

Enabling refugee resilience

Concept Note for: Refugee and Host Community Graduation Approach Project: Tillaberi region, Niger

BY POVERTY ALLEVIATION
COALITION : Niger
August 2020

PARTNERS



Project Summary



Total Programme Value

USD 00,00



Cost per household

USD 00,00



Methodology

The Graduation Approach



Target Beneficiaries

Households 000



MERCY CORPS



GOAL



TRICKLE UP

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Project Summary

FUNDING REQUEST

- > \$4,635.456
- > Program: Graduation approach for a period of 5 years
- > Cost Items: Program Implementation, Staffing, Operating Costs, Technical Assistance & M&E, and Overhead Costs

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we collaborate to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Mercy Corps has been working in Niger since 2005, implementing a portfolio of programs to improve the resilience and food security of the most vulnerable Nigeriens and increase prospects for a peaceful future. In Niger, our work focuses particularly on the role of gender equality in improving life and economic outcomes.

GOAL was founded in 1977 with the aim to provide relief to the poorest and most vulnerable peoples. The Organization has supported the vulnerable populations across Niger since 2005 when we first responded to the regional food security crisis. Our 65-person staff manages a €2M budget from our head office in Niamey and a field office in Zinder. GOAL implements programs that build community resilience and well-being through the implementation of integrated emergency response, humanitarian and development programs.

LOCATIONS & TARGETS

The consortium has extensive implementation experience across northern Tillaberi region and Niger in general that is relevant to this refugee-targeted program. Listed below are the locations that this program proposes:

Tillaberi region, Niger: 1,500 households over 5 years

- > **Abala camp** – 750 households (75% refugees, 25% host community) – **Mercy Corps**
- > **Mangaizé (Ouallam) or future resettlement site** – 750 households (75% refugees, 25% host) – **GOAL**

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Trickle Up has been a pioneer graduating people out of extreme poverty since 1979. The organization has helped more than 1.5 million of the poorest, most vulnerable people move to greater economic self-sufficiency and connection with their communities. Trickle Up helps people in extreme poverty and vulnerability advance their economic and social well-being. It drives large-scale change by partnering with governments, global institutions, and local organizations.

Trickle Up is the technical partner for the consortium, providing capacity-building to the program team and real-time Monitoring & Evaluation.

FACILITATION & COORDINATION

The UNHCR will provide overall coordination, facilitation and high-level result monitoring. UNHCR will further ensure inclusion of relevant partners, quality of proposals, collection of good practices & lessons learned, and facilitate access to populations or data where relevant.

Background

PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The conflict that has roiled the north of Mali since 2012 has resulted in wide-scale displacement, with more than 52,999 Malian refugees having fled to Niger. The majority of Malian refugees are housed in three camps – Mangaizé (Ouallam), Abala and Tabarey-Barey - in the region of Tillabéri, while others are being hosted by rural communities throughout the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions (generally around/near the camps) or in urban centers such as Niamey and Ayorou. Of the approximately 52,999 Malian refugees currently in Niger, as of September 2019, 15,339 people (2,961 households) and 7,308 (1,636 households) are located in the Abala and Mangaizé (Ouallam) camps, respectively. In addition to the flow of Malian refugees over the last five years, UNHCR estimates that in 2019 armed groups in areas close to the border with Mali displaced approximately 55,000 people, of which 60% are children, in the Tillabéri region due to a resurgence of inter-ethnic conflicts between Peulh and Daoussak Tuareg groups and attacks. In these areas, host communities are already grappling with extreme poverty and a lack of basic services and infrastructure. Chronic food insecurity is widespread in the northern Tillabéri region, driven by environmental and social factors and there is no indication that major improvements in malnutrition levels have taken place since the 2016 SMART Survey.

The general humanitarian needs in Niger have not changed substantially over the years: according to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2019 across Niger. The needs analysis shows the persistence of five major crises affecting the country: food insecurity (1.4 million people estimated in need), malnutrition (1.7 million people), epidemics (1.17 million people), floods (170,000 people) and population movements due to conflict or migration (392,305 people). In both Abala and Mangaizé, livelihoods are stressed and disrupted, especially for refugees and IDPs who have lost most assets and have limited income opportunities. A multi-sectoral assessment (MSA) conducted by Mercy Corps in December 2018 confirmed that IDPs, refugees and host community members are at risk of acute food insecurity and engaging in negative coping mechanisms, while a more recent baseline assessment in Abala camp found that the average income for refugees is less than \$10 USD/month and more than 25% report no income at all. Further, according to the 2019 assessment, only

31% of refugee households have received any form of support for income-generating activities from humanitarian partners. In Abala, the majority of respondents identified a lack of income or jobs as a severe constraint on their lives, and are heavily dependent on daily wage labor as a principal source of revenue. Vulnerable host communities remain largely unsupported. The sharing of food aid has been reported between recipients and other vulnerable community members, highlighting the insufficiency of assistance available.

