Volume I
Users' Guide: CRS Capacity Indices and Tracking Systems

Core Organizational Development Tools
Title II -Programming Capacity Index (T2-PCI)
Local Community Capacity Index (LCCI)

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Executive Summary:
Volume I and II
CRS Capacity Indices and Tracking Systems

This report describes three capacity building indices or assessment tools that CRS is proposing to pilot test in its Title II projects. The ultimate goal of the indices is to assist CRS staff and national NGO partners:

- Identify what broad categories of skills they need to master in order to better support community capacity building through their Title II projects,
- Monitor progress toward mastery of these skills as part of the collaborative "action plans" that CRS encourages its country programs to develop with local NGO partners, and
- Provide a more systematic agency-wide mechanism for assessing community and local partner capacity building as both an input and output of Title II programming.

The indices are designed to assess capacity and agency support for capacity building at two levels. At the program level:

- The **Core Organizational Development Tools** assesses the core organizational development capacity that local NGO partners need to participate as full partners in food security programs, and
- The **T2-PCI (Title II Program Capacity Index)** assesses the more specific technical skills that managers and technical supervisors at both CRS country programs and local NGO partners need to execute Title II programs.

At the community level:

- **The LCCI (Local Community Capacity Index)** assesses the core organizational capacity and the technical capacity that local communities need to create and manage food security initiatives, as well as local NGO partner and CRS program support to for building these types of capacity in these communities.

The report is divided into two volumes.

Volume I: Users' Guide: CRS Capacity Indices and Tracking Systems

This volume outlines:

- The background logic that went into the choice of a particular template for the indices, as well as the recommended template (format) for the index indicators and indicator rankings (chapter one);
- The proposed framework for finalizing incorporation of the local NGO partner and community self-assessment tools being proposed (chapter two); and
- The actual guidance and data entry forms for the core organizational development tools, the T2-PCI, and the LCCI.   Each set of guidance includes a separate Excel-based data entry form that computes the "scores" automatically.

Volume II: Background: CRS Capacity Indices and Tracking Systems

This second volume describes the process that led to the development of the indicators, their formal structures and recommended systems for reporting.

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[1] A "model" list of indicators based on the FAM/LCB working group inventory is included for the major technical categories that are supported under Title II. Title II projects may choose from this list or create their own (Ferrris-Morris 2002 a, 2002 b, 2002 c, 2002 d).

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List of Acronyms

ACDI-VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International—Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Service
ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Association
ARC	American Red Cross
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission of Malawi
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CODI	Core Organizational Development Index
CNTP	Counterpart International
CP	Country Program
CR	Country Representative
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CS	Cooperating Sponsor
CSR4 (or CSR2)	Cooperating Sponsor Results Report and Resource Request
DAP	Development Assistance Programme
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DMER	Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
DRD-PQ	Deputy Regional Director for Program Quality
FAM	Food Aid Management (Consortium of Title II Cooperating Sponsors)
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (of USAID/FFP)
FFP	Food for Peace (Unit of USAID that administers Title II)
FFW	Food for Work
FHI	Food for the Hungry International
FSCCI	Food Security Community Capacity Index
FSIN	Food Security Initiative in Niger
FY	Fiscal Year
ha	Hectare
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immune-deficiency virus
HKI	Helen Keller International
ICB	Institutional Capacity Building
IDF	Institutional Development Framework
IEE	Initial Environmental Examinations
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IHD	Integral Human Development
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
IR	Intermediate Result
ISA	Institutional Support Assistance grant (from Title II)
ISG	Institutional Support Grant
km	Kilometer
kg	Kilogram
LCB	Local Capacity Building
LCCI	Local Community Capacity Index
LOA	Life of Award (Life of Activity)

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAGI	Microfinance Alliance for Global Impact
MIS	Management Information System
MOU	Memoranda of understanding
MQ	Management Quality
MQAT	Management Quality Assessment Tool
MSI	Management Systems International
MYAP	Multi Year Assistance Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PCU	Program Coordination Unit (of a Title II project)
POET	Participatory Organizational Evaluation Tool
PQ	Program Quality
PQSD	Program Quality Support Department
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SARO	Southern Africa Regional Office (CRS)
SAVE	Save the Children International
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
SPP	Strategic Program Plan
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
TA	Technical assistance
T2-PCI	Title II Programming Capacity Index
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIS	Village Information Systems

