



Evaluation of DEC Disaster Response Programme in Niger, Mali and Mauritania

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

June 2006

Commissioned by: Oxfam GB West Africa

Evaluators: Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

Introduction

Oxfam's Emergency Response to the Food Crisis in West Africa officially ended this April having successfully reached more than *350,000 men, women and children*, across the three Sahel countries of Niger, Mali and Mauritania. This was one of Oxfam's largest humanitarian responses in recent years in West Africa with a total spend of 6.3 million GBP. £3.9 of this was funded by the DEC.

The Crisis

In August 2005 a total of 4.2 million people were food insecure across the three countries of Niger, Mali and Mauritania. The WFP estimated that 3.6 million faced food shortages in Niger, with 2.5 million on the brink of starvation; 1.2 million faced chronic food shortages in Mali; nearly 1.9 million were considered at risk in Mauritania according to the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS).

Many of the problems facing rural Sahelian communities are chronic. Desertification, spatially and temporally erratic rainfall, and a lack of access to basic services and markets are the norm. These factors were compounded by two environmental factors: lower than average rainfall since 2003; locust invasions that had devastating effects on pockets of Mali, Mauritania and Niger (as well as Burkina Faso). These factors led to poor harvests for agriculturalists and poor pasture for herders (pastoralists).

In addition, legislation in Nigeria & lower yields in regional food markets (Côte d'Ivoire & Benin) are thought to have had a knock on effect on prices in Niger as the country imports large quantities of food. Border closures between Niger & some neighbours also had a negative impact on market prices and cross border trade. Prices for cereals increased dramatically, in some parts by up to 10 times their normal market rate – *reducing sharply the purchasing power and therefore the access to cereals for the most vulnerable people*.

Oxfam's Response and the DEC

Oxfam was one of the first International INGOs to respond the crisis across the Sahel. Staff was deployed to some of the remotest parts of these countries. In Niger the intervention was without any existing Oxfam infrastructure or existing programme support in country. The programmes in neighbouring Mali and Mauritania were scaled-up to meet the massive emergency needs. Oxfam strategically targeted regions and villages that were hard to access, which ensured that we reached the most vulnerable people first.

Oxfam had two phases of the intervention. The first phase was designed to get emergency food aid as fast as possible to people in a very precarious situation. This work saved lives. It supported people during their most difficult time. Oxfam's food aid increased the number of meals families had during these most difficult months last year; many increased their intake of food to three meals everyday.

Once the immediate emergency was staved off with food aid, de-stocking of thin and dying animals and seed fairs, Oxfam launched the second phase of our Sahel emergency programme. As per the proposal, the vast majority of the DEC funding was used in this second phase of the emergency response.

This second phase began the process of restoring people's livelihood assets (animal re-stocking), drought mitigation (water management) and contingency planning for the next lean period through Cash Transfer programmes. The link between malnutrition, poor public health and high child mortality rates was made and an integrated public health component included. Beneficiaries were mainly pastoral and agro-pastoralist animal breeders, who are amongst the most marginalized communities in the Sahel and the worst affected by the crisis.

While the TV cameras left after the peak of the emergency of 2005, the consequences of a vastly reduced herd size, depleted pasture ground, and greatly increased debt left a mark on affected communities for the coming *years*.

What Next?

The real causes of the crisis are incredibly complicated, and ultimately the result of chronic poverty. Poverty levels in these countries are only getting worse, exacerbated by years of chronic drought, no employment opportunities when people are not farming (up to 6 months of the year), lack of access to basic social services, poor government policies and more recent regional trade barriers. The most marginalized people, pastoralist and to a lesser extent, agro-pastoralist communities, have become locked into a cycle of poverty and debt. Every day is a struggle for survival; so people here are extremely vulnerable to any change in their economic or physical environment. The bigger picture of increased desertification, chronic drought, and an increase in localised conflict with people competing for reduced pasture land needs to be taken head on.

Oxfam is committed to working in the three countries to try to tackle these underlying causes of chronic poverty and to stave off a repeat of further crisis. However, it is, unfortunately, all too likely that an emergency will occur again in the Sahel and Oxfam needs to be, and will be, ready for this.

