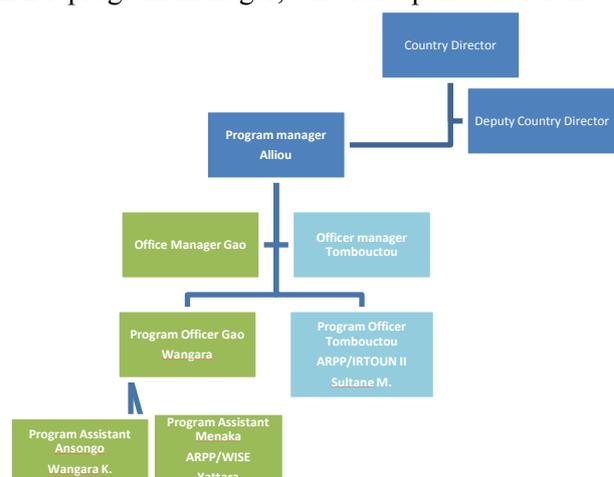
Recruitment, training and orientation of ARPP staff

Program start-up began with the recruitment of the ARPP program manager, who is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the program. The program manager leads a team of four locally hired staff who serve as the face of the program in the field: two program officers operate out of Mercy Corps' Timbuktu and Gao offices and two program assistants are based in the circles of Menaka and Ansongo.

The ARPP team received two extensive orientation and training sessions: 1) Mercy Corps' approach and methodology to peace and conflict management, and 2) Conflict analysis, mediation techniques, reconciliation and the review of the ARPP program. These sessions were structured to prepare them for their field work.

During the startup period, the program manager also developed a work plan for the first year of the program, which included a detailed plan for the remaining startup activities including the baseline study, signature of subgrant agreements, and conducting an official launch event.

Preparation and implementation of the baseline study



To prepare for the baseline study implementation, the ARPP team refined its indicator planning and developed methodologies and tools for data collection, working closely with USAID's M&E Officer, the Management Systems International (MSI) technical team, and the Ministry of Reconciliation. Mercy Corps' monitoring and evaluation team then pre-selected target villages by conducting a rapid context and feasibility assessment with the participation of Mercy Corps' field teams working in the regions of Gao, Ansongo, Ménaka and Timbuktu. This assessment defined a preliminary list of 200 target villages, using criteria such as security, accessibility, presence of government authorities, and the level of violence or tension within potential beneficiary communities. The Mercy Corps M&E team then conducted baseline data collection across a simple random sample of 24 of these villages, surveying community members on their experiences and perceptions of peace and violence as well as social, economic, political and cultural factors that inform outcome and impact-level indicators and provide an opportunity to refine program design and targets. The baseline report was shared in a previous quarterly report.

Sub-grant agreements and orientation sessions with CAFO and AJDM

The ARPP program manager worked with the CAFO and AJDM leadership to further define their roles and responsibilities within the project and develop Terms of Reference (TOR), which were then validated by each partner. These TORs specified the duties, responsibilities, activities, and expected deliverables of each partner, and have been used as a benchmark to ensure that the subawardees complete their work as planned. CAFO is responsible for empowering women's peace committees to educate diverse communities about the peace process and to advocate at higher levels of governance for solutions to promoting peace and meeting local needs. AJDM is responsible for working with at-risk youth who are vulnerable to engaging in violence in order to build social linkages, strengthen community engagement and develop economic opportunities to enhance youth resilience to violence.

Prior to signing the sub-awards and concurrent to the development of the TORs, Mercy Corps carried out a pre-award assessment of each partners' financial management capacity, to identify areas where each partner may need extra support and capacity building. USAID's finance team also carried out an evaluation of the partners' financial capacities prior to approving the updated budgets developed during the startup period. Following the financial evaluation of the AJDM and CAFO partners led by USAID and the approval of the submitted budget modifications, the partnership contracts were signed. AJDM began its activities on February 1st while CAFO started on March 1st, 2017. In the meantime, the program manager organized two orientation sessions in Gao and Timbuktu with the following objectives for ADJM and CAFO:

- Present the ARPP program and review activities and program objectives
- Establish a common vision for program implementation
- Facilitate understanding of indicators and use of data collection tools
- Specify the communication plan and the reporting procedures
- Prepare a draft of the quarterly planning

Two orientation sessions for CAFO and AJDM partners were organized at the field level: one took place in Timbuktu on 5 - 6 February and the other in Gao on 7 - 8 February 2017.

Official launch of ARPP program

On 28 April 2017, Mercy Corps organized the official launch of the ARPP program, in partnership with the Ministry of National Reconciliation. The aim of this launch was to inform the public about the contribution of the ARPP program to the peace process and to demonstrate its collaboration with the Ministry of Reconciliation, whose strategies are aligned with ARPP program activities. At the ceremony, all the program's major stakeholders made speeches, the baseline results and Mercy Corps'

approach to peacebuilding were presented, and there was an opportunity for discussion and questions by attendees. The U.S. Ambassador to Mali and the Minister of National Reconciliation both spoke in support of the ARPP program, highlighting its community based approach.