Chapter One
Introduction

1.0. Background

All United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Food for Peace (FFP) Title II projects emphasize the need for community level capacity building to sustain development intervention overtime. One unique feature of the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) Title II project organization and management structure has been its historic commitment to working through local non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to achieve this type of local capacity building. Therefore, for CRS, building local NGO partner capacity for food security programming cannot be separated from building local community capacity to manage food security projects. This is a tradition that extends from CRS's institutional commitment to the concept of partnership. As early as 1943, the CRS principles for war relief and aid programs urged cooperation with "indigenous Catholic charities" and, when necessary, CRS was to strengthen these charities so that humanitarian programs could continue after War Relief Services programming came to an end (Mierke 1998: 6). In CRS's philosophy, the concept of capacity building is (Mierke 1998: 14):[2]

> An extension of this essential vision of partnership with local organizations and communities. Local capacity development goes beyond a specific activity; it is based rather on a shared vision of and commitment to ongoing joint action. Local capacity development includes a commitment to healthy partnership, to the organizational development of partners, and to the development of the broader society in which the relationship unfolds.

Deputy Regional Director for Program Quality (DRD-PQ) working with CRS/Malawi Senior M&E Advisor Stephen Nkoka, CRS Safety Net Project Officer, Fidelis Mgowa, and Vennie Kapalamula, Diocesan CADECOM Secretary in the Chikwawa CADECOM office

CRS recognizes that existing local partner capacity will affect the partner's ability to manage Title II programming (as an input). To date, however, the agency has never developed a systematic methodology for assessing local partners' capacity building needs, even though this is the specific focus of CRS's Partnership Principles 8-10 (Box 1.1). Simultaneously, CRS's notion of capacity building through ensuring that local NGO partners have the training needed to sustainably manage the humanitarian programs CRS initiates can be seen as an output to Title II programming. Yet the agency has not developed an internal system for

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[2] Mierke (1998) includes a detailed review of CRS's internal policy documents about local capacity building and partnership during the first 55 years of its existence as well as the "CRS Principles of Partnership" and "Standards and guidelines for Local Capacity Building" which resulted from a November 1997 Program Quality Summit. The document also includes an excellent review of the external literature on local organizational development, assessment, and PVO/NGO relations that informed CRS's development of this strategy.

Box 1.1 CRS Principles of Partnership

1. CRS bases partnerships on a shared vision for addressing people's immediate needs and underlying causes of suffering and injustice.
2. All of CRS's partnerships assign responsibility for decision-making and implementation to a level as close as possible to the people whom decisions will affect.
3. CRS achieves complementarity and mutuality in its partnerships, recognizing and valuing that each brings a set of skills, resources, knowledge, and capacities to the partnership in a spirit of mutual autonomy.
4. CRS fosters equitable partnerships by engaging in a process of mutually defining rights and responsibilities, in relation to each partner's capacity, required to achieve the goal of the partnership.
5. In its relationships with partners, CRS promotes openness and sharing of perspectives and approaches.
6. To foster healthy partnerships, CRS promotes mutual transparency regarding capacities, constraints, and resources.
7. By building partnerships, CRS seeks to make a contribution to the strengthening of civil society.
8. The engagement of CRS and the local partner in local capacity development involves a long-term commitment to complete a mutually agreed upon process of organizational development.
9. CRS recognizes that all communities have capacities and coping mechanism that should be identified, understood and strengthened in order to be used as a primary resource for solving local problems.
10. CRS facilitates and promotes the strengthening of partners' abilities to identify their vulnerabilities and specific capacity building needs and to identify and expand their strengths through a process that leads to sustainability.

Source: CRS. 1998. Sara Mierke. 1999. Partnership and Local Capacity Building: Foundations for a CRS Strategy. Occasional Paper Series. Baltimore: CRS/PQSD. Pp.13-14.

assessing the managerial and program impact of the agency's activities in developing the local capacities being targeted by these initiatives.

