



## Lessons Learned

### Habbanayé: Livestock Asset Building and Protecting Lives in Niger

#### Project Overview

USAID Hamzari is an activity funded by the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** and executed by **CARE Niger** in collaboration with four Non-Governmental Organizations. Hamzari operates in the rural communes of Chadakori, Guidan Roundji and Guidan Sori with the aim of increasing **sustainable, equitable and resilient food and nutrition security** for vulnerable groups in the Maradi region, Niger.

Hamzari aims to implement a targeted yet flexible combination of interventions and activities to achieve its goal of sustainable, equitable, and resilient food and nutrition security for vulnerable groups, with a special focus on **women, youth, and young children** in the most vulnerable communities.

#### USAID HAMZARI

**Where:** Maradi, Niger

**When:** 2018-2025

**Donors:** USAID Food for Peace

**Partners:** WaterAid, ANBEF, DEMI-E, FORSANI, KARKARA

**Reach:** **96,000** direct participants in **32,000** households spread across **325** villages in Chadakori, Guidan Roundji, and Guidan Sori, with **17,305** pregnant women and **23,961** breastfeeding women receiving food and nutritional counseling.

## Socio-Historic Context and the Habbanayé Activity

In the recent food and nutrition situation report of the [Food Crisis Prevention Network](#), the Maradi region is the second most populated region in Niger with over 5.3 million people. The recurrent shocks due to poverty and climate change make the living conditions of vulnerable communities extremely difficult. Furthermore, growing insecurity in the region caused a sharp escalation in humanitarian needs, putting more individuals and households at risk of food insecurity and acute malnutrition. According to the same report, about 510,000 people (10% of the whole population) of Maradi region are facing food insecurity phases 3 and 4 from June to August 2023.

Hamzari deploys sustainable approaches that ensure **community ownership** and use **self-reinforcing** and **self-transferring** mechanisms. One of the flagship activities promoted by USAID Hamzari is the 'habbanayé' activity, a traditional solidarity system. USAID Hamzari enhanced and innovated this practice to maximize its impact. The practice itself consists of lending a goat or other small ruminant to a community member in need. Once the animal gives birth, it is returned to its owner and the offspring are raised by the recipient. The rebuilt herd represents a source of food (milk, meat) and serves as a source of income to meet family needs. The cycle continues as the offspring multiply, spreading the livestock wealth throughout the community.

With this activity, USAID Hamzari addresses the root causes of chronic vulnerability through a livestock, income generation, and nutrition approach. The habbanayé helps communities better prepare for and recover from droughts and other economic stressors.

### Habbanayé

The traditional approach in which wealthier households loan a few female ruminants (such as cows, sheep, or goats) to a poorer friend or family member who keeps the offspring of the borrowed animals to build their own stock for the purposes of sustaining their families through difficulties like drought and conflict.