1. NIGER

DEC Disaster Response Programme Final Report

Country:	Niger
Localities:	Region of Maradi (Department of Dakoro) Region of Tillaberi (Departments of Tillaberi & Ouallam)
Thematic Areas:	Food Security / Water & Sanitation / Public Health
Lead Agency:	Oxfam GB
Partners:	Operational

1.1 Project Summary

- **Name of Project:** Emergency Food Security Intervention *Niger Disaster Response Programme* (August 2005 – April 2006)
- **Duration of Project:** 9 months
- **Project cost:** (indicate DEC funds as a percentage of overall programme budget)

£ 1,620,615 was spent in Niger.

The DEC funds, as a percentage of overall project budget is around 51%.
(Oxfam GB's total spent in Niger was £3,180,750).

1.2 Aim and Objective(s):

Following the food crisis in Niger in May 2005, Oxfam GB received DEC funds to support the needs of men, women and children in the Maradi (Dakoro Department) and Tillaberi (Tillaberi and Ouallam Departments) regions of Niger.

This programme aimed to improve immediate access to food and help to rebuild eroded livelihoods for pastoral-nomadic communities. The programme targeted vulnerable people through a Voucher For Work (VFW) scheme; those affected received vouchers allowing them to purchase food and goods, including livestock at organised animal fairs. Cash For Work (CFW) operations were also carried out in Tillaberi region and Dakoro department. In addition, the programme aimed to improve access to water and environmental rehabilitation as well as promoting public health and reducing the incidence of disease.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives:

1. To improve immediate access to food, through a Voucher for Food approach and Cash For Work Scheme, to help to rebuild eroded livelihoods for pastoral communities in Niger. (The Voucher scheme was used in the first phase in Dakoro and Tillaberi).

2. To begin to help rebuild livelihoods through animal restocking, coupled with a Cash Grant to allow families to protect their animal assets and to meet immediate food needs.
3. 6,000 people in pastoral and agro pastoral communities in Dakoro and Tillaberi Departments benefit from improved access to safe sustainable water sources for humans, agriculture and livestock, and environmental rehabilitation¹.
4. Pastoral communities receive public health assistance through improved knowledge, attitude and good hygiene practices linked to waterborne diseases; and supporting 8,000 households in malaria prevention measures with distribution and good use of an impregnated mosquito net.

1.3 Outputs

- Food Security

I. **70,000** pastoral and agro pastoral people have had their immediate food and livelihood protection needs met.

- Water and Sanitation

II. **22,500** people in Dakoro and Tillaberi departments have access to safe water for human, agriculture and livestock needs.

- Public Health

III. **9,874 pastoral people** received public health assistance, with awareness raising. Among them, 1,932 women, 3,212 girls and 145 women head of household.

- Capacity Building of partners and staff

IV. Oxfam and AREN staff received training on Oxfam Ways of Working, Project Cycle Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.

V. Training on Animals Health delivered to AREN and beneficiaries.

- Lobbying

VI. Oxfam encouraged the Government's early warning system - *Système d'Alerte Précoce* (SAP) to take a more holistic set of indicators that are more sensitive to the pastoral context. The SAP system has taken this on board and this year the system is more in tune with field level realities.

VII. Oxfam has given the pastoral communities a voice in political forums. The pastoralists have been marginalized over the needs of the South of the country where the density of the population is much higher.

1.4 Partners

Oxfam GB had three main partners during the emergency programme :

- Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger (AREN)

Oxfam was operational throughout this emergency response. We did not have an office base in country. We were working with our local partner organisation - Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger (AREN) - for our long term Pastoral Programme in Niger. We have worked with AREN for three years of the pastoralist

¹ In the original proposal this was listed as "reducing the vulnerability to drought by developing water sources to improve water for human consumption, for livestock, and for agricultural production. This will be achieved through the voucher for work programme and through training in the management of natural resources." This objective has been linked to objective one, with the main priority to improve access to food through CFW, and the community activities that this results in this - such as water harvesting (construction of half moon dykes, dam digging), and fire break construction.

programme in the Tillaberi area.² In July AREN guided our areas of intervention and supported to build the connections with the local administrative structures to facilitate the intervention, with their knowledge of both Tillaberi and Dakoro. As our knowledge of the local context grew we increased the number of villages we worked in over time. This was the first time AREN were present during a large-scale emergency response and it challenged their existing capacity to the limit, it was decided that Oxfam was to lead the process.

