WELCOME
VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE TO COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM (VRAI)

Implemented by Mercy Corps in Burkina Faso and Niger, in partnership with CGD and Karkara

Funded by USAID/West Africa Regional Office

Maggie Janes-Lucas, Deputy Country Director Mercy Corps Niger
16 May 2018
MERCY CORPS

5,000 strong, we live and work in more than 40 countries…

Meeting urgent needs and building a stronger tomorrow.
Mercy Corps Niger is Strengthening livelihoods, boosting resilience & empowering communities.
REDDUCING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Mercy Corps: Measuring Peace and Conflict Programming

Youth and conflict TOCs (2010)
Kenya research (2011)
Somalia study (2012)
Sub-Saharan Africa analysis (2013)
Afghanistan impact evaluation (2014)
3 country case study (2015)
REDUCING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- **Foreign Fighters in Jordan (2015)**
- **Somalia Impact Evaluation (2016)**
- **Boko Haram Youth & Violence (2016)**
- **Iraq Governance and Perceptions (2016)**
- **Youth Violence in Mali (2017)**
- **Impact evaluation in Afghanistan (2018)**

**VRAI Niger and Burkina Faso (2018)**
VRAI Project

Mercy Corps’ Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment Initiative to Counter Violent Extremism (VRAI)

Promote peace and stability in West Africa through the development of innovative and adaptable tools that identify community vulnerabilities and resilience capacities to inform effective CVE programs.

• Tools that measure vulnerability and resilience while taking into account gender issues and local knowledge.

Disseminate the process and lessons learned to be improved and adapted.
# Geographic Targeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Region/ Province</th>
<th>Commune</th>
<th>Reason for choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Diffa</td>
<td>Diffa and Maïné-Soroa</td>
<td>Situated on the Niger-Nigeria border, which runs along the Komadougou-Yobe river. Significant recruitment from ISIS/WA, originating in Nigeria, has been noted in this area. For example, the village of Tam had more than 400 people recruited (estimated between 2014-2015, but most were recruited before the first Diffa attack in 2014) based on the statistics provided by the Town Hall of Maïné-Soroa. During the first few months of 2017 the area was relatively calm and therefore a good target for the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tillabéry</td>
<td>Banibangou and Tondikiwindi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Areas situated along the border with Mali penetrated by VEOs originating from Mali. These VEOs’ influence in Tillabéry has increased in the last two years. The security situation has become tenser and attacks are frequent. For the safety of staff, partners and community members, daily security reviews and adjustments to targeted villages will take place, as needed. As the situation is rapidly changing, we need to evaluate the situation and had to make adjustments to the study based on October 2017 attack of Nigerien and American forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Oudalan</td>
<td>Gorom-Gorom</td>
<td>An area in the triangular region between Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, which is also experiencing complex security issues that need to be recorded and analyzed. Last year the region saw the emergence of the local extremist group Ansarul Islam in the Soum Province, which neighbors Oudalan province. ISGS came to the forefront in late 2016 by attacking security posts in Markoye and Intagom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VRAI PROJECT

Process

Rapid Start Up
- Security evaluation/DNH
- Vulnerability Index
- Village selection tool
- Training of surveyors

Validation
- Interviews
- Household surveys
- Observation

Data analysis
- Stakeholder discussion
- Adjustment of tools
- Repetition test

Stakeholder discussion
- Adjustment of tools
- Repetition test

Reproduction & Scaling
- Extension to other areas
- Lessons learned
- Training local actors

Phase 1: Diffa, Niger (tools refined, adjusted and streamlined)
Phase 2: Gorom-Gorom, Burkina Faso
Phase 3: Tillabery, Niger
VRAI Project Methodology

The VRAI toolkit: 6 participatory community assessments that seek to measure community vulnerability – and resilience – to recruitment by VEO.

Primary Tool: the Village Selection Tool (VST), includes 23 criteria:

- Set of vulnerability and resilience criteria, which a committee of community stakeholders use to rank villages in a particular region by their perceived vulnerability.
- Following this ranking exercise, 10 villages are selected for further data collection with five villages from the perceived “more vulnerable” group and five from the “less vulnerable” group; next step: implement the 6 participatory assessment tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tillabery (revised after security incident)</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Vulnerability Score (higher scores equals greater vulnerability)</th>
<th>Diffa</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Vulnerability Score (higher scores equals greater vulnerability)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tondikiwiindi (Oullam)</td>
<td>Fanaka Koiria</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Koursari</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koma Bangou</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ligaridi</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korombarra</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bagara</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cewane</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diffa Koura</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boutouri</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grémadi</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milyado Koiria Zeno</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abdouri</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kodey Koiria</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yabal</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banibangou Haoussa (quartier de Banibangou)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boudoum</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wiyé (quartier de Banibangou)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abouniga Souleyri</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banibangou Zarma (quartier de Banibangou)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tam</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diffa Key Findings

- Participants perceived socio-economic factors as the most significant category of vulnerability in Diffa.

- The individual vulnerability factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: difficulty in marrying or attaining a position of respect within communities (85%); this was followed by degradation of traditional educational values (83%);

- Interestingly, no governance-related factor received more than a 38% response rate.

- The resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was having a religious conviction that opposes ISIS/WA (94%).