Progress of Program Objectives

Objective 1: Community leaders advance the peace process.¹

Activities under the program’s first objective are implemented by CAFO, and focus on empowering women’s peace committees to educate diverse communities about the peace process and advocate at higher levels for meeting local needs, to increase public support for the accord and enhance the ability of development institutions to address community grievances.



The Minister of National Reconciliation, government representatives, and the US Ambassador to Mali at the official launching ceremony of the ARPP program

Activity 1.1 *Establish 20 inter-ethnic women’s peace committees to promote the peace process.*

Based on its network of 2,500 women’s groups, CAFO first conducted a participatory mapping in the 20 target communes in the Gao, Timbuktu, Ansongo, Ménaka and Gourma Rharous circles, mobilizing women leaders in all regions of the North and initiating exchanges with other community leaders and administrative authorities to conduct the selection process. The selection criteria to join the peace committees were based on residency in the community, the dynamism and commitment of the women in promoting peace and cohesion in their communities, their availability and good relationships with other community leaders and key stakeholders. The mapping also respected ethnic and religious diversity in the composition of the committees. The composition of the committees was validated by administrative authorities in all circles. A total of 20 women's inter-ethnic committees were created.



Validation of Women's Peace Committees in Gounzoureye, Gao, May 2017



Inter-ethnic women’s peace committee establishment in Gounzoureye, Gao, May 2017

Activity 1.2: *Women peace committees share information on peace process and identify grievances across ethnic communities.*

Activity 1.3: *Develop, present, and broadcast recommendations for addressing community grievances through implementation of the peace process*

¹ The activities of this objective are implemented by CAFO. The grant contract was signed and the partnership entered its active phase on 1 March 2017.

Both activities (activities 1.2 and 1.3) are linked to the organization of the peace dialogue sessions. Before women leaders organized peace dialogues, CAFO held capacity-building sessions. Two ToT sessions were held in Timbuktu and Gao. During these sessions, CAFO officers and local presidents were educated on the main points of Algiers Peace Accord, as well as on the methodology for communicating about its main components that was developed by the Ministry of National Reconciliation in collaboration with its partner GIZ. Four local presidents and two CAFO agents took part in the session in Timbuktu, while seven local presidents and three CAFO agents participated in the Gao session. After these ToT sessions, local presidents and CAFO agents organized the training of the 20 inter-ethnic women peace committees. A total of 232 women leaders from the 20 committees took part in the eight training sessions in Gao as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Summary of women peace committees' trainings

<i>Circle</i>	Dates	Committee Communes	# of committees formed	# of participants
<i>Timbuktu</i>	2-4 August 2017	Timbuktu and Alafia	2	24
	7-9 August 2017	Bourem Inali and Lafia	2	20
<i>Gourma Rhrarous</i>	18-20 August 2017	Gourma Rhrarous and Banikane	2	24
<i>Gao</i>	7-9 August 2017	GAO – Soni-Ali Ber and Gounzoureye	3	34
	10-12 August 2017	Anchawadji et Gabéro	2	22
<i>Ansongo</i>	28-30 September 2017	Bourra, Tin-Hama and Ouattagouna	3	36
	30 September- 2 Octobre 2017	Ansongo, Tessit and Bara	3	36
<i>Ménaka</i>	25-27 September 2017	Ménaka, Tindermène and Anderamboukane	3	36
Total			20	232

During this first year of implementation, the women's peace committees organized 48 peace dialogues that involved around 850 people in the community, including 18 dialogues in August and 30 in September. To hold these meetings, woman leader returned to her community after the training and organized a meeting with community leaders, women and other community members. During each meeting, the woman leader explained in the local language the main points of Algiers Peace Accord following the methodology as explained in the training sessions. After the presentation of the Peace Accord, the leader engaged a dialogue with the community to understand local opinions and collect grievances and recommendations related to agreement implementation. The women leaders collected more than 100 recommendations. Women leaders will share these recommendations through advocacy activities with authorities at national and circle levels and by producing radio programs.

A testimony from Mariam Boncana, a woman leader who conducted a peace dialogue in Gao in August of 2017, highlighted the importance of communicating out the main tenants of the accord:

"... I was surprised to find that some women do not even know what the Peace Accord means. The women I invited were surprised to see that the Peace Accord is a document ... Just to make you understand how much this action to inform women about the content of the Peace Accord is important. Today those who are there know what the agreement is and will surely explain to others what they will learn and say during this dialogue.

We thank Mercy Corps and USAID for their initiative and ask Mercy Corps to provide more resources for women allowing them to reach as many women as possible in the community. It is unacceptable that a large proportion of women are unaware of decisions concerning the people and not giving their opinions."

Activity 1.4: *20 women’s peace committees provide psychosocial counseling and support to address past violence and promote reconciliation.*

This activity will begin in the next quarter. To prepare for it, during the second half of the first year of program implementation Mercy Corps field staff conducted an assessment of the operational status and capacity needs of 15 peer counseling centers established by CAFO within the targeted circles under previous programs. These centers will be used to carry out peer counseling activities, mediation needs, and provide advice and resources to community members in the target areas. Terms of reference and criteria to select the women counselors were validated by stakeholders and leaders. The criteria chosen are related to the experience of candidates and their involvement in the psychosocial domain, as well as the quality of their relationship with community members and the partners involved in the program activities. The selection process was finalized during the participatory mapping in the communities. The communes and communities chose three women per commune, with 60 women selected overall. Their training is being planned and we are identifying all of the specific technical areas to be covered.