Women and women-headed households are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty, having fewer resources and agency to seek out and pursue new livelihoods options. Many refugee women marry at an early age, with 50% having their first baby before the age of 18, taking on the responsibility of caring for their children from a young age, and preventing them from obtaining training or education that would increase their earning potential. Gender inequality is a driving factor of economic vulnerability in the Nigerien context today, negatively impacting and compounding communities' capacity to overcome a variety of environmental, climatic, social and conflict-related shocks and stresses. Gender-based violence (GBV) is also a serious concern of women and girls and is not discussed openly, especially as the health services are currently being rebuilt and not fully functioning in Abala. Women and girls in Niger have multiple and important roles to play in Nigerian society, both in the home and outside of it, and yet they are widely subjected to early and forced marriage, low levels of education, and a lack of decision-making power at the household and communal level, including in relation to their fertility. As a result, half the population is disproportionately disadvantaged, with lower levels of literacy, lack of access to income-earning options, and the majority of the responsibility for household tasks - even as the population rises rapidly and the need for new sources of income is high to address the pressing concerns of elevated poverty and hunger.

In 2016, Mercy Corps conducted a Strategic Resilience Assessment (STRESS) to better understand the impacts of shocks and stresses on Nigerien households and identify how to best strengthen their resilience capacities to reduce incidences of extreme poverty. Based on the insights from our STRESS process, we learned that to surmount shocks and stresses within Niger's complex context, Nigerien men, boys, girls,

and women must have access to appropriate resources and apply risk-mitigating strategies. Some of the key areas and barriers that were recommended for programs to address were:

- Increased capacity of women and girls to influence and make decisions
- Improved access and use of adapted financial services for rural women
- Improved access to basic social services (e.g., education, health, social protection)
- Improved access to productive rural and urban employment

Based on these findings and recommendations, an economic inclusion approach targeting vulnerable women is critical to tackle Niger's burgeoning poverty, gender disparity, and malnutrition challenges.

As elevated levels of vulnerability among both refugee and host populations persist, support is needed to help these communities move towards recovery and self-sufficiency, in order to decrease poverty and food insecurity. Although the border with Mali is still porous and the population dynamic, the permanent return of refugees is

currently not an option for most as insecurity persists in their areas of origin. In addition, UNHCR with GIZ, the World Bank and the government of Niger (GON) have signed agreements to transition the Abala and Mangaizé refugee camps into permanent settlements. In the context of this protracted complex crisis, the proposed program offers a pathway out of poverty for these populations, moving beyond the traditional humanitarian assistance model, offering continual but decreasing support as refugees and host community participants are equipped with skills and capacities to increase their income. The program seeks to target women-headed households and youth in particular, in acknowledgement of the increased vulnerability among these populations. The program consortium, consisting of Mercy Corps and GOAL, brings years of experience within the region and with the target population to the table. The proposed program offers a distinct opportunity to develop an integrated methodology appropriate for the context based on solid evidence supporting the effectiveness of the graduation approach, ultimately seeking to increase resilience of populations in Tillabéri region in the medium to long term.

Project Operating Model

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the proposed project is to alleviate poverty for 1,500 refugees and host community households in Abala and Mangaizé (Ouallam) in Tillabéri region, by increasing their resilience, self-reliance, and social inclusion through sustainable income-earning opportunities.

This consortium, led by Mercy Corps, proposes an integrated approach to improve the well-being of vulnerable households with a focus on women and youth, while promoting skills and livelihood training, supported by protection and social inclusion activities, which will ultimately facilitate a transition towards self-sufficiency. The proposed program will enhance the impact of a recovery program for Malian refugees and host populations in the rural municipalities of Abala and Ouallam already being implemented by Mercy Corps and GOAL in Niger. First implemented in 2017 until today, this programming will provide the consortium with a base of evidence on how to effectively help vulnerable Nigerian and Malian women and young people to improve the well-being and social inclusion of their families. The proposed program consists of holistic, sequential and stratified interventions to address the interrelated challenges identified in the STRESS process. The program seeks to apply and refine a graduation approach model that is appropriate for the target context and population, building on the consortium members' past experience in this area. Over the course of five years, there will be two rounds of graduation of 750 households each

Theory of Change: The proposed program is based on the Theory of Change that IF extremely vulnerable and poor refugees and host community members in Tillabéri region have access to an integrated, phased, and tailored package of cash support, livelihoods and financial literacy training, and a safe place to save and transact, THEN these individuals will be better able to start or continue viable livelihoods and reduce the incidence of economic marginalization.

