

Justice and Stability in the Sahel (JASS)

General context of the JASS program

The JASS program, implemented by Mercy Corps and its partners in Mali and Niger, aims to strengthen security and stability in the Sahel by improving equitable access to natural resources and justice. Funded by the FCDO with £19 million, it addresses a complex crisis in Mali, marked by escalating violence and a perception of inequality in access to resources. From September 2021 to March 2026, JASS is collaborating with AMEDD in Mali and Cercle Dev in Niger to promote equitable outcomes in land and natural resource governance.

Results-based implementation approach

By integrating gender, social inclusion, climate adaptation and resilience strategies across all sectors, JASS is structured around three complementary outcomes:

RESULT 1 — Improved capacity for conflict management and collaboration between communities, and between communities and institutions, in order to mitigate and resolve conflicts related to land and other natural resources.

RESULT 2 — Strengthening resilience to climate shocks and stressors to reduce the frequency and impact of resource and land conflicts in the Sahel.

RESULT 3 — Improved evidence base and advocacy for effective coordinated design, implementation and action among key actors.

Major achievements

Conflict management and land governance

- 351 village and communal land commissions (COFOs) revitalized or created, trained, and equipped, with an 81% land conflict resolution rate.
- Local financing mechanisms established by the communities to sustain COFO operations.

- Strengthened trust between communities and state services, including courts, administrative authorities, extension services, leading to increased community engagement with these institutions — including the first official court approvals of COFO minutes.
- More than 310 village conventions were developed with 2,942 participants, 30% of whom were women.
- Over 351 village natural resource management agreements covering more than 7,000 km² were developed, involving 2,942 participants, 30% women.

Research, coalition

- Seventeen (17) studies carried out, including a Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion Study and an Assessment of Resilience to Conflict and Climate Change, and an Analysis of the Political Economy of land and other natural resources.
- Support, with NRC, for the development of the Guide for women and young people's access to the 15% of land developed by the State and local authorities.
- In Mali, support for the development of the COFO Approval Guide for Minutes
- Development, in partnership with the INFJ and UNDP, of initial and continuing training modules for magistrates on land law.

Resilience and adaptation to climate change:

- Rehabilitation of 53 water points benefiting 22,400 people;
- Training of 6,980 agro-pastoralists and provision of resilient inputs;
- Production of 143 tonnes of climate-resilient seeds and 310 tonnes of fodder;
- Average increase in agricultural production of 67%;
- Recovery of more than 460 hectares of land (agricultural land and grazing areas);
- Manufacture of 3,169 improved stoves, reducing household firewood requirements by three-quarters.



- Establishment and training of 4 SCAP/RUs and development of 4 contingency plans in Niger.
- Distribution of NFI and dignity kits to 429 households affected by the floods (129 in Mali and 300 in Niger).



Market Systems Development and Economic Resilience

- Establishment of four community livestock feed banks. Expansion of operations by supported feed sellers, with a significant increase in storage capacity and creation of local jobs in Niger.
- Improved price transparency through market information systems, training of observers in Mali and integration with an institutional system in Niger.
- Training of 920 members of agricultural cooperatives (87% women) in value chain and market concepts, with access to microfinance institutions.
- Financial support for 50 cooperatives and agri-food businesses with 3,771 members, 92% of whom are women.
- Financial support, technical training and networking for 40 young entrepreneurs, with an increase in income of up to 160%.

Gender and social inclusion

- Increase in women's participation in COFOs from 16% to 33% in Niger and from 11% to 30% in Mali.
- Leadership and mentoring programme benefiting 620 women and young people, resulting in women obtaining 99 hectares of land and 15% (Niger) - 20% (Mali) more women gaining access to decision-making positions in natural resource governance and decision-making mechanisms at community level.
- Participation of religious leaders from 24 municipalities and at the national level to promote social inclusion and strengthen resilience to climate change - contributing, for example, to a positive transformation of social gender norms on women's access to inheritance.
- Reduction in domestic violence thanks to the influence of 'model husbands', with a notable decrease in cases of domestic violence of more than 60% in Mali and Niger.



Advocacy Topics

- Advocacy for COFO funding
- Advocacy for improving the level of representation of women to at least 30% within COFOs in light of Law 2015-052 of 18 December 2015 establishing measures to promote gender equality in access to appointed and elected positions
- Ongoing advocacy with other partners for the training of women and young members of COFOs in order to strengthen their capacity to positively influence decisions within these structures.
- Advocacy for improving access to agricultural land for women and young people through a joint MPFEF/MA circular on the effective application of Law No. 2017-001 of 11 April 2017, Article 13 of which stipulates that 'at least 15% of land developments by the State or local authorities shall be allocated to women's and youth groups and associations located in the area concerned'.
- Advocacy for free court approval of conciliation reports drawn up by COFOs.

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