- This factor was followed by having a culture of non-violence (68%), which also would provide a bulwark against recruitment messages provided individuals in communities have a general understanding of the violent tactics of ISIS/WA.
“One day, two friends from the village asked me to drop them off by the banks of the Komadougou. I told them I did not have any gas, so they paid for the gas. When I wanted to go back to the village, they ordered me to stay with them and told me they had kidnapped me on behalf of Boko Haram. I started talking to them and promised to leave my motorbike, but they told me I had to stay and join the movement. When I tried to resist, one of the young men drew a gun on me and ordered me to take my bike and follow them. We got on the road for their base in Nigeria. I could see that it was very organized, with a health center here, a garage over there, preaching areas, food supplies... basically it felt like a real guerrilla camp...”
Tillabery Key Findings

Unlike in Diffa and Gorom-Gorom, only one individual vulnerability factor stood out significantly in Tillabéry: easy access to financial and personal gain (90%).

The resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was inter- and intra-community dialogue (51%).

The majority of participants expressed general agreement that religious factors are not key factors for people joining VE (95%). Also, 99% of respondents expressed their discontent and disagreement with religious preaching for hate and violence, similar to results in Oudalan Province of Burkina Faso.

Local communities are confident in the ability of the security forces and authorities to face the challenge of VEOs (97.5%). However, communities are concerned about the inability of security forces to effectively resolve tensions between communities.
VRAI PROJECT

Tillabery, Niger: Local Authorities

What are strategies and measures community members use to cope with the violence, to survive?

Advice/counsel to youth

Adopt resilience measures

Bring people together to discuss issues and develop decisions together…

Inter-community solidarity

Praying to God and for solidarity – keep communicating

Sensitize the community

Sensitize community with relevant information, community union, denounce suspicious people…

Patriotism – we can not help others who don’t want to help [their country]; good understanding [of the situation] and good education.
Respondents indicated grievances, negative sentiments toward the central government that could be exploited.

Respondents who cited either a lack of government services or ineffective services tended to come from villages that were perceived as vulnerable on the VST.

The individual vulnerability factor that the majority of respondents noted was “easy access to financial and personal gain,” which was identified by 63% of surveyed households. Local Authority responses were similar/in-line with respondents.

The resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was having a “culture of non-violence,” which was identified by 70% of surveyed households.
Grievances toward Government could be exploited:

“There are infrastructure problems in more populated areas and the issue gets worse when the only water fountain is broken. It is difficult to get it repaired in a short period of time so more installations are needed [but not available] to increase accessibility to water...”

“It must be emphasized that these terrorists take advantage that the Sahel is a marginalized area in the management of the government and the population feels the need to ‘revolt’, so they [VE] use this point in their sermons to push people to adhere to their struggle”
VRAI Project Sites
Sahel Region, Burkina Faso
Tillabery Region, Niger
Diffa Region, Niger
January 2018

Légende
○ peu vulnérable
● moyennement vulnérable
● très vulnérable
● extrêmement vulnérable
VRAI Project
Sahel, Burkina Faso and Tillabery, Niger
January 2018

Légende
○ peu vulnérable
○ moyenement vulnérable
● très vulnérable
● extrêmement vulnérable
→ Attaques en 2017
Reflections on the Tools

» Reluctance on the part of respondents to share information about the sensitive topic of VEO recruitment

» Include a question on which VEOs are operating in the respondent’s area.

» Detailed feedback on removing/revising questions in HH survey, Focus Groups

» The survey and focus group discussion tools asked respondents to share perceptions of drivers of VEO participation in general in their communities

» Because the purpose of VRAI is to develop tools that are replicable and scalable, identifying and seeking current or former members of armed groups was not feasible; third-party perspectives carry specific limitations

» Security situation in Diffa and Tillabery; availability of skilled interviewers

» Data collection for Gorom-Gorom and Tillabéry took place using digital tablets, versus data collection in Diffa via paper
Recommendations – Programs and Tools

- Provide alternative options for youth to earn money, enter into adulthood, and advance in society; strengthen quality of formal and informal education.

- Expand on existing dialogue efforts between communities that appear to be making an important positive impact on community resilience to VE.

- Strengthen relationships and social cohesion across ethnic groups.

- Strengthen the existing culture of non-violence through community-based activities and campaigns that reinforce peaceful behavior.

- Focus on governance-related interventions that are most salient to vulnerability to VE – access to services is not enough; participatory decision-making, feedback; increase quality and administration of justice.
Responding to Challenges

› Constantly re-assess security; security monitoring through data collection; local guidance on security; adaptive, remote management

› Engage local expertise and knowledge: participatory process – the process is as important as the results; document the process effectively with all levels of stakeholders, including observations

› Refine tools and re-assess criteria at each stage/each new location

› Engage global and regional technical experts to support analysis and presentation of results, in the context of other research in the country or region
  
  • Leadership of local teams in partnership with global and regional experts
Tillabery Region - Discussion

- Current security situation: VEO, Inter-ethnic Conflict, banditry…
  - The security situation in the northern parts of the Tillaberi region is extremely volatile, unpredictable and difficult to manage because of the nature of the conflict - non-State, VEO, armed groups; kidnappings;
  - The tactical retreat of non-state armed groups to Niger whenever military operations are launched against them in Mali by Barkhane and the Malian army;
  - A renewed inter-community/ethnic violence between Peulhs, Tuaregs and Arabs; a revival of banditry, including the theft of cattle and the looting of property.

- The implementation of the state of emergency measures in five departments of Tillaberi (Ouallam, Ayorou, Bankilaré, Abala and Banibangou) including, among others, curfew, banning of motos/transport, the closure of weekly markets and the dysfunction of schools and health centers, has greatly contributed to exacerbate the humanitarian situation in this area.
  - ~10,000 people current internally displaced; over 57,000 Malian refugees (3 camps)
  - Potential for 40,000 - 80,000 people displaced if security situation continues to decline (OCHA, protection cluster, GON)
NB: LES COORDONNEES GPS DE CERTAINES LOCALITES NE SONT PAS GARANTIES SANS ERREUR
Thank you!

Working together
Building potential
Empowering communities
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