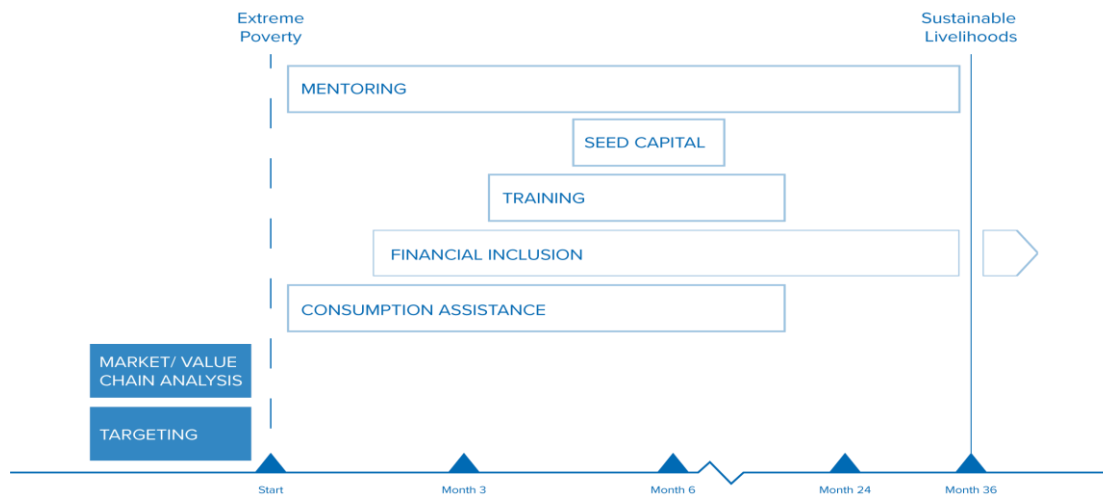
We base this theory on our long-standing work in Niger and at the global level. Evidence from seven large scale RCTs conducted on the Graduation approach in Ethiopia, Ghana, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Honduras further supports this methodology. Furthermore, the graduation

approach is currently being applied and studied in the Sahel, including through IPA's Adaptive Social Protection Program in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal), which aims to increase access to effective social protection systems in the region, while also helping the poor and vulnerable adapt to climate-induced changes and something this pilot would contribute to.

Learning Agenda: This program seeks to identify successful, scalable and sustainable Graduation approaches that lift refugee and host community participants out of poverty in Tillabéri region. To support this goal, the program has developed initial research questions that will inform a learning agenda (see Monitoring and Evaluation section). As a result of the program, the consortium will produce final learning documents identifying the factors for success in the graduation approach pursued, with particular consideration to the needs of women and within the context of a protracted complex crisis

METHODOLOGY

Mercy Corps and GOAL propose an integrated approach to improve the protection and economic inclusion of 1,500 extremely poor female-headed refugee and host community households. The program will do this through diversified skills promotion and appropriate livelihood training that will ultimately benefit these vulnerable households. Over the course of five years, there will be two rounds of graduation of 750 households each. The proposed program will strengthen and build off the impact of a food security and livelihoods assistance program already being implemented by Mercy Corps in Niger over two years (2019-2021) and provide a base of evidence about how to effectively help vulnerable refugee women improve their families' well-being. The proposed program is holistic, sequencing and layering interventions to address the interconnected challenges identified through the STRESS process. It will facilitate self-reliance, increase women's confidence and provide a pathway out of extreme poverty for women-headed households through five phases of support:



IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

1. Preparatory Phase

Aggregate information from existing market assessments to identify viable livelihoods options and selection of program participants.

2. Phase 2

Over the course of the first 6 months of implementation, the program’s highly trained community coaches will provide bespoke training on diversified and community-appropriate livelihoods (e.g., goat fattening, milk processing, vegetable gardening, small-scale commerce, etc.) and technical and life skills development, financial education and an introduction to savings groups within the community. Participant households will at the same time benefit from up to six months of consumption support, in the form of food or cash, worth approximately \$300.

3. Phase 3

Within months 6-9, the program will provide a lump sum of approximately \$200 based on existing market assessments and needs of households and kick off the start of savings group activities.

4. Phase 4

At month 12-14, the program will provide a second transfer of \$100 to further strengthen individuals’ ability to make group investments, start self-employment/entrepreneurship or engage in other income-generating opportunities that are introduced during the livelihoods training.

5. Phase 5

Ongoing monitoring and coaching support throughout/the end of the respective graduation cycle.

The chosen graduation approach is based on Mercy Corps and GOAL's experience supporting community development programs in Niger. It is also in line with key donor strategies looking to increase funding to Niger to tackle extreme poverty through targeted economic inclusion programming. For example, the US government's Niger strategy seeks to, "increase efforts in countering violent extremists, with the goal of decreasing the number of youth vulnerable to radicalization; fostering political and economic inclusion at the community level; and improving access to livelihoods and job opportunities in at-risk communities." Further to this, with the forthcoming World Bank Safety Net program being rolled out in Niger, the proposed pilot for women will support and inform design of appropriate economic inclusion models.