Objective 2: Traditional, elected, and religious leaders reduce violence and promote inter-ethnic reconciliation within communities

Under the program’s second objective, Mercy Corps is taking the lead to enhance the conflict resolution capacity of key local stakeholders and support their efforts with early warning systems, resulting in increased stability and inter-ethnic reconciliation. Over the course of the first year, leaders received training on mediation, and the early warning and early response system was tested and piloted.

Activity 2.1: *Enhance capacity of traditional, religious and elected leaders across ethnic communities in 200 villages to resolve conflict.*

Mercy Corps began this activity by reviewing and adapting Mercy Corps’ interest-based mediation training module, adding a section on understanding and analyzing conflict as well as including case studies from Mali to ground the module in the national context. Then, ARPP staff carried out a process to identify community leaders to participate in the mediation training, who were selected on the criteria of representativeness, integrity, and commitment to social cohesion and ethnic diversity. The identification of participants took place with the participation of traditional chiefs, administrative authorities and other key resource persons.

Facilitated by the ARPP program manager and Program Officers, the objectives of the initial training were:

- Develop participants’ abilities to understand the concept of conflict
- Strengthen participants' ability to analyze conflict
- Strengthen the capacity of community leaders on interest-based mediation techniques

“Yesterday evening, just after the prayer and just when all of my congregation were still sitting for the invocations, I was able to test what I learned in the training. I facilitated a *khutbah* (sermon) in which I explained the main points of the analysis of a conflict. I explained to the congregation the points that need to be addressed to conduct a good conflict analysis, listing the different parts of the conflict analysis grid: from the history of conflict to the consequences.

I also explained the conflict tree. I asked the mosque’s congregation to answer this question: if I present to you a conflict in the image of a tree, what part of the tree should we cut if we definitely want to kill it? Unanimously, my congregation answered, “The roots!” So I explained to them that the parts of a tree perfectly represent the characteristics of a conflict. The leaves represent the consequences of the conflict, the trunk is the problem proper and the roots are the basis of the conflict, its sources. The whole tree is developed and supported by the roots well buried in the soil and difficult to unearth.

I also talked about the merits, according to religion, of one who reconciles people or prevents a conflict from turning into violence “

HAFIZOU ALIOU, IMAM OF MOSQUE OF MEKARA IN ANSONGO

At the beginning of each training session, the trainer presented Mercy Corps' approach to peace building, which is based on two principal approaches: 1. Conflict prevention through the strengthening of social cohesion and addressing the root causes of conflict; 2. Conflict management through strengthening local capacity for peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Subsequently, through presentations, practical exercises, and role-plays, the training addressed three primary themes. First, participants revisited the definition of conflict, the styles of conflict, and the sources and triggers of conflict. The facilitator then supported participants to understand how to conduct a conflict analysis and shared a number of conflict analysis tools, including the conflict tree. The final major theme was to introduce approaches to conflict resolution with a focus on interest-based mediation. During the training, participants had the opportunity to practice different approaches, including active listening techniques, an essential quality for community leaders working to resolve conflicts. The participants completed a pre-test and a post-test to assess how their understanding of key concepts evolved over the course of the training at the beginning and the end of each session.



Participants in a role-play on the practice of interest-based mediation during the training session in Tindermene, Ménaka, in February 2017

In total, ARPP organized 43 training sessions targeting 672 community leaders including 161 women through this activity.

Activity 2.2: *Establish EWER systems in 20 communes for Local Security Advisory Committees to identify volatile inter- and intra-ethnic community conflicts that could erupt into violence.*

To develop this program component, the program manager and Mercy Corps' global Peacebuilding Advisor drafted a strategy for the program's Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) systems. To inform the strategy, the ARPP team conducted meetings with key stakeholders such as MINUSMA, the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) and community leaders in Gao and Ansongo to take stock of existing mechanisms and understand how ARPP could build on existing mechanisms and fill identified gaps. After the preliminary drafting of an early warning systems strategy and the finalization of the consultant's terms of reference by the program manager, an international call for applications was launched for the recruitment of a consultant to support the development of the early warning system.

Once selected, the consultant validated theoretical tools and carried out a field mission to Gao, Ansongo and Timbuktu to meet key stakeholders (prefecture authorities, governors, religious leaders, security forces, opinion leaders, community leaders, village chiefs, MINUSMA, and technical and humanitarian partners) and to understand the dynamics of community conflicts. As a result of this mission, the consultant was able to tailor the system to the local context and produce all of the documents related to the operational parameters of the



Members of the CRC of Bourra, Ansongo, in August 2017

EWER system. These included:

- A strategy document outlining the EWER system
- Operational parameters of the EWER system
- Indicators to be collected for the monitoring of community conflicts
- Templates of reports to be produced for the EWER system
- A data collection and processing system
- A training module on EWER system

Based on contextual information, the consultant developed the final EWER strategy. Based on this strategy, monitors who are based in targeted communities are responsible for collecting information and alerts. They produce incident reports and transmit text messages to regional centers in Gao and Timbuktu. The regional center officers analyze and verify the messages before sending them to the CRCs to develop the first level of responses. If the CRC cannot resolve the conflict, they send it to the administrative authorities and the monitoring committee for conflict resolution. The monitoring committee for conflict resolution involves influential leaders in conflict resolution. The establishment of the EWER fits well with ARPP's objectives of supporting the involvement of community leaders in conflict resolution. The EWER will facilitate the flow of information on tensions and warnings so that leaders can intervene and avoid violence.