Oxfam designed and developed the programme and defined the methodology and approach. Oxfam implemented the programme with AREN staff present as observers rather than as implementers.

- Vétérinaires Sans Frontières – Belgique (VSF-B)

Our partner for the animal Restocking intervention in Dakoro Department. We worked with them to offer training sessions to train trainers (who then went on to train beneficiaries) in animal health and animal feeding. During the animal Fairs VSF-B undertook the veterinary quality checks on all the animals purchased. The vaccinated and de-wormed the animals working in conjunction with the local authority vet clinics (under the **Animal Resources Ministry**). In addition the developed all the zoo-technical monitoring tools.

- Karkara

Oxfam's partner for Public Health; they have a background in Community Organization in water and sanitation projects. Karkara mobilized the community, set up and trained committees with local animators for hygiene and sanitation and organized community meetings with stakeholders. They also led the KAP surveys (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) for behavior research in order to gather baseline information. In addition they distributed the PHP items and developed the Hygiene Education Campaigns.

Besides these three partners in the field, Oxfam also worked closely with the **Environmental Technical Services Department** in Tillaberi, Oullam and Dakoro, with whom we signed an MOU. They undertook field visits with Oxfam staff to offer advice and training for soil erosion prevention techniques and construction of the small half moon dykes.

An MOU was also signed with the **Rural Engineering Department** for receiving technical advice for school fence construction, walls constructed around health posts, and damn digging. Joint field visits were undertaken and training given on technical matters to Oxfam staff.

We also worked in coordination with **Direction Regionale de l'hydraulique** for the water and sanitation component.

1.5 Targeting Criteria

1.5.1 Site Selection

There was no uniform technique for site selection. Oxfam worked to be as flexible as possible given local context, knowledge and coordination with the other INGOs on the ground.

Food Security

² AREN is also a partner of NOVIB in the Dakoro region.

First Phase – Dakoro Town and Department (July – October 2005)

Oxfam had not worked in Dakoro previously, though our partner for our long-term Pastoralist programme - AREN - had a sub office and worked with Oxfam Netherlands in the region. Using this local knowledge Oxfam entered the area and selected villages. It is fair to say that at this time all of the villages in the area were vulnerable. The WFP began its free food distributions in Dakoro town, and to avoid overlap and to increase coverage, Oxfam moved northwards in the second phase.

Second Phase – Dakoro Town and Department (November 2005 – April 2006)

As Oxfam's knowledge of the local context grew we adapted and adjusted our intervention. Once this strategy was established Oxfam received a list of all sites and villages in two northern Communes of Dakoro. As all were incredibly vulnerable and many had received no support in the first phase Oxfam decided to intervene in all 175 sites in Bermo and Gadabeji.

First Phase - Tillaberi and Ouallam (Began in August 2005)

The intervention in Tillaberi began a little later than that of Dakoro as Dakoro was prioritised for the level of need. Due to the scale of the emergency and the challenges that brings, it was necessary to have a focused approach.

Sites in Tillaberi were identified through the lists provided by SAP (*Système d'Alerte Précoce - the Government's Early Warning System*). Oxfam met with the Prefet (Commune head of authority for both Tillaberi and Ouallam) to discuss the analysis of the SAP information. The Ministry of Agriculture (representing the SAP information) was present at these meetings. The sites selected from this list, represented the highest livelihood deficit; it included villages that have 80% livelihood deficits – when we looked at crop production, food needs, and density of population in a locality.

Our own assessment and cross checking of information with other INGOs on the ground, guided our intervention area. In Ouallam we followed the advice of the local authorities to concentrate in one Commune to ensure the impact of the intervention. The neglected Commune of Bani Bongou was selected. Our approach evolved over time to include the vulnerable Commune of Ouallam by September - expanding to Ouallam town and the Commune of Tondi Kwindi. The second phase ensured that we reached people who had not received any support before.