Targeting: The program will support Malian refugees in Abala and Mangaizé camps where the camp is still currently functioning. Since mid-2018, Mercy Corps and GOAL have supported the transition of the camp to a permanent community through UNHCR's "localization" efforts. The project will also continue to work with vulnerable host communities that have connections to the Abala and Ouallam camps during this critical point of transition. Specifically, this will include villages surrounding the two camps, all of which are areas in which Mercy Corps has worked for over a decade on food security, agriculture and nutrition programs. As of September 2019, Abala camp is home to approx. 2,961 HHs and 15,339 individuals: 54% are women, 62% are under the age of 18, and 3% over the age of 60. The breakdown for Mangaizé (Ouallam) is 1,636 HHs or 7,308 individuals with a similar age breakdown. Youth are a key target group in this program given their vulnerability and lack of livelihoods opportunities to engage them or develop their potential – using the "I'm Here" approach, as well as a youth and women-led market assessment which will help these groups share their voice, needs and solutions.

General criteria for selection include: 1) HHs not receiving livelihoods support from other donors; 2) HHs classified as having a poor or limited diet; 3) HHs without a single source of income; 4) HHs dependent upon daily wage labor as their primary source of income; 5) HHs without access to arable land; and 6) HHs without livestock. In addition, the program will target HHs that are female-headed and single parent HHs, and those with at-risk women, children, elderly or disabled members. We will also design interventions to ensure prevention of GBV is a key focus area and that survivors of GBV have information and access to referral support, especially as the government health infrastructure is solidified in 2019 in Abala and Mangaizé.

Approximately 125 of the participant households will be host community members who will benefit

largely from the market vegetable gardens, village savings and loan associations (VSLA) and protection, Safe Spaces activities and prevention/referral of GBV. As targeting of beneficiaries has previously proven to be a source of conflict, the consortium will continue to work closely with UNHCR, camp residents and refugee committees to ensure the selection process is well communicated, inclusive, fair and accountable. In addition, the most vulnerable young women/girls and boys/men are targeted for immediate assistance. To ensure an effective transition from emergency to sustained livelihoods and resilience we will continue to use UNHCR's criteria that target livelihoods/transition activities to moderately vulnerable households (HHs).

Training: The program's field agents (called "business mentors") will deliver six months of business skills, financial literacy training, and other life skills designed for participants who essentially have little formal education to assist them on their path to more diversified and community-appropriate livelihoods (e.g., goat fattening, milk processing, vegetable gardening, small-scale commerce, etc.). These business mentors will be trained in a training-of-trainer (TOT) format by Trickle Up and will receive ongoing capacity-building to ensure the coherence and quality of the graduation approach. Where appropriate, the program will also provide basic technical/vocational training in the most relevant local trades to participants where this is the best option. The training materials developed and used will be interactive, concise, and geared to adult learning.

Savings groups: After the initial six months of consumption support, the program will form Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) of approximately 30 individuals each. VSLAs are a self-generating, self-managed form of microfinance that allow members to pool savings and access micro loans. VSLA provide members with ongoing protection against financial shocks and access to growth capital. The VSLAs also serve as a support group and basic safety net, as well as an exit strategy beyond the program.

Seed funding: The program will provide an initial cash grant of \$200 USD as seed capital to start the livelihoods / income-generating activities based on a basic business plan with the help of their business mentor. A second cash transfer of \$100 USD will be provided six to nine months later based on positive progress with the respective livelihoods/income-generating activity, as assessed by the business mentor.

Coaching: The Trickle Up trained and guided business mentors will work with each participant in selecting a livelihoods/income-generating option based on the individual's skill set, local market conditions, risk factors, and profitability. Equipped with mobile training and mentoring tools, business

mentors provide important ongoing coaching and mentoring throughout the program to ensure that all participants have the skills and knowledge to be successful in their livelihoods activity, save for the future, resolve group conflicts, develop confidence and agency, and successfully graduate out of extreme poverty.

Financial Inclusion: Financial inclusion is essential to building a sustainable livelihood and the savings groups approach in graduation programming is a key step towards financial inclusion. Participants will have the opportunity to join savings and loan groups, thus gaining access to informal financial services. Wherever appropriate, the program will also create linkages to formal financial services. The need for creating financial inclusion linkages in refugee contexts is greater because of the generally greater isolation of refugee settlements from economic infrastructures. Additionally, refugees and host community members face difficulties in access and use of services because of requirements for initial

membership fees, minimum saving and guarantees for one to access loans/credit. The incomes derived from income-generating activities will generate resources for the households and community.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Outcome 1: Refugees and vulnerable households are provided cash transfers to meet their immediate basic needs and support development of livelihoods

Outcome 2: Vulnerable refugee and host community households report sustained livelihoods/employment

Outcome 3: Outcome 3: Vulnerable refugee and host community households report enhanced access to financial service

Project Impact and Sustainability

INTENDED IMPACT

Overall, 1,500 vulnerable individuals, predominantly refugee and host community women and their household members (estimated to be 10,500 individuals in total, split 75% refugees to 25% host community) will be able to start viable livelihoods and their households will become more resilient in the face of future shocks and stresses. These individuals will benefit from targeted livelihoods training and skill development delivered by community coaches, financial literacy training, and access to cash transfers, as well as a safe place to save and transact. Further to this, Mercy Corps has been awarded the SCALE program where existing open source alternative livelihoods training material will be tailored for the pilot region. We anticipate that the key barriers could be ongoing climate shocks that could exacerbate an already difficult context as well as a shortened timeframe.