The EWER consultant also facilitated a training session on the EWER System for the ARPP staff. As a result of the consultant's work, two complementary activities were carried out in connection with the setup of the EWER System:

- *The identification of 60 monitors (three per commune)*

The monitors are responsible for collecting information on community conflicts, tensions and threats by monitoring established indicators. A mobile phone will be made available to each monitor to transmit information to the regional collection center by short message system (SMS).

- *Updating Conflict Resolution Committees (CRCs)*

In the system, conflict resolution committees (CRCs) are the first level of response to community conflicts and tensions. To avoid duplication of efforts, the ARPP program built on committees that already exist in the target regions, capitalizing on their experiences. However, two CRCs were created in the communes of Gao and Banikane where there were no existing committees.



Respectively, The Head of Mercy Corps of in Timbuktu, the Prefect and the Mayor at the early warning system workshop opening ceremony, Timbuktu, August 2017

Table 2: Location and Status of Conflict Resolution Committees for the Early Warning System

CIRCLES	N°	COMMUNES	STATUS
GAO	1	Gabero	Updated
	2	Gao	New
	3	Gounzoureye	Updated
	4	Anchawadji	Updated
	5	Sony Aliber	Updated
MENAKA	6	Tindermene	Updated
	7	Anderamboukhane	Updated
	8	Menaka	Updated
ANSONGO	9	Ansongo	Updated
	10	Bourra	Updated
	11	Ouattagouna	Updated
	12	Tessit	Updated
	13	Tin Hama	Updated
	14	Bara	Updated
TOMBOUCTOU	15	Tombouctou	Updated
	16	Lafia	Updated
	17	Alafia	Updated
	18	Bourem Inaly	Updated
GOURMA RHAROUS	19	Gourma Rharous	Updated
	20	Banikane	New

Before expanding the EWS to the 20 communes, a pilot was organized during August and September of 2017, to allow for feedback and adjustments.

Two communes, Alfia (Timbuktu) and Bourra (Ansongo) were chosen for the pilot, based on criteria of a good security situation, presence of the local authorities and the presence of an operational CRC. Mercy Corps organized two three-day workshops in Timbuktu and Ansongo, the objectives of which were to:

- Inform and train monitors, authorities and community leaders on the functioning of the EWER system
- Present the structure of the EWER system;
- Present indicators to be collected;
- Present formats for reports and alerts to be produced by the EWS;
- Train authorities, community leaders and instructors on the EWS

These workshops brought together 6 monitors and 27 CRC members. During the workshop, community leaders had the following feedback for adaptation of the systems:

- **Adapt indicators list to the local context.** Local leaders recommended to remove the indicator related to arms circulation because reporting on arms circulations can be at risk for them in the current context. Other indicators were deemed appropriate.
- **Select monitors following ethnic representation.** The monitors should be representative of the specific ethnicities in their communities. If each ethnicity or subset of the community is not represented, the community will be less likely to share information.
- **Signoff of communities before transmission of messages to the regional center.** Monitors have to inform CRCs first about all warnings before sending SMS to regional center. Culturally, community leaders are the first people to be informed so that they can check information before reporting by monitors

These recommendations have been integrated into the EWER system as it expands to the 20 communes in the coming quarter.

Activity 2.3: *Village leaders resolve 100 inter- and intra-ethnic community conflicts identified by EWER systems.*

Activity 2.4: *Conduct eight circle -wide conflict resolution sharing and learning forums for town leaders and the LSACs to share lessons.*

According to the program design, Activities 2.3 and 2.4 will follow the establishment of the EWER system. Activity 2.3 focuses on supporting CRCs to develop responses to alerts from monitors. Community leaders will engage in mediation efforts to resolve conflicts reported by the EWER system. Activity 2.4 will provide an opportunity for community leaders to share their experiences of conflict resolution. These meetings will be an opportunity for these leaders to share experiences, challenges and lessons learned in dispute resolution activities. We will organize two meetings in each circle during the implementation of the program.

Despite the fact that Activity 2.3 doesn't officially start until after the expansion of the EWER system to all targeted communes, community leaders are already involved in and tracking conflict resolution in their communities. Since their trainings in interest based mediation, they have resolved at least 224 conflicts. Almost the half (47 %) of these resolved conflicts are about natural resources, land disputes and conflicts between farmer and breeder. These figures confirm the assumption that management of and control over natural resources in northern Mali is a critical issue. The second type of conflicts collected is political and cultural conflict. These conflicts occurred generally in interpersonal relationships where cultural and values differences can cause tensions within the community. The table below shows examples of the main types of conflicts resolved by leaders.