More systematic monitoring of capacity and capacity building efforts can bolster the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of Title II programming by:

- Providing clear, objective benchmarks by which to measure CRS's progress in building capacity of local NGO partners and local communities;
- Mapping the inevitable rise and fall in local partners' capacity that accompanies the successful execution of a program

National CRS partner staff at start of one year extension to Title II-funded DAP, Malawi. Five of six staff are new and CRS reinvested in technical training to get the up to speed.

(e.g., when there is a sudden increase in turnover due to promotion of staff); and
- Developing a more a logical framework for documenting the impact of country-specific and regional training programs.

When there are quantitative measures of capacity for local NGO partners and local communities it is easier for CRS to identify examples of best practice and, therefore, to duplicate these practices elsewhere. This accelerates CRS's ability to provide effective training, which in turn allows for important resources to be spent helping people rather than navigating bureaucratic requirements.

2.0. Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study were to:
- Develop CRS guidelines for using capacity indices as a way for target communities, CRS's local NGO partners, and CRS country programs to self-assess their mastery of the skills and project-provided support needed to implement and manage Title II projects; and
- Develop a template for and illustrative examples of capacity indices and tools.

The study was funded by CRS's Title II Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) grant. The goal of the ICB is (CRS 2003): "to reduce food insecurity in vulnerable populations through three Strategic Objectives (SOs) and eight Intermediate Results (IRs)." Strategic Objective One (SO1) addresses vulnerability, cross-sectoral approaches to risk management, and the gap between emergency and development programs. SO2 focuses on HIV/AIDS and water insecurity because of the gravity and scale of these problems in relation to food security and the complex responses required to address these problems. SO3 centers on building community and private voluntary organization (PVO) capacities to understand and influence critical decisions and factors affecting food insecurity.

This particular study was expected to contribute to the two principal inputs that the ICB initiative envisioned feeding into achievement of cross-cutting Intermediate Result (IR)-A: "capacity of local partners and communities to manage and implement programs is increased." Although the initial focus of the exercise was on CRS's Title II-funded projects, it was expected that the resulting indices and indicators would have relevance for other Title II Cooperating Sponsors (CS) and CRS's non-Title II portfolio.

3.0. Methodology

To achieve these objectives the CRS PQSD (Program Quality Support Department) in Baltimore embarked on a participatory process, under the leadership of the senior technical advisor (STA) for capacity building, with assistance from an outside consultant. This exercise started by a review of:
- The extensive external literature on monitoring capacity building; and
- The alternative models for measuring local NGO partner and local community capacity that CRS has developed over the years as part of its commitment to partnership and local capacity building.

This literature review was supplemented by a series of individual and group interviews with CRS PQSD staff that have been identified as an internal CRS PQSD "capacity building team." Based on information gathered from these reviews and interviews, the capacity building team then developed and refined four tools for assessing program and community capacity.

4.0. Results: Program and Community Level Capacity Indices and Indicators

Based on the interviews with CRS PQSD staff, the consultant-working with Lucile Thomas, the senior technical advisor for capacity building, and Gaye Burpee, deputy director of the Program Quality and Support Department and one of the Title II specialists at CRS, proposed a set of four tools: two focused on core capacity at the program level (the core organizational development tools), one focused on Title II technical capacity at the program level (called the Title II Program Capacity Index), and one focused on both core and Title II technical capacity at the community level (called the Local Community Capacity Index) (Table 1.1).

4.1. Program Level Title II Capacity Indices[3]

- The **Core Organizational Development Tools** include the CRS Organizational Capacity Checklist and the Institutional Development Framework; these tools assess the basic organizational skills that local NGO partners need to participate as full partners in food security projects.

- The **T2-PCI (Title II Program Capacity Index)** assesses the more specific technical skills that managers and technical supervisors need to execute Title II projects. The T2-PCI is appropriate for use by CRS (or any Title II Cooperating Sponsor) and by local NGO partners.

