

NIGER

RAPID ASSESSTMENT

Assistance project for pastoral and agro-pastoral households confronted with the cumulative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lean period and insecurity



IFAD'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY (RPSF)

FACILITY'S PILLARS



Assistance project for pastoral and agro-pastoral households confronted with the cumulative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lean period and insecurity (Niger) ¹

Launched in April 2020, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) is IFAD's multi-donor response to COVID-19. With the overall objective of providing agile support to poor rural producers affected by key immediate challenges posed due to COVID-19, it seeks to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the context of the crisis by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. The West and Central Africa regional assistance project for pastoral and agro-pastoral households confronted with the cumulative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lean period and insecurity (PAS2P) is part of the 20% of the projects chosen to undergo a rapid assessment to report against Tier 1 'development result' indicators in the RPSF Results Measurement Framework.

Project activities

The WCA regional project covered Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, with a total budget of US\$ 2.44 million. It was implemented by the Billital Maroobé Network (RBM), a non-profit transnational pastoral organization established in West and Central Africa. RPSF 1 provided support to households directly, while RPSF 2 benefitted focal points and stakeholders of FOs trained or involved in policy dialogue activities.

The overall objective of the project is to sustainably strengthen the livelihoods and resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral households facing the negative effects of the pastoral lean season, recurrent insecurity and the coronavirus pandemic.

The project focused on two components. For component one, the project worked in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which were the three countries hardest hit by the cumulative crises, and targeted cross-border areas and areas hosting internally displaced persons. Here, the project predominantly provided tailored support packages supported 9,200 households. The project distributed livestock (cattle, sheeps, goats), 2,400 tonnes of animal feed between contributions from IFAD and RBM, and seeds (vegetable, millet, fodders). It also organized a vaccination campaign.

For component two, the project reached 170,500 people through a variety of activities. It focused on data collection to feed into the RBM digital platform, which provides monitoring for the impacts of COVID-19 on the group, and offered trainings and technical support for digital monitoring. It also used digital means such as SMS (with technical support from ORANGE) and radio for transhumant herders awareness on areas such as regulatory measures and their movements. It also organized a pastoral hackathon to support innovation to support relevant challenges, selecting 5 projects.

To implement, RBM put in place memorandums of understanding with nine national pastoral organizations: CRUS-Burkina Faso, RECOPA-Burkina Faso, TASSAGHT-Mali, AREN-Niger, GNAF-Mauritania, BILMPAN-Nigeria, ADENA-Senegal, COPAFIB-Chad and PAEP-Togo. The latter ensured the implementation of project activities in its various

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areas of intervention. Project activities were implemented in the eight, covering 35 regions, 84 municipalities and more than 345 localities.

The project directly supported almost 180,000 people, nearly half women and a majority of 60 per cent young.

Rapid assessment methodology

Self-reported information on Tier 1 'development results' indicators was collected from a representative sample of 400 beneficiary households in Niger supported by RPSF 1, of which 14.7 percent are headed by women and 11.7 percent are headed by youth (aged less than 35 years). Details of each indicator were asked with the aim of capturing the potential contribution effect from i) COVID-19 and ii) the RPSF project. Interviews were conducted between the last week of July 2022 and mid- August 2022 using a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) survey.

Key results ²

Contribution effect of COVID-19

- Around half of households experienced a sharp decline on production, total income, food security (number of meals consumed) and resilience, with an even larger share of households reporting being affected on sales. Further, most households (9 out of 10) sold assets prior to the start of project activities.
- There is large heterogeneity by sex and age of the household head. Women headed beneficiary households were less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to households headed by men, in terms of market sales and resilience, but more affected on total income. In addition, youth headed beneficiary households, compared to households headed by adults, were more affected on the number of meals consumed and resilience.

Contribution effect of RPSF

- More than 7 out of 10 households were able to maintain or improve on indicators of interest, with the exception of number of assets owned.
- Changes after project activities also show a significant level of heterogeneity by sex and age of the household head. Those headed by a women experienced mixed results, reporting less often to maintain or improve market sales, but more often benefits on the number of meals consumed. Moreover, the income of youth headed households did not improve as much as that of adult headed households.

Lessons learned

² The rapid assessment does not consider a control group; thus, results are only indicative of potential contribution effects.

- Households were able to sell assets as one coping mechanism to the negative shock experienced. Yet, project activities were not enough to support the accumulation of assets, ultimately leaving households vulnerable to other shocks. Future program design should consider i) how to support improvements in some of these longer-term outcomes, such as assets and resilience to other shocks; and ii) how to effectively address barriers faced by households headed by women, which hinders their participation in markets.