Village	Wabaria	Koumeikoukou	Gassi
Commune	Gounzoureye	Lafia	Bourra
Circle	Gao	Tombouctou	Ansongo
Date	14 August 2017	1 May 2017	20 May 2017
Type of conflict	Farmer vs. breeder	Land dispute	Natural resources
Conflict description	Irruption of about fifteen cows in the fields of sorghum farmers in the village of Kadji. Farmers claimed to be compensated for the destruction suffered while farmers said there were no sorghum plants	A man decides to exploit a piece of land that has remained unoccupied for several years. Later, the owners come to claim the parcel.	Tensions around the use of the communal well of the village. Every morning the girls meet around the well. Tensions arose when each of the girls wanted to be the first to draw water.

Objective 3: Reduce youth involvement in violence and armed groups

AJDM is leading the activities under Objective 3, which act as a way to restore social relationships and serve as a bridge between at-risk youth and their communities, thereby reducing youth vulnerability to violence. Having worked since 1995 to engage young people constructively, AJDM's approach provides a safe space for activities that promote communication, decision-making, conflict mitigation and reconciliation, especially targeting adolescents. Sports activities will serve as an opportunity for young people from different communities to meet in a non-political space to build communication and conflict resolution skills. During the first year, since the sub-award agreement signing in February 2017, activities implemented are as follows:

Activity 3.1: *Form 100 inter-ethnic sports clubs to engage at-risk youth ages 15-24 as team members and youth ages 25-29 as coaches.*

Mercy Corps carried out a preliminary survey in each community to understand the context better prior to implementing activities. This process involved identifying whether sports clubs already existed, whether girls were involved in sports activities, and the current condition of infrastructure related to sports.

After this initial survey was carried out, AJDM and Mercy Corps collaborated to begin the selection process for sports clubs coaches. Criteria and questionnaires for the selection of coaches were first developed by the AJDM team, then amended and validated by ARPP program manager. Once finalized, the AJDM team shared criteria and questionnaires with their facilitators to be administered to the target groups of school leaders, community leaders, youth and women's associations to select the coaches. Overall, 100 coaches including 36 women were chosen.

Only two women coaches were chosen as coaches in Ménaka particularly, due to the reluctance of certain radical groups who are opposed to the involvement of women in this type of activity for religious and cultural reasons. AJDM and Mercy Corps chose not to push the matter due to the unstable and volatile security context and the presence of several armed groups in the area that were seen as a potential threat.

Activity 3.2: *Engage sports clubs in Sport for Change to provide psychosocial support and increase life skills.*

Following the identification of the coaches, AJDM and Mercy Corps organized an orientation session for the coaches on the use of the mapping tool for identification of at-risk boys and girls. Based on the register and the cartography guide, Mercy Corps and AJDM worked with the coaches to identify sports clubs participants. Based on this process, 2,012 young adolescents, including 610 girls, were selected for involvement in sports clubs. There are now 64 soccer clubs, 26 traditional dance clubs, six volleyball clubs, two basketball clubs and an athletics and theater club as shown in the table below.

Table 4: Club Participants

Types	# of participants per club	# of clubs	Total
Football	23	64	1,472
Basketball	15	3	45
Danse	15	26	390
Theater	15	1	15
Athletics	15	1	15
Volley Ball	15	5	75
Total		100	2,012



ARPP program manager explaining a role-play on leadership (Left 18 June 2017) and practical opening circle (right 20 June 2017) to ADJM Staff in Gao during the ToT

After these steps of identification and sport clubs creation, AJDM carried out three main activities as follows:

- *Training of trainers on the first eight modules of the Sport for Change curriculum*

Prior to the training of the 100 sports club coaches, the ARPP program manager carried out a training session with the support of eight animators and the AJDM coordinator. The objective of this session was to train the animators on how to carry out effective trainings with youth, the different parts of a training (opening sessions, registration, theme of the day, active sessions, revision of the theme, comments/closing); the content of each Sport for Change module; and the practical activities to be carried out. Over the course of the three days of training the following eight modules were covered: goal setting, identity, self-esteem, communication, inclusion, teamwork, responsibility, and leadership.

- *Training of the 100 coaches on sport for change modules*

After the training of trainers, animators held five sessions, one in each circle of Timbuktu, Menaka, Rharous, Ansongo and Gao to train coaches in modules listed above. All 100 coaches participated to the trainings.

- *Sport for Change sessions with youth*

For this first phase of the sport for change activities, each coach organized 16 sessions, 2 per week over the course of two months. These sessions covered the first eight (out of sixteen) modules with girls and boys. In addition, the AJDM proceeded to the delivery of equipment for all sports clubs.



Coachs during the training in Ménaka,, July 2017



Girls' basketball club in Ansongo

Activity 3.3: *Connect at-risk youth ages 20-29 with public and private sector apprenticeships and mentors for personal and professional guidance.*

Activity 3.4: *Youth ages 15-29 engaged in sports clubs and apprenticeships execute campaigns to promote nonviolence*

Activities 3.3 and 3.4 are Year II activities and are linked to Activity 3.2. After "Sport for Change" modules are complete, AJDM will select 60 young boys and girls for professional training. Concurrently, these youth will conduct community activities and awareness campaigns to reconnect them with communities.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

During this first year of implementation, we faced several challenges that are as follows:

- *Administrative issues*

At the administrative level, the process of finalizing and gaining approval for the subaward budgets for CAFO and AJDM took a lot of time. That happened at the end of December 2016, five months after program official starting. Mercy Corps adjusted the implementation timeline to account for this delay.