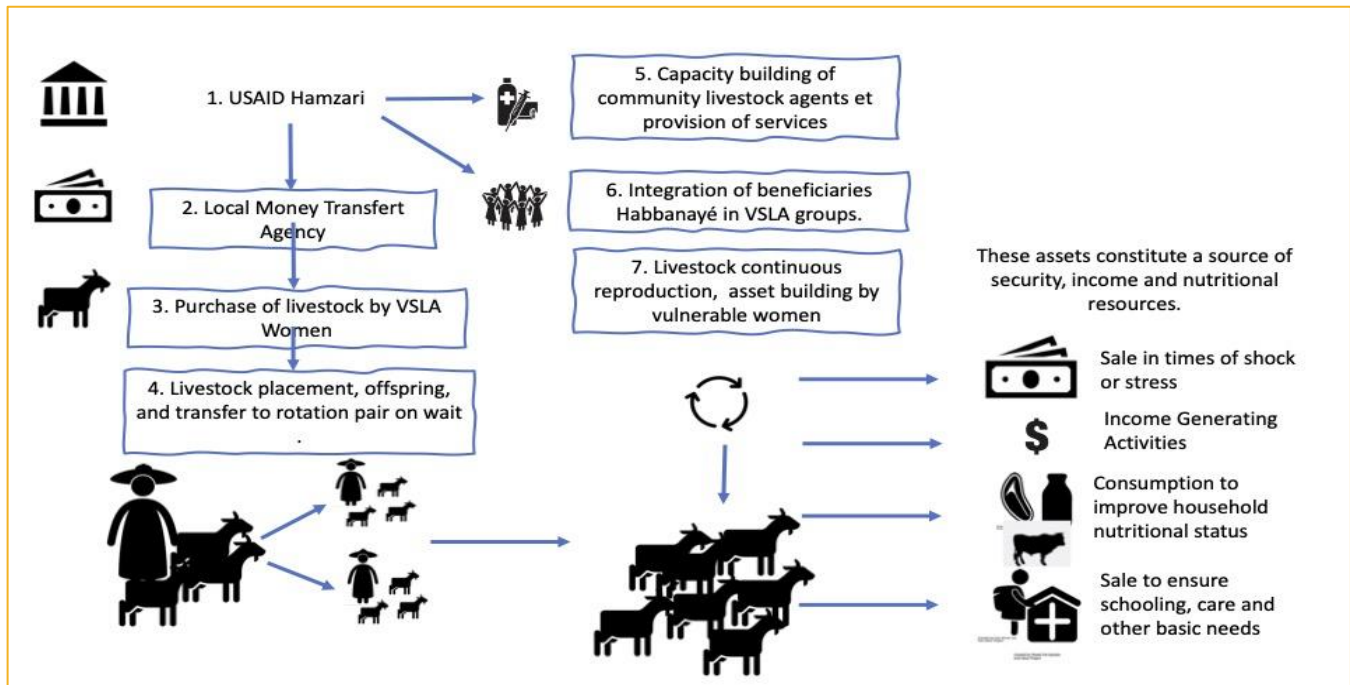
## Implementation Mechanism

USAID Hamzari targets women from the most vulnerable and marginalized households, based on vulnerability criteria established in a village General Assembly. After the targeting, beneficiaries are divided into two groups of peers, CARE selects a local money transfer agency to give the funds to the women, who in turn purchase the animals in local markets. Each woman in the first group receives a kit consisting of two goats and one buck, which she raises until she gets offspring. Once the offspring are weaned, she transfers the two goats and the buck to her peer in the second group, who waits for her turn to keep and raise the animals. Before the transfer, when the buck is fattened enough or get aged, the woman keeping and raising the buck can seek approval from the management committee to sell buck and buy a new one for the rotation pair. And she keeps the profit generated from the sale for her financial autonomy.

The innovation brought by USAID Hamzari consists in the integration of habbanayé to the **Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA)/Mata Masu Dubara (MMD)** concept for better sustainability. This approach allows women beneficiaries to integrate savings and credit groups to engage in **income-generating activities** to ensure the food security of their households in case of shocks such as bad agricultural seasons.

In each beneficiary village, USAID Hamzari promotes the habbanayé activity to structure the beneficiaries into VSLA/MMD groups. They have internal regulations for the joint management of the animals. A habbanayé Management Committee within each group ensures that the internal rules are respected, in particular the payment of monthly contributions (100 CFA francs per woman), the care of the animals thanks to the link that has been established with community livestock agents trained by the project, and the replacement of the animals in case of mortality.

## USAID Hamzari Habbamayé Implemtation Model



## Main Lessons Learned from Implementation

- The participatory and inclusive targeting of beneficiaries, considering the zone's vulnerability criteria proposed by women at community meetings, allowed for better identification of the most vulnerable and marginalized women in the village.
- The spacing (two weeks) between the transfers of funds to women helps to avoid inflation of animal prices on local markets.
- The sustainability of habbanayé for the benefit of the most vulnerable depends on the respect of the rotations between women; therefore, the establishment of Habbamayé Management Committee is imperative to ensure the respect of these principles during and beyond project implementation.
- Group solidarity through members' contributions allows systematic replacement/renewal of animals that die, as well as payment of veterinary care when needed.



*“My name is Ani Ibrahim. I am 38 years old and I live in the village of Dan Ganga Tsohoua, in the commune of Guidan Roumdji. I am married and mother of six children. I live alone with my children since my husband left us without means of survival. It is in this context of poverty that Hamzari helped women of vulnerable households through the raising of goats to reconstitute their livestock assets. I was selected by the women of the village with another peer and the project gave us funds to buy two goats and one buck. I take good care of these animals and my dream is that they can give offspring that will belong to me. With the offspring from this investment, I will one day rebuild my herd. The buck that I will sell soon to place another one with my peer, will allow me to earn income and*

### Main Accomplishments (October 2020 - July 2023)

- Identification of **157** villages with livestock technical services and local municipalities.
- Targeting and rotation pairing of **2,280** highly vulnerable and marginalized women.
- Placement of **2280** animal kits (**6,840**, goats) through direct purchase by beneficiary VSLA group members themselves on local markets.
- Creation of **111** Women VSLA groups (MMD type) based on /thanks to the habbanayé activity.
- Establishment of **138** management committees and training of members on management tools (cash register, rotation or transfer to binomials, herd evolution monitoring form).



*“Before the implementation of Hamzari, we were extremely vulnerable. With the 60,000 CFA francs (approximately \$90) that my partner and I received, we bought two goats and one buck. Some of these goats have already given offspring, and this helps us a lot - just before the feast of Ramadan, I sold some of the offspring that to buy food and clothes for my children. Thanks to the support through the habbanayé, we participate actively in the social life of the community. We thank Hamzari very much because we are no longer marginalized as we used to be in the past.”*

**-- Yaha Sadi**

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Recommendations

- Comply with the State's recent commitment to implementing the Habbanayé strategy, namely the granting of a goat kit consisting of three females and one male, to help vulnerable households rebuild their herds.
- Establish a Habbanayé beneficiary support fund to help maintain the kits (animals), to replace/renew animals lost to mortality, and to provide veterinary care in the event of disease.
- Undertake fodder production or actions to restore degraded grazing areas to facilitate animal feeding, especially in the context of climate change marked by fodder shortages.
- Undertake forage production or actions to restore degraded sites to facilitate animal feeding.

### Conclusion:

Goat breeding is the most popular activity among rural women. Through the distribution of kits (animals), Habbanayé is helping to strengthen the resilience of beneficiary communities. The goats multiply rapidly without much expense, giving beneficiaries faster access to a source of income that can be mobilized to offset food deficits, cover household needs during the lean season, and enable women to meet social expenses (children's weddings, baptisms and weddings of relatives, health, etc.).

For more information on learnings from this and other -Hamzari Activities, contact: [Alisone.Bonafos@care.org](mailto:Alisone.Bonafos@care.org)