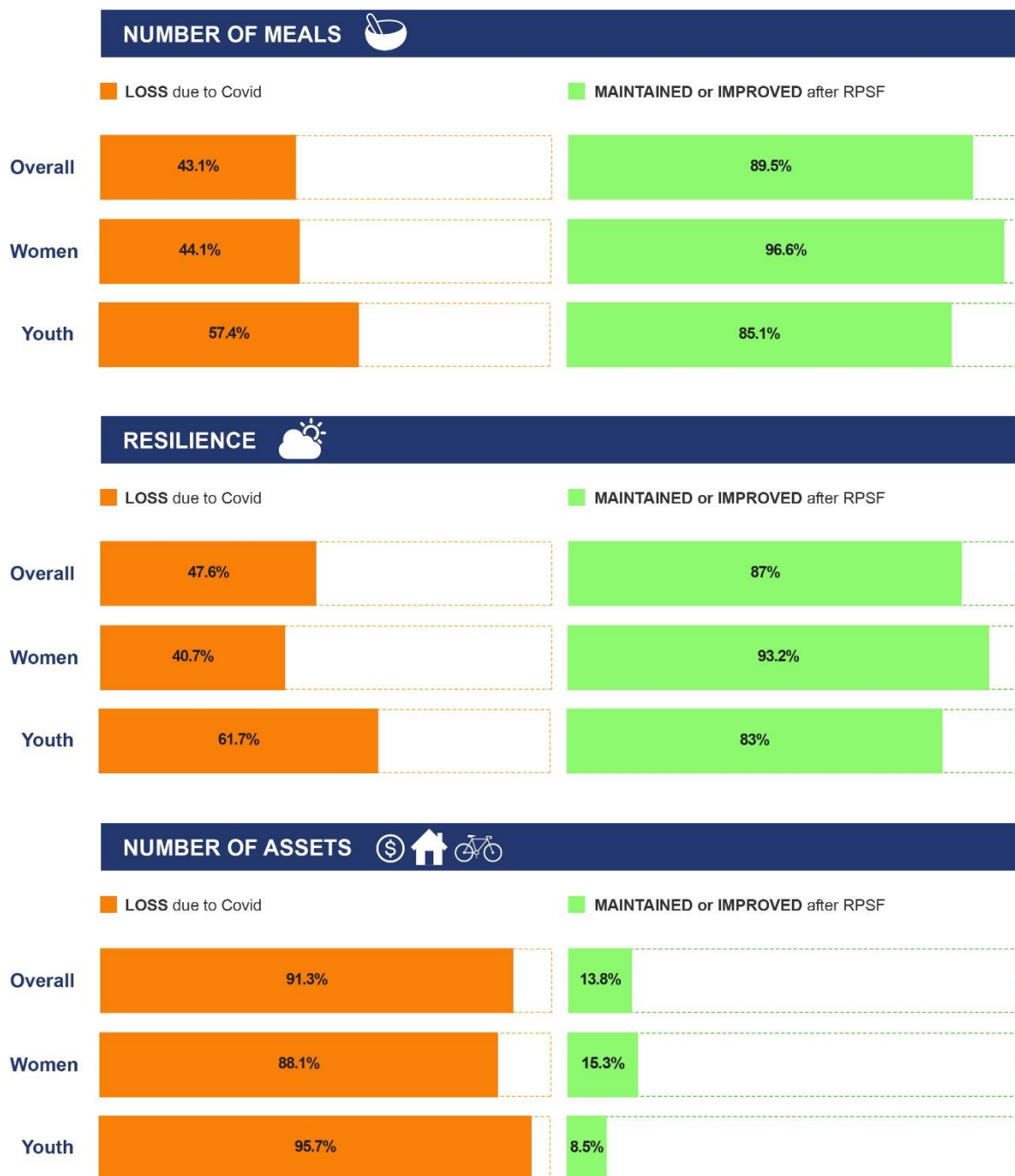
Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



NOTE: RPSF activities were rolled out starting in April 2021.

Two separate questions were asked for each indicator. The first question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between June 2020 and June 2021: i) a total loss; ii) reduced; iii) stayed the same; or iv) increased. The **orange bar** shows the percentage of households that responded i) or ii) to this question, that is, those which experienced a total loss or reduction in the indicator. The second question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator since June 2021: i) reduced further; ii) stayed the same; iii) increased but still below the level before COVID-19; iv) returned to level before COVID-19; or v) increased above the level before COVID-19. The **green bar** shows the percentage of households that responded ii), iii) iv) or v) to this question, that is, those which maintained or improved each indicator since the start of RPSF.

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