- *Difficulties of mobility*

The difficulties of mobility linked to seasonal flooding and deteriorating infrastructure in the North – especially in Ménaka and Gourma Rharous – caused a slight delay in the program implantation. For example, ARPP's Menaka-based team member is regularly blocked in Menaka due to cancellation of flights and insecurity on the roadways. The same situation occurs with staff based in Gourma Rharous. In order to respond to potential difficulties regarding our implementing partners' capacity to effectively implement activities over a wide territory within the targeted circles, Mercy Corps

provided a motorcycle to each AJDM community agent as well as for each CAFO ADC for each area of intervention.

- *Security context*

The precarious security situation in some areas of the north of the country, particularly in Ménaka (Anderanboukane), Ansongo (Tessit and Tin Hama) and Gourma Rharous (Banikane), affected the implementation of activities. Demonstrations and tensions associated with the establishment of the interim authorities hindered the normal operation of field activities. Similarly, tensions between armed groups have resulted in several postponements of the training sessions in Ménaka, Ansongo and Gao. Concerning the partners AJDM and CAFO, the insecurity restricts agent movement – because of restrictions on motorcycle travel in some project areas. Mercy Corps was obliged to either postpone our activities several times or to move the participants to other locations in order to carry out activities. Mercy Corps closely monitors the security situation in order to be able to adapt interventions as much as possible.

Additionally, in some locations like Menaka, some communities are opposed to the participation of young girls in sports activities. Because of the presence of radical groups in this area, we have chosen to create as many girls and women's clubs as possible in locations or communities where it is acceptable and accessible.

Gender Integration within ARPP

Women, men, girls, and boys have been impacted by the conflict in different ways. Men in Mali are more likely to participate in violence and suffer attacks from armed groups, while women experience rape and sexual violence. To encourage and maintain men, women and adolescent girls' participation in ARPP activities, we conducted a gender analysis and strategy session that assessed whether any level of discomfort with women's leadership might, contrary to our previous analysis, jeopardize the success of our Objective 1 activities in any way or discourage attendance in Objective 3 activities. Sex-disaggregated data were used to evaluate the inclusivity of peace-building structures and assess the differential impact of the program on women, men, girls, and boys. We are mitigating the risks identified by acquiring continuous feedback from beneficiaries of the program and applying lessons from CAFO's National Gender Policy for Mali, the USAID Women and Conflict Toolkit, and the State Department's Implementation Plan of the National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security. These lessons include: 1) conducting all program activities at safe times for women and girls and in locations near their homes to minimize the risk of sexual violence and ensure participation by women with limited mobility; 2) emphasizing female participation in the EWER system, since women often possess key information about impending violence that male leaders overlook; and 3) creating single-sex groups such as female youth sports clubs to promote women's participation in peace-building in culturally appropriate ways.

Sustainability

As we are conducting training sessions and the implementation of the early warning system, Mercy Corps focuses on a rigorous identification of community leaders already involved in promoting social cohesion in their community so that these leaders can continue working on peacebuilding even at the end of the program, ensuring the sustainability of the actions. Similarly, the identification of coaches and club members focuses on male and female youth who are already involved in sport activities in their respective communities, so that activities can continue even after ARPP program.

Environmental Impact and Mitigation

Mercy Corps will assess the condition of existing football, and as necessary, other sport fields/facilities in the northern regions. ARPP will not construct any infrastructure construction. If any rehabilitation activities are pursued, we will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the rehabilitation and will submit to USAID an Environmental Impact Mitigation Plan before we undertake any action. We aim to utilize existing structures in all our activities to prevent any impact on the environment.

Proposed Activities for Next Quarter

The following activities are proposed for next quarter:

Objective 1: Community leaders advance the peace process.

Activity 1.2: Women peace committees share information on the Peace Process and identify grievances across ethnic communities.

Activity 1.3: Develop, present, and broadcast recommendations for addressing community grievances through implementation of the peace process

The 20 women's peace committees will hold 50 peace dialogue sessions each month, gathering the grievances and concerns of the communities and sharing them with local and national authorities through advocacy activities. The information and grievances gathered during the peace dialogues will be used to produce radio broadcasts on local stations on the views of communities on the Peace Agreement.

Activity 1.4: Women's peace committees provide psychosocial counseling to address past violence and promote reconciliation.

CAFO identified 60 women leaders during the participatory mapping process organized in the 20 municipalities. For each commune, three women leaders will be trained as psychosocial counselors. This training and psychosocial assistance will be carried out during the next quarter.

Objective 2: Traditional, elected, and religious leaders reduce violence and promote reconciliation within inter- and intra-ethnic communities.

Activity 2.2: Establish EWER system in 20 communes for Local Security Advisory Committees to identify volatile inter- and intra-ethnic community conflicts that could erupt into violence.