Water and Sanitation

Villages selected were amongst those where we were already implementing food security activities. These were further narrowed down to those villages where there was no protected water point, and where at least 250 people lived in a settlement site or village. This selection criterion was put in as lower number of people would not be cost effective.

Water is a very delicate issue in the Sahel and although consultation with communities took time the communities were fully involved in the process and understood and agreed the village selection process. This limited any potential tensions with those villages not selected. The process involved all 175 Food Security villages. Criteria were agreed by all of these communities and site selection of the wells was decided by communities themselves.

As far as public health component is concerned the choice of sites were led by the presence of activities of the water and sanitation component in the area. The Watsan and PHP teams worked closely in the same villages in order to increase people behaviour change and maximise impact in reducing the water-linked diseases and to improve use of water points.

1.6 Beneficiary Selection

In the first Phase in Dakoro, priority was given to women headed households, larger sized families and those who lost animals. There was difficulty in getting communities to limit the

beneficiary lists to those who lived in their respective site. There is a very strong culture of solidarity in the Sahel and people felt it difficult to turn others away, (from neighbouring Communes not selected), who wanted to be included. As there was no existing census or local level document to list who lived in a particular site or Commune it was very difficult to cross check information and sites regularly changed and added names of people to include. This was accepted in the first phase due to the high level of vulnerability and more because some family members who had already migrated to look for work returned to their sites when they heard of the intervention.

For the Animal Restocking and Cash For Work activities, we first set up community elected village management committees. Oxfam then undertook a wealth ranking exercise in both departments. This was undertaken in the form of questionnaires (Dakoro), and proportional piling (Tillaberi) to ascertain who should be included in which socio-economic groups in the respective villages. *There was a deliberate strategy not to inform the communities of the purpose of the respective wealth ranking exercises.* This was to ensure the impartiality of information garnered from the communities. Once the criteria was defined and accepted by the village committees people were ranked in groups with the richest listed as 'A' group and the poorest listed as the 'D' group. In Dakoro there was a strategic decision to target the poor listed as the 'C' group and not the poorest of the poor. Targeting the poor increased the chances of survival for the animals distributed, as the poor will have some means to sustain the animals – while the poorest of the poor (who as pastoralists will also have experience of managing animals), will have a greater chance of not having the means of sustaining their herds. This was vital in terms of the re-distribution of the offspring, but also in terms of sustaining people's livelihoods by avoiding the sale or slaughter of any animals. Given the size of the asset and the need for accurate selection necessitates that Oxfam made the selection of beneficiaries for the animal re-stocking. The names were read out in community meetings – in the presence of the Committee – and the communities were asked to discuss the names of those selected. Communities and the committees largely appreciated the selection of the names by Oxfam because distribution was limited to 1,500 people (approximately 8 people in a site), and they report that they would have had difficulties in making the decisions themselves without creating conflict. Animals were then distributed to the head of the household – through Animal Fairs - benefiting the whole family, but registered in one person's name.

A second list of beneficiaries was then selected using the same criteria and process to determine who would receive 25% of the offspring of the animals re-stocked from the first round of beneficiaries. These would be distributed with the support of Management Committees who supported the beneficiaries throughout the process. The first round of beneficiaries was asked not to leave the communities they lived in until the offspring were born and distributed. They were also asked not to sell any of the livestock given through the animal fairs to ensure the second round of beneficiaries would also gain. Both these requirements would have been difficult without further support as many people migrate, particularly during the dry season to find work during the difficult months before a harvest. To support the beneficiaries to sustain their new livestock Oxfam issued beneficiaries with a Cash Grant, which was intended to support their immediate food needs. This 10,000 FCFA grant tied them over until CFW activities were started in April 2006.