4.2. Local Community Capacity Indices

- **The LCCI (Local Community Capacity Index)**
  o **The LCCI core capacity component** assesses the basic organizational skills that local communities need to identify food security problems and risks, to plan interventions that increase food security and minimize risk, and to negotiate the external resources that they need to support these interventions.
  o **The LCCI technical capacity component** assesses the more specific technical training (in the areas of agriculture, natural resource management [NRM], water security, health, nutrition, education, and microfinance) that local communities need to build in order to achieve the Strategic Objectives and Intermediate Results for a particular project.
  o **The LCCI (combined scores)** assesses the combined core and technical LCCI scores.

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[3] The NGO partner and CRS country program components of the LCCI measure local NGO partner and CRS program support for community capacity-building and, therefore, are also program level indices. However, since the index reviews their support for local community capacity, they are classified as community-level not program-level tools.

o **The LCCI local NGO partner and CRS country program components** assess local NGO partner and CRS program support to the community capacity building efforts.

5.0. Index Structures

5.1. Categories, Variables, and Indicators/Rankings

The two core organizational development tools (the IDF and the CRS Checklist) and the T2-PCI measure four to five capacity categories, the LCCI measures two. Each capacity category is broken into sub-categories called variables. Each variable is measured by ranking one to eight indicators. The indicators for the two core organizational development tools, the T2-PCI, and the LCCI Core capacity indices are "generic" and apply to all programs. Therefore, audiences are to use the list of indicators described in the code sheets included in guidance for each of these particular indices/components (chapters three-five). It is important to note that while the indicators are fixed, individual programs/projects/communities are free to establish the specific ranking criteria for each indicator. One of the first steps of administering either of the core organizational development tools or the LCCI core index is to adjust the rankings to the specific situation in a project.

In contrast to the indicators for the core organizational development tools and the core component of the LCCI, the indicators for the LCCI-technical variables and for local NGO partner and CRS country program support for community capacity building are project specific. The LCCI guidance includes a code sheet that Title II projects can use as a guide to developing these project-specific indicators (chapter five).

Each indicator for the program capacity indices (i.e., the core organizational development tools and the T2-PCI) is ranked 1-4. Each indicator for the LCCI core component and the technical component is ranked 1-5. A ranking of 1 implies non-functional or weak capacity. The ideal ranking is a four or five, which implies strong capacity that is:
* In the case of a local NGO partner or CRS country program, "informed and working to a higher standard" or
* In the case of a community, developed to the level needed to sustain a food security project once Title II project funding ends.

5.2. Scores: Data Entry and Analysis

Each index is scored so that the maximum value is 100 points. When the index's "raw scores" (i.e., the sum of all the indicator rankings) surpass 100, the scores are "adjusted" to reflect whatever percentage of 100 points that raw score would represent. Since the data entry files use Excel, the software automatically adds and adjusts the raw scores.

Table 1.1 Proposed CRS Capacity-Building Indices for Title II Projects

Indices	Capacities Measured	Audience*		
		Local NGO Partners	CRS Country Programs	Local Communities
Program-Level Tools				
Core Organizational Development Tools Tool 1: the **CRS Organizational Capacity Checklist** Tool 2: the **IDF** (Institutional Development Framework)	Core organizational capacity of local NGO partner organizations	X		
T2-PCI (Title II - Program Capacity Index) and Resource Guide	Title II-specific programming capacities that local NGO partners and CRS country programs need to successfully design, implement, monitor and evaluate Title II food security programs	X	X	
Community-Level Tools				
LCCI (Local Community Capacity Index)	The capacities that local organizations need in order to identify food security constraints and risks and to design and execute solutions to these constraints in collaboration with local NGO partners			
	LCCI-Core	X	X	X
	LCCI-Technical	X	X	X
	LCCI-Combined Score	X	X	X
	LCCI-CRS country program and NGO partner support for community capacity building	X	X	

*Audience refers to the organization or community group that conducts the self-assessment using these tools.