The program aims to impact the lives of targeted extremely poor households, supporting them towards a self-reliance and independence mindset to create opportunities for increased household income, access to services and improved quality of life. Through their involvement in the program, participants will gain new skills and capacities while building their assets and social capital for sustained improvements to their well-being. The program's integrated approach seeks to provide a long-term path out of extreme poverty. Women and youth will be particularly targeted by the program given their increased vulnerability in the context.

Why graduation? The poverty graduation, initially pioneered by BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), is a widely validated effective tool for breaking the cycle of extreme poverty for people living below the extreme poverty line (\$1.90 a day). Through six randomized control trials, [Innovations for Poverty Actions \(IPA\)](#) found that the Graduation approach is cost-effective and leads to significant gains in economic and social outcomes for extremely poor households across diverse contexts. Outcomes included increased consumption, food security, income and savings as well as improvements in psychosocial well-being. The return on investment (ROI) in five of six countries studied was positive, ranging from 133% in Ghana to 433% in India. In other words, for every dollar spent on the program in India, ultra-poor households generated \$4.33 in long-term benefits.

A recent [IPA and Consultative Group to Assist the Poor \(CGAP\) study](#) compared 48 cash transfer, poverty Graduation and livelihood programs globally for cost benefit and sustainability of impact. The study concluded that Graduation programs show the most sustained long-term impacts (at one or two years after the interventions had ended). It concluded that “based on available evidence, the Graduation Approach is the clearest path forward to reduce extreme poverty in a sustainable manner.” These results have been further validated by another [IPA study released this month](#) comparing the long-term impacts of a Graduation program with interventions offering savings-only and cash or asset-transfer only programs. The study concluded that the Graduation program has significant positive effects on financial inclusion and income that persist at least three years. The savings-only program has significant positive effects on financial inclusion and consumption at two years, but both effects are much weaker by the three-year mark. Finally, there is no evidence of any positive welfare effects of the asset-only treatment after either two years or three years.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 3: Logical Framework

Outcome and Outputs	Activities	Indicative Indicators
Outcome 1: Refugees and vulnerable households are provided cash transfers to meet their immediate basic needs and support development of livelihoods		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of households who report that cash assistance supported them to meet their immediate needs % of households who report a shift in most urgent needs from basic survival to recovery
Output 1.1: Cash transfers provided to participating households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 1.1.1: Target vulnerable refugees and host community individuals and their households (with a focus on women headed households), using vulnerability assessment tools and based on wealth ranking indices Activity 1.1.2: Program participants informed on program activities Activity 1.2.3: Three tranches disbursed to participating households for basic needs and livelihoods supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of households identified and informed on support available # of households trained on empower world approach # and value of cash transfers
Outcome 2: Vulnerable refugee and host community households report sustained livelihoods/employment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and % of participants who self-report increased income by end of program period as compared to the pre-program baseline
Output 2.1: Livelihoods training and skills development provided to target households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 2.2.1: Identification and training of coaches/mentors Activity 2.2.2: Targeted livelihoods and skills development training for 1500 target beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of coaches/mentors identified and trained # of program participants trained on livelihoods of their choice Type of livelihoods pursued by program participants
Output 2.2: Follow up support provided to participant households to increase sustainability of livelihoods interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 2.3.1: Coaches conduct follow up monitoring and support for livelihoods activities Activity 2.3.2: Provide financial education through tailored tools and linkages with micro-finance institutions (MFI) Activity 2.3.3: Link program participants to local and regional market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # and % of program participants receiving at least XX support and monitoring visits # of local and regional markets linked
Outcome 3: Vulnerable refugee and host community households report enhanced access to financial services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of program participants who report access to and decision over use of finance Percentage of participants who report enhanced self-efficacy and financial management (Self efficacy index)
Output 3.1: Savings groups created and trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 3.1.1: Creation of saving groups Activity 3.1.3: Train savings groups on VSLA principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of saving groups created # of saving groups trained on VSLA principles and financial literacy # of saving groups that develop

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 3.1.4: • Train saving groups on financial literacy • Activity 3.1.5: • Train the groups on business plan development and support the development and finalization of this plan 	<p>a business plan</p>
<p>Output 3.2. Savings groups and other local financial institution provide financial support to program participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 3.2.1: • VSLA groups establish pooled funds and disburse loans to group members • Activity 3.2.2: Coaches/mentors conduct follow up monitoring and support visits with groups • Activities 3.2.3: • As appropriate and possible, develop linkages to microfinance institutions and other forms of financial access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total value of loans disbursed to savings group members • Total number of loans disbursed to savings group members • Percent of loans that are repaid on time • # of linkages to financial institutions created

Project Management and Governance

COALITION ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Each of the consortium partners has longstanding management, technical and financial leadership in place in Niger to identify, implement and monitor innovative solutions to this culturally complex program. In total, we have designed, implemented and managed over \$80 million in programming in Niger over the last 15 years. Mercy Corps' management, financial and partnership principles are grounded in transparent communication and focus on working with and strengthening local structures to promote sustainability. As the consortium lead, Mercy Corps' established guidelines, systems, sub-grant management policies and processes ensure stewardship of institutional resources, effective management of large consortia for multi-sectoral programming, and full compliance with required systems and codes.