Activity 2.3: Village leaders resolve 100 inter- and intra-ethnic community conflicts identified by EWER system.

Mercy Corps will expand the EWER to the 20 communes. We chose the communes of Bourra (Ansongo) and Alafia (Timbuktu) to lead this pilot phase over two months. Following the pilot phase, the system will be evaluated, any necessary changes will be made, and it will be expanded to the other 18 municipalities, utilizing and implementing the lessons learned. Conflict resolution committees will develop responses to the tensions and conflicts identified by the system.

Objective 3: Reduce youth involvement in violence and armed groups.

Activity 3.2: Engage sports clubs in Sports for Change to provide psychosocial support and increase life skills.

During the next quarter, AJDM will continue activities with young boys and girls of the sports clubs. We have already completed the 8 first module sessions on the following topics:

- Goal Setting
- Identity
- Inclusion
- Team Work
- Communication
- Responsibility
- Self Esteem
- Leadership

Activity 3.3: Connect at-risk youth ages 20-29 with public and private sector apprenticeships and mentors for personal and professional guidance.

The program will connect 60 young people to benefit from professional development activities through apprenticeships, which will take place in the second year of the program. Findings from the OFDA-funded Irtoun program's youth-led labor market assessment will also inform this activity.

Activity 3.4: Youth ages 15-29 engaged in sports clubs and apprenticeships execute campaigns to promote nonviolence.

Finally, young people will be engaged in community service activities to address community needs, and will develop campaigns to promote non-violence within their communities.

Annexes

- › ARPP Indicator Performance and Tracking Table
- › Annual report table summarizing key activities and updates

Annex 1: ARPP Indicator Performance Tracking Table					FY 17		
					April - June		
Indicators	Indicator Type	Level of measure	Baseline Value	Target	Achieved	% of target achieved	
Goal: Malians secure a more peaceful future.							
1	Point value rating of conflict intensity (F 1.6.1-11)	Impact	Population	6			
2	% of people who believe their communities are peaceful, safe and secure (MC-91)	Impact	Population	BV			
2a	- Male			37,89%			
2b	- Female			62,11%			
2c	- 15 - 19			4%			
2d	- 20 - 24			8%			
2e	- 25 - 34			16%			
2f	- 35 - 49			32%			
2g	- 50 +			40%			
2h	- Arab			5%			
2i	- Fulani			12%			
2j	- Songhai			48%			
2k	- Tuareg			35%			
Objective 1: Community leaders advance the peace process.							
3	% of people who believe peace accord implementation will benefit their ethnic and geographic community	Outcome	Population	90,48%			
3a	- Male			21%			

Annex 1: ARPP Indicator Performance Tracking Table					FY 17			
					Baseline Value	April - June		
						Target	Achieved	% of target achieved
Indicators	Indicator Type	Level of measure						
3b	- Female			79%				
3c	- 15 - 19			5%				
3d	- 20 - 24			7%				
3e	- 25 - 34			15%				
3f	- 35 - 49			33%				
3g	- 50 and older			40%				
3h	- Arab			7%				
3i	- Fulani			10%				
3j	- Songhai			41%				
3k	- Tuareg			41%				
Objective 2: Traditional, elected, and religious leaders reduce violence and promote reconciliation within and between ethnic communities.								
4	Number of reported incidents of violence per month (MC-α 83)	Outcome	Population	189				
Objective 3: Youth involvement in armed groups reduced.								
5	% of people who believe the use of violence in support of a social or political cause is never justified (MC-α 86)	Outcome	Population	98%				
5a	- Male			38%				
5b	- Female			62%				
5c	- 15 - 19			4%				

Annex 1: ARPP Indicator Performance Tracking Table					Baseline Value	FY 17		
						April - June		
						Target	Achieved	% of target achieved
Indicators		Indicator Type	Level of measure					
5d		- 20 - 24			8%			
5e		- 25 - 34			16%			
5f		- 35 - 49			32%			
5g		- 50 and older			40%			
5h		- Arab			4%			
5i		- Fulani			12%			
5j		- Songhai			48%			
5k		- Tuareg			35%			
Result 1.1: 20 interethnic women committees established to promote the peace process								
6	# of local women participating in a substantive role or position in a peacebuilding process reported with USG assistance (F 1.6-6)		Output	Beneficiary	0	220	292	133%
6a		- Formal			0	0	0	N/A
6b		- Informal			0	220	132	60%
6c		- 30 and younger			0	66	36	55%
6d		- 31 and older			0	154	96	62%
Result 1.2: 200 peace accord dialogues conducted.								
7	# of peace accord dialogues that result in community-supported recommendations		Output	Beneficiary	0	200	48	24%
Result 1.3: Women peace committee recommendations delivered to 20 CTs and 2 RDAs and broadcast 5 times in each commune								