Table 1.2 Suggestions for Incorporating the Core Organizational Development Tools and the LCCI into the Official Format of Title II Indicator Performance Tracking Tables (IPTTs)

Indicator	Baseline	FY 05" Target	FY 05 Achieved	FY 05% Achieved vs. Target	FY 06" Target	FY 06 Achieved	FY 06 % Achieved vs. Target	FY 07" Target	FY 07 Achieved	FY 07 % Achieved vs. Target	FY 08" Target	FY 08 Achieved	FY 08% Achieved vs. Target	FY 09 Target	FY 09 Achieved	FY 09% Achieved vs. Target	LOA Target
Sample Title II program SO1: Enhancing and protecting livelihood capacities																	
Impact Indicator 1.1: Local community capacity to execute food security and risk management strategies (**LCCI**) (technical + core capacities) (100 pts max)	20pts							60pts						80pts			80pts
Impact Indicator 1.2: Local NGO partner capacity to backstop food security and risk management strategies (**LCCI-local NGO partner scores) (100 pts max)**	50pts							75pts						90pts			75pts*
Impact Indicator 1.1: Core organizational capacity of local NGO partners **(IDF)** (100 pts max)	35pts							65pts						75pts			75pts

Indicator	Baseline	FY 05" Target	FY 05 Achieved	FY 05% Achieved vs. Target	FY 06" Target	FY 06 Achieved	FY 06 % Achieved vs. Target	FY 07" Target	FY 07 Achieved	FY 07 % Achieved vs. Target	FY 08" Target	FY 08 Achieved	FY 08% Achieved vs. Target	FY 09 Target	FY 09 Achieved	FY 09% Achieved vs. Target	LOA Target
Sample Title II ICB SO3: Institutional capacities for influencing food practices and policy are bolstered**																	
Impact Indicator 3.1: Local NGO partner capacity for key design, management, M&E functions related to Title II and targeted by the ICB (**T2-PCI** partner score)	20pts							79 pts						75pts			75pts
Monitoring Indicator 3.1: CRS country program and CRS regional capacity to backstop Title II programs on key guidance, regulation, M&E and reporting issues (**T2-PCI**-CP and regional CRS score)	CPs new to TP 40pts CPs with long-standing TII programs 60pts CRS Regional Office: Region 60pts				all CPs 75pts Region al 90 pts			all CPs 75pts Regional 90pts			all CPs 75pts Regional 90pts			all CPs 75pts Regional 90pts			all CPs 75pts Region. 90pts

*LOA expectations for a project should be adjusted to account for the inevitable loss of staff that accompanies the end of a project.   Developing a reasonable LOA expectation from the start for core capacities that the local NGO partner might retain once special project funding ends can help reduce the stress of project phase-out.

**Although the hypothetical SO3 in this table is indeed the third SO of the ICB, the T2-PCI is not part of the official IPTT for this project. It is inserted here to illustrate how this type of indicator can be useful in tracking the basic capacities that a CRS Title II Project Coordination Unit needs to backstop a Title II program.

Acronyms: CP=country program; Part=local NGO partner. IDF=Institutional Development Framework; LCCI=Local Community Capacity Index. T2-PCI=Title II Programming Capacity Index; IPTT=Indicator Performance Tracking Table; SO=Strategic Objective; ICB=Title II funded Institutional Capacity Building grant; LOA=Life of Activity

6.0.   Reporting

The team recommends that each local NGO partner assess its core organizational capacity using one of the core organizational development tools on an annual basis. While capacity building has always been a part of CRS's management strategy, it has often been invisible to outside donors and evaluators. Since the CRS Partnership Principles (Box 1.1) clearly state that core capacity is a basic "input" into any project, CRS should consider having the Institutional Development Framework (the more detailed of the two core organizational development tools described in chapter three) as an impact indicator on each of its Title II and non-Title II projects. The IDF in a Title II food security project's Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) is the outward and visible sign of CRS's Partnership Principles at work. Table 1.2 shows how this information could be incorporated into the USAID/FFP office's mandated template for an IPTT.

The information needed to calculate the T2-PCI for both local NGO partners and CRS country programs should also be collected and analyzed annually as part of CRS's internal management information system for its Title II projects. It can also be reported as an unofficial (or official IPTT) tool for the Baltimore-based Title II Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) grant, which oversees capacity building for all of CRS's Title II projects.