Partner 1 – Mercy Corps

As consortium lead, Mercy Corps will be the lead agency and will oversee all technical implementation, quality control, robust learning and research agenda, plus dissemination/advocacy; provide technical, material, financial assistance to ensure success.

Mercy Corps is implementing a portfolio of programs to improve the resilience and food security of the most vulnerable Nigeriens and increase prospects for a peaceful future. In 2018 alone, Mercy Corps Niger helped 139,000 vulnerable Nigeriens. With funds from donors including USAID, the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, Nike, the Department of State (BPRM) and others, we have developed and tested approaches for ensuring the full participation of women and girls in economic and

community life, including Safe Spaces and Safe Schools for adolescent girls, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and targeted interventions for gatekeepers (family and spouses) to win their support for women's empowerment.

Partner 2 - GOAL

GOAL will be implementing the program and all related activities in Mangaizé/Ouallam district. GOAL has a 65-person staff manages a €2M budget from our head office in Niamey and a field office in Zinder and implements programs that build community resilience and well-being through the implementation of integrated emergency response, humanitarian and development programs. GOAL has also been promoting financial inclusion and access to informal financial services through Village Savings & Loan Associations (VSLAs). Addressing all underlying contributors to food insecurity by integrating water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition activities into our programs.

Partner 3 – Trickle Up

Trickle Up is the technical partner for the consortium, providing capacity-building to the program team and all of the real-time Monitoring & Evaluation. Trickle Up's work with UNHCR serving refugees in Africa since 2013 has brought it to Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, with many more countries to follow as these pilot projects are completed and our partnership expands in the region. In 2017, Trickle Up began a partnership with AVSI Foundation and USAID to reach refugee families in Uganda as well.

BROADER PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

UNHCR

UNHCR coordinate refugee operations and offer technical support on protection issues. Together with the Government of Niger, they are in charge of settlement coordination, register refugees and asylum seekers using biometric system and offer litigation services. It is the co-chair of the protection and cash technical working groups.

APBE - Camp Management Partner

UNHCR's camp management agency APBE coordinates all partners intervening in the camps and co-chairs the protection and livelihoods technical working groups on site. APBE will support with gender, protection and child protection issues and extremely vulnerable individuals for food and income security and livelihood interventions.

Local Government & Technical Services

The respective département (direct) governments have leadership of integrating refugees into the communal development plans with guidance from various technical services and relevant line ministries. The rural development technical service is key also for providing technical assistances for the adoption of agricultural extension innovations. They will approve the selection of host beneficiaries, support training and interventions

during and post the program, for example negotiating access to land with host communities.

Refugee Committees

The informal refugee committees composed of refugee representatives of each camp neighborhood (as well as women and youth) will play a significant role in mobilizing the refugees for program activities and communal engagements, and consortium partners will maintain their working relationship with them.

Other Livelihoods, Social Cohesion, and Protection implementers

Other livelihoods, social cohesion and protection actors working in Abala and Ouallam will be invited to collaborate with the program. At the very least, the graduation program will liaise with these actors/implementers to avoid overlapping and better targeting. Where possible and relevant, the program may include participants in other actor's interventions in order to create efficiencies and synergies.

Financial Inclusion Actors

To the extent possible, the program will already work with microfinance institutions (ASUSU, Capital Finance, etc.) that operate in Tillabéri region to include their microfinance products and presence in the program planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

This program will develop a strong real-time monitoring and evaluation system that provides reliable and accurate field level data to the consortium to enable evidence-based decision-making and results tracking. Trickle Up will be the consortium's Monitoring & Evaluation partner. Technical assistance services to the consortium will include creating systems to inform adaptive management, customizing and implementing monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plans and training materials, and providing ongoing support, guidance and quality program assurance throughout the implementation period. As Mercy Corps and GOAL will use Ona for data collection, our teams will be able to easily and effectively collect data on participants through mobile devices, sent to the cloud where it synchronizes with Trickle Up's internal data management tool. The system also integrates geospatial recording for monitoring of field activities by program managers.

The level of data collection and rigor allows thorough analysis of progress towards program impact at a granular level. Additionally, using Mercy Corps' and GOAL's business mentors as data collectors ensures that accurate and consistent data is collected throughout the program and will support our team in its ability to course correct and support individuals' livelihoods development. The implementation of this program

in Niger will provide Mercy Corps and GOAL with a rich source of new knowledge that will be disseminated to the wider community of practice through the World Bank's Partnership for Economic Inclusion and in other forums. The use of digital data collection tools will allow for the rapid reporting and dissemination of results to partners, funders and others in the development community.