Annex 1: ARPP Indicator Performance Tracking Table				Baseline Value	FY 17		
					April - June		
					Target	Achieved	% of target achieved
Indicators		Indicator Type	Level of measure				
8	# of media stories disseminated with USG support to facilitate the reconciliation or peace processes (F 1.6.1-14)	Output	Beneficiary	0	100	0	0%
Result 1.4: 60 women peace committee members trained as psychosocial counselors							
9	# of women peace committee members trained to provide psychosocial peer counseling and support	Output	Beneficiary	0	60	0	0%
10	% of trained women who are able to provide peer counseling and support	Output	Beneficiary	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A
Result 2.1: 40 conflict resolution trainings conducted for local leaders							
11	# of USG supported events, training or activities designed to build support for peace or reconciliation among key actors to the conflict (F 1.6.2-13)	Output	Beneficiary	0	60	135	225%
12	% of trained leaders who are able to solve conflicts peacefully	Output	Beneficiary	N/A	100%	100%	100%
12a	- Male			N/A	100%	100%	100%
12b	- Female			N/A	100%	100%	100%
Result 2.2: 20 commune-level Early Warning/ Early Response systems established							
13	# of conflict/fragility early warning systems or conflict assessments supported by USG assistance (F 1.6.3-7)	Output	Beneficiary	0	20	2	10%
Result 2.3: 100 conflicts resolved by local leaders							
14	# of disputes resolved by program participants (MC-α 88)	Output	Beneficiary	0	100	224	224%
Result 2.4: 8 <i>cercle</i> -wide conflict resolution listening and networking forums							
15	# of USG-funded events, trainings, or activities designed to build support for peace or reconciliation on a mass scale (F 1.6.2-12)	Output	Beneficiary	0	8	830	1083%

Annex 1: ARPP Indicator Performance Tracking Table				Baseline Value	FY 17		
					April - June		
					Target	Achieved	% of target achieved
Indicators	Indicator Type	Level of measure					
Result 3.1: 100 inter-ethnic sports clubs created							
16	# of youth sports clubs created	Output	Beneficiary	0	100	100	100%
16a	- Male			0	60	64	106%
16b	- Female			0	40	36	90%
Result 3.2: 2,000 youth engaged in "Moving Forward" sports activities and community service events							
17	# of male and female youth participants in Moving Forward sport activities and community service events	Output	Beneficiary	0	2 000	2012	100,6%
17a	- Male			0	1 200	1287	107%
17b	- Female			0	800	725	90%
Result 3.3: 50 apprenticeships set up for male and female youth ages 20-29							
18	# of male and female youth who have attended their apprenticeships in the past month	Output	Beneficiary	0	60	0	0%
18a	- Male			0	40	0	0%
18b	- Female			0	20	0	0%
Result 3.4: 20 youth anti-violence campaign planning sessions at commune level and 100 campaigns executed at village level							
19	# of host national inhabitants reached though USG-assisted public information campaigns to support peaceful resolution of conflicts (F 1.6.1-13)	Output	Beneficiary	0	10 000	0	0%
19a	- Men			0	7 000	0	0%
19b	- Women			0	3 000	0	0%

Annex 2: Table summarizing the progress of key activities

Summary Plan of Activities for the Year by Program Areas	Targets	Status of Implementation				Comments
		Update at 6 months	Rate	Update at End of year	Rate	
Objective 1: Community leaders advance the peace process						
Act 1.1- Establish 20 inter-ethnic women peace committees to promote the peace process.	20	0	0%	20	100%	
Act 1.2: Womens peace committees share information on peace process and identify grievances across ethnic communities.	200	0	0%	48	24%	
Act 1.3: Develop, present, and broadcast recommendations for addressing community grievances through implementation of the peace process.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	This activity will start in the next quarter
Act 1.4: Women peace committees provide psychosocial counseling and support to address past violence and promote reconciliation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	This activity will start in the next quarter.
Objective 2: Traditional, elected and religious leaders reduce violence and promote reconciliation within and between ethnic communities.						
Act 2.1: Enhance capacity of traditional, religious, and elected leaders across ethnic communities in 200 villages to resolve conflict.	40	2	5%	43	108%	
Act 2.2: Establish EWER system in 20 communes for LSACs to identify volatile inter- and intra-ethnic community conflicts that could erupt into violence.	20	0	0%	2	10%	We conducted a pilot in two communes. The system will be expanded to the 20 commune in the quarter
Act 2.3: Village leaders resolve 100 inter- and intra-ethnic community conflicts identified by EWER system.	100	NA	N/A	N/A	0%	The EWER is not yet fully functional in the 20 communes but the community leaders resolved 224 conflict as explained above.

Act 2.4: Conduct eight circle-wide conflict resolution sharing and learning forums for village leaders and the LSACs to share lessons.	8	0	0%	0	0%	This activity will start in the next quarter.
Objective 3: Reduce youth involvement in violence and armed groups.						
Act 3.1: Form 100 inter-ethnic sports clubs to engage at-risk youth ages 15-24 as team members and youth ages 25-29 as coaches.	100	0	0%	100	100%	
Act 3.2: Engage sports clubs in sports-for-change to provide psychosocial support and increase life skills.	16	0	0%	8	50%	
Act 3.3: Connect at-risk youth ages 20-29 with public and private sector apprenticeships and mentors for personal and professional guidance.	50	0	0%	0	0%	Year II activity
Act 3.4: Youth ages 15-29 engaged in sports and apprenticeships execute campaigns to promote nonviolence.	20	0	0%	0	0%	Year II activity