Since the LCCI is conceptualized as an impact indicator, it only has to be measured at baseline, mid-term, and the project's end. Some projects (like CRS in Niger) may choose to monitor the indicator annually as part of the participatory rural assessment exercises that accompany their community action plans (Box 1.2).

7.0. Organization of the Chapters

Chapter two in this volume provides a plan for finalizing the capacity tools and facilitating their roll out over the next fiscal year. This is followed in chapter three through chapter five by the basic guidance for the four capacity indicator tools: the two core organizational development tools, the T2-PCI, and the LCCI.

A second volume, entitled *Background: CRS Capacity Indices and Tracking System,* describes the background literature and analysis that led to choice of the tools and their recommended format. To facilitate comparisons between tools, each chapter in the Volume II is presented in the following standardized format:

> 1.0.   Objectives and Audience: The major objectives and audience for each capacity index.
> 2.0.   Background: The background justification within CRS for the index, as well as lessons learned from other internal CRS and external capacity assessment instruments that were useful in the design of the index.
> 3.0.   Structure: The formal structure of the indices and index "templates" (i.e., layout) including the explanations/recommended systems for:
>   - Capacity categories, variables, and indicators/rankings,
>   - Completing the indices, and
>   - Calculating the scores.

    4.0.   Reporting: Informal and formal systems of reporting.

    5.0.   Anticipated Impacts: The anticipated program and field level impacts of using the indices as monitoring and evaluation and management tools.

Box 1.2 CRS Experience with Monitoring Local Community Capacity in Niger (FY01-FY05)

Background: In 2001, CRS and its partner Helen Keller International (HKI) committed to monitoring the impact of its extensive technical and management training, awareness-building, and literacy and management training efforts on local community capacity. To achieve this, the M&E system used a capacity index which was based on the Africare Food Security Community Capacity Index. Although the FSCCI was an impact indicator for the project, it was measured annually. Each Cooperating Sponsor (CS-Africare, CRS/HKI, CARE) in the Title II-funded Food Security Initiative in Niger agreed to use the same community capacity assessment tool that ranked local capacities during the annual PRA exercise that accompanied the elaboration (in new villages) or updating (in established villages) of the village action plans. Each CS used the same system of rankings for the indicator, but adjusted the definition of the rankings to the cultural specifics of their site. The average baseline FSCCI for the four principle consortium sites was 35. This average figure, which was reported in the IPTT, was a weighted average based on the average "scores" reported by each of the Cooperating Sponsors for their sites.

Results: Baseline measurements for CRS/HKI's first 20 villages were substantially higher than for the sites in the consortium (52.7 in Dogon Doutchi and 42.3 in Tanout). This compared with the baseline figures of 27 for Agadez (Africare) and 18 for Koni-Illela (CARE). By mid-term (FY03), the average capacity for the indicator had increased to 50.1 (for all sites), based on 56.9 for the CRS/HKI villages in Dogon Doutchi and 59.9 in Tanout. These differences were attributed to the higher baseline organizational development in the villages where CRS worked during the first phase of the project. The new villages that CRS added during the second phase had not benefited from as many earlier projects and had a lower baseline rating on the FSCCI.

Programmatic Impact: One strength of the project's use of the FSCCI was to highlight the critical importance of strengthening this "core organizational capacity" that was lower in the "new villages" than in the "older villages" as part of the overall project strategy. Another strength of the FSCCI was that it could be applied to specific organizations as well as the overall organizational development capacity of the community. During preparation for the mid-term CARE/Matameye used the FSCCI to analyze the core capacity of the health committees with which it was working. Based on this analysis, the project supervisor and M&E specialist determined that 52 percent of the COSAN (health management committees) had "weak to average" capacity, below what was needed to sustain the project's innovative health and nutrition programs once project funding ended. This information provided the basis for CARE to strengthen its core capacity training strategy for the villages identified as "weak" and to anticipate the need for some sort of "transition" support to these community organizations when the main project activities ended in a few months.

Source: CRS and Food Security Initiative in Niger (FSIN) project materials.