Potential learning questions:

- Did the specific package of support and capacity building offered by the program succeed in improving the economic and social well-being of program participants? What components were deemed particularly important by program participants for increasing their ability to earn income and build assets, and what components could be added?
- What aspects of the chosen approach worked well for refugee communities; what aspects were deemed appropriate for host communities (was there a difference in their needs in the context of the graduation approach)?
- What adaptations are necessary to improve program success in the fragile and conflict-affected areas targeted by the program?
- What aspects of the program package best met the gendered and age-specific needs of the program participants, and where did the program design fall short in meeting these needs?

Project Budget

FUNDING REQUEST

The consortium suggests this 5-year program to alleviate extreme poverty for 1,500 refugee and host community households in Abala and Ouallam (Mangaizé camp) districts.

The program will use the evidence based poverty alleviation model the Ultra Poor Graduation Approach, which targets extremely poor households. These activities directly address the drivers of the present shock towards improved livelihoods and self-reliance by actively stimulating local production and market systems.

The following budget request of \$4,635,456 is based on recent program that the consortium members have run in Niger. The costs below represent program implementations cost, staffing cost, operating expenses, and overhead costs. These costs are a result of extensive programming by all three actors and represent an in-depth understanding of the costs of development programs across Niger and in refugee settlements.

Figure 3: Financial structure of the project

Consortium Partner	Amount / %
Mercy Corps (incl. ICR)	\$2,333,973 / 50%
GOAL	\$1,701,483 / 37%
Trickle Up	\$600,000 / 13%
Total Budget	\$4,635,456 / 100%

PROJECT BUDGET

The budget is formulated based on the assumptions below:

- 1,500 household each requiring approximately \$1,355 in investments (six months of consumption support, two asset transfers, and ongoing coaching & training).
- Years 1 - 4 (two times 1-24 months) are the main periods of implementation, whereas Year 5 is dedicated to follow up and the program learning.
- Out of the total budget, 44% is estimated to cover the program costs for the three outcomes, 7% for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, 27% for staffing, 15% for direct operating costs, including transport costs, and 7% indirect costs.

Table 7: Project budget over 5 years

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Program Costs						
Outcome 1 – HH Needs met through Cash Transfers	250,814	207,959	285,580	223,637	94,780	\$1,062,770
Outcome 2 – Sustained Livelihoods/Employment	44,750	221,050	139,550	151,750	93,750	\$650,850
Outcome 3 – Access to Financial Services	36,100	52,500	67,900	77,450	86,750	\$320,700
Monitoring & Evaluation	66,000	66,000	66,000	63,600	63,000	\$324,600
Salaries & Supplies						
Staffing/Salaries	247,271	271,387	277,882	283,529	191,526	\$1,271,595
Equipment & Supplies	39,940	38,081	32,800	38,081	12,500	\$161,402
Operating Costs						
Vehicle Costs/Transport	30,612	35,473	36,905	38,406	34,120	\$175,516
Communications	7,953	8,761	9,112	9,482	8,323	\$43,631
Office Running Costs	61,072	63,859	65,100	66,402	50,039	\$313,532
Direct Costs	802,521	956,482	981,601	942,633	641,359	\$4,324,596
Indirect Costs 7%	56,176	66,954	68,712	61,415	57,603	\$310,860
Outcome 1 – HH Needs met through Cash Transfers	250,814	207,959	285,580	223,637	94,780	\$1,062,770
Outcome 2 – Sustained Livelihoods/Employment	44,750	221,050	139,550	151,750	93,750	\$650,850
Project Total	858,697	1,023,436	1,050,313	1,004,048	698,962	\$4,635,456

Annex 1 – Risks and Assumptions

Table 8: Internal and external risks

	Assumption	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Internal	Availability of field agents able to live in/near the community	Staffing problems, inability to provide the coaching and mentoring that participants will need.	Medium	Medium	Hire and train staff that come for the two implementation areas and that speak the local languages.
	Availability of a Micro-Finance Institution to work in these areas.	Having to distribute cash directly ourselves and losing the links to financial inclusion that are so important.	Low	Medium	Work with MFI that we have experience with and/or that have previously worked in the implementation zone.
	Participants stay in the program until graduation.	Premature drop out of participants.	High	Medium	Ongoing monitoring and regular interaction/face-to-face time with participants.
		Participants liquidating/selling the provided assistance or otherwise not sticking to the program goals.	High	Medium	Ongoing monitoring and regular interaction/face-to-face time with participants.
	Access to the program participants.	Government (re)imposes the need for armed escorts or otherwise limits access to participants that disrupts service delivery and implementation.	High	High	Determine to which extent local staff can access program sites with public transportation; determine if participants can meet in Abala or Ouallam town.
	Climatic conditions stay relatively favorable	Episodes of extreme drought could undermine the livelihoods of the target communities, necessitating humanitarian assistance.	Medium/High	High	Develop “crisis” modifier approach and already coordinate with possible responders (notably WFP) for a mitigation plan.
	Security situation stays acceptable.	Security situation deteriorates further and disrupts implementation ability and access to participants.	Medium	High	Hiring field agents that are locals of the districts and speak local language. Determine if participants can meet in Abala or Ouallam town.
External	Government collaboration and buy-in.	Government withdrawing support for the graduation approach and/or not participating in the program.	Low	Medium	Involvement of government actors, particularly the technical services, and giving them active role.
	Refugee	Changes to the refugee locations, i.e. relocalization elsewhere or plans in their settlement.	Low	High	Ongoing coordination with UNHCR and government to ensure that the relocalization plans for 2020/21 stay as they are.