The CFW programme started in Dakoro in April. As well as supporting the re-stocking beneficiaries with CFW we went back and targeted those who were the poorest of the poor (the 'D' group) to ensure the most vulnerable also received support with the CFW activities – women headed households were prioritised in this phase for example. Where the elderly or disabled member of a household was unable to work (the CFW activities were chosen by the communities and included work that would benefit the wider community – this included small dyke digging and pond deepening which were heavy weight jobs done in the heat) they were

able to nominate another member of their household to take part. Payment was however still made to the beneficiary selected and not to the nominated member of the household.

In Tillaberi, the committees dealt with the results of the wealth ranking exercise and identified the beneficiary names according to the information they had already given. The Committees supported the process of criteria definition. This criteria included the number of animals owned and reared – if less than two, income of households dependent on their economic migration patterns (their need to search for casual labour in the lean months), the areas of plot cultivated if less than ½ an hectare, the quantity of food available at HH level covering the needs for a period not longer than one months).

If the information gathered indicated that X number of people belonged to the ‘D’ group (the poorest of the poor), the community, facilitated by the Committee, was asked to list the names who should be included in the CFW. This ensured that there was community ownership of the process of beneficiary selection.

Essentially, as Oxfam’s experience of the Niger context increased, Oxfam adapted and became more flexible given the local context. ,there was greater emphasis on community involvement.

1.7 Coverage

Oxfam worked in coordination with other NGOs to define our area of work. Following the start of Oxfam’s emergency programme, a baseline survey in Dakoro area, at the border between agro-pastoral and pastoral areas, was conducted in July 2005. This survey revealed important loss of livestock in both pastoral (70% of loss) and agro-pastoral (65% of loss) communities. Despite agro-pastoral communities having planted a third less crops this year, pastoral populations appeared most affected:

- In pastoral areas about 40% of households had only one meal or less per day (22.5% in agro-pastoral areas). 8% of households consumed just wild plants, often tree leaves.
- About half of families have not consumed dairy products in the last 6 months due to animals ceasing to lactate early. This considerably reduces people’s protein intake, particularly for young children.

Loss of livestock has dramatic consequences for people who rely entirely on livestock for their livelihoods. Oxfam GB decided to focus almost solely on pastoral communities in Niger given:

- a) the particular vulnerability of the pastoral communities according to the baseline survey
- b) the extent to which cross border trade has more negatively affected pastoralists than agro pastoralists.
- c) the fact that agro pastoral communities are more easily targeted in Niger because they are registered (in Government systems) whilst pastoral communities are often not.
- d) pastoral zones are more inaccessible. Nomadic sites are not well known or assessed by systems like SAP, and indeed they have been marginalized because of their remoteness and relatively small numbers.
- e) Other INGOs largely covered agro-pastoral zones, while there were only a few who had the resources to be able to intervene in the remoter areas.

The following villages were covered reaching a total of **119,790 beneficiary households****.

	Components**	Number of villages	Total number of Households	Female Headed Households	% of Female Headed Households	Male Headed Households
1	Food security					
	1st phase: Dakoro (July – Oct 05)	81 sites	13,533	4060	30	9473
	1 st phase: Tillaberi/Ouallam (August – October 05)	35	3882	1022	26	2860
	2 nd phase Dakoro Re-stocking (Nov 05 - April 06)	165	1500	210	14	1290
	2 nd phase: Dakoro CFW. (April 06)	165	1999	411	20.5	1588
	2 nd phase Tillaberi/Ouallam	29	2279	913	40	1366
2	PHE – Jan-April 06	17	1200	109	7	1193
3	PHP – Jan- April 06	17	1716	155	9	1561

***The figures for beneficiary household numbers have been counted to try to avoid overlap between the various phases and components. The figure of 19,965 is only estimation due to this overlap.*

1.8 Inter-Agency Co-operation

1.8.1 Niamey

Oxfam GB participated in weekly CCA (Cellule Crise Alimentaire – Food Crisis Cell meetings led by the Prime Minister's office) coordination meetings in Niamey and in the respective sector meetings for Food Security (led by the FAO every two weeks), Water and Sanitation, and Nutrition.

1.8.2 Regionally

In Maradi and Dakoro, Oxfam GB coordinated activities with UNICEF IFRC, VSF, the Ministry of Hydraulics, and the Health Districts – representing the Ministry of Health, Switzerland International Cooperation Agency, CREPA (a regional West African NGO - Centre Regional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement), GTZ, OCHA and local technical offices in charge of Animal Resources Department, Rural Engineering, Environmental Department, and Water and Health Department.

Oxfam GB participates in regular inter-agency forums, and advocates for an integrated approach to the humanitarian response in Niger. There was no formal group of INGOS to support in lobbying the government to change SAP indicators for example, however when Oxfam raised concerns other INGOs (e.g., Concern, MSF, ACF) echoed our stance.

As part of our longer term planning, Oxfam GB organised two workshops (Tillaberi and Maradi towns respectively) to meet with various local NGOs to discuss community issues and to attempt to map out the local NGOs active in our areas of intervention, obviously including the local authorities.

1.9 Challenges and Constraints

1.9.1 Logistical Challenges

At the start of the emergency Oxfam GB did not have a presence in Niger. There was great geographical distance between the office base and between the sites, posing both logistical and communications challenges. Poor roads to Dakoro, long travel times and lack of reliable communication systems, hampered communications with Niamey and the RMC and slowed the establishing of an efficient operational base. During this time Oxfam GB heavily relied on AREN for information and assistance.

Delays in the voucher programme can be partly explained by these logistical constraints. The voucher process was time-consuming and labour intensive. In remote areas there are no functional shops or markets and the hoped for flexibility of the voucher system - designed to give beneficiaries the choice of what they purchased- was lost given the non-functioning of the local commercial network.

In addition, when the response began it was also the rainy season and this caused great logistical problems in terms of access to some of the sites due to floods.

1.9.2 Political Constraints

The Government of Niger was slow to acknowledge the growing crisis. The Government did not allow any general free food distributions until they officially recognised a famine situation. They wanted food distributions only to be targeted towards children.

1.9.3 Geographical Constraints

There were challenges of communicating with the nomadic communities. There was a reliance on those who were sedentary to spread the word about Oxfam's interventions, aims, objectives and indeed process and strategy, until we developed better means of communicating more directly with people.

1.10 Achievements against objectives

Outputs	Achievements***	Further Information	Impact
<p>Food Security Component</p> <p>The immediate food and livelihood protection needs of about 70,000 people in pastoral nomadic communities are met through:</p> <p>Enabling herders from 80 sites/villages to improve their knowledge on animal health and management</p> <p>Supporting 1,500 households to restock lost animals</p>	<p>Oxfam's first phase emergency response programme funded by a range of donors, including a contribution by the DEC</p> <p>The Voucher-for-Work programme reached 15,677 households (94,062 people):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,016 metric tons of food distributed in 116 villages. Food included wheat, rice, niebe beans (a local bean), oil, dried meat and manioc flour. <p>Main community activities carried out under the VFW scheme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry meat processing (4.1 metric tons) • Construction of fire breaks (343 km) • Seed collection (911 Kg) • Tree planting (23,342 seedlings planted) • Rehabilitation of half moon dykes (10,000) • Village site cleaning (35) • Class room construction (4) • Upgrading of road access (52.5 km) <p>The animal de-stocking programme reached 564 households (3,384 people):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 627 animals were purchased, with (paid for with the Voucher for work scheme as outline above) 4,100 kg of total dried meat produced. <p>Second phase Restocking (in Dakoro Department only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,908 people trained (in collaboration with Veterinary Sans Frontière in 165 sites on Herd Management, Animal Health and Animal Feeding. • 8 Animal fairs organised (January to February); 270 millions FCFA worth of animal distributed. • Partnership Agreement with Ministry of Animal 	<p>Vouchers were selected initially due to their flexibility in allowing beneficiaries the choice of goods they could exchange them for. However as the local markets had stopped functioning due to the lack of cash in the system, this proved to be inefficient as well as heavily bureaucratic.</p> <p>The strategy in this phase was to announce Oxfam's arrival in the areas of intervention and allow people the dignity to work for food / voucher. While Oxfam ordered food, and set up its local base communities began their selected activity. Oxfam