Annex 2 – Project Partner Credentials

Partner 1

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we collaborate to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. We have empowered people in over 122 countries to survive through crisis, build better lives and transform their communities for good. Today our staff of about 5,000 team members is reaching nearly 28 million people in more than 40 countries around the world.

Mercy Corps has been working in Niger since 2006, implementing a portfolio of programs to improve the resilience and food security of the most vulnerable Nigeriens and increase prospects for a peaceful future. In Niger, our work focuses particularly on the role of gender equality in improving life and economic outcomes. With funds from donors including USAID, the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, Nike, the Department of State (BPRM) and others, we have developed and tested approaches for ensuring the full participation of women and girls in economic and community life, including Safe Spaces and Safe Schools for adolescent girls, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and targeted interventions for gatekeepers (family and spouses) to win their support for women’s empowerment.

Most notably, it has implemented a succession of USAID/OFDA and FFP-funded programs in Filingué—PASTORAL I (2010-2011), PASTORAL II (2011-2012), Wadata Makiya (2012-2013), Madara and ECOUT (2014-2016) and currently CARES (2018-2020). Each of these programs provided or is providing essential support to severely food insecure households through cash-for-work and food-for-work activities. The USAID-funded Violent Extremism Research Program, (2016 - 2018) worked with local and religious leaders, civil society and community members throughout Tillaberi region to understand community vulnerability and resilience to violent extremist groups. Through the Sawki (2012-2018), funded by USAID/FFP, Mercy Corps implemented market gardens and Safe Spaces for over 3,000 adolescent girls in Niger, reducing rates of child marriage and helping girls break out of cycles of malnutrition and vulnerability. Since September 2017, we have implemented the RECOVER I and II program which have reached over 6,000 individuals in Abala camp and host communities, including 1,500 adolescent girls in Safe Spaces, 275 individuals with livelihoods

assistance and constructed 484 latrines for refugee families, and schools.

Partner 2

GOAL was founded in 1977 with the aim to provide relief to the poorest and most vulnerable peoples. The Organization has supported the vulnerable populations across Niger since 2005 when we first responded to the regional food security crisis. Our 65-person staff manages a €2M budget from our head office in Niamey and a field office in Zinder. GOAL implements programs that build community resilience and well-being through the implementation of integrated emergency response, humanitarian and development programs. GOAL work to identify and treat acute malnutrition; improve nutrition specific & sensitive behaviors and practices; build communal and household assets through cash-for-work activities; enhance food security and support sustainable agricultural livelihoods through improved productivity and increased incomes in livestock programs. GOAL implements comprehensive and integrated programmes at both the household and community levels to improve economic and food security. Our work includes constructing cereal & fodder banks in villages to ensure the availability and safe storage of grain and animal fodder during the lean season. Integrating habanaye, the traditional Nigerien livestock generational rotation system.

Through cash-for-work, local community members carry out zaï, a traditional land regeneration practice in areas that are experiencing desertification. This supports economic stability and combats some of the negative effects of climate change. Promoting financial inclusion and access to informal financial services through Village Savings & Loan Associations (VSLAs). Addressing all underlying contributors to food insecurity by integrating water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition activities into our programs.

Partner 3

Trickle Up has been a pioneer graduating people out of extreme poverty since 1979. The organization has helped more than 1.5 million of the poorest, most vulnerable people move to greater economic self-sufficiency and connection with their communities. Trickle Up helps people in extreme poverty and vulnerability advance their economic and social well-being. It drives large-scale change by partnering with governments, global institutions, and local organizations.

Trickle Up has worked in Africa since 1980. Today, it works with community-based organizations, government social protection programs, and the World Bank in West Africa, where its regional office in Burkina Faso opened in 2013. Previously, the regional office was located in Mali, where Trickle Up completed many projects in partnership with USAID, including initiatives focusing on people with disabilities. In Mali, Trickle Up worked in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu, and Mopti with a wide range of implementing partners. In 2008, the program was extended to Burkina Faso, and in 2017 Trickle Up began its partnership with the Adaptive Social Protection program to expand to Niger, Senegal, Chad, and Mauritania.

The work with UNHCR serving refugees in Africa since 2013 has brought Trickle Up to Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, with many more countries to follow as these pilot projects are completed and the partnership expands in the region. In 2017, Trickle Up began a partnership with AVSI Foundation and USAID to reach refugee families in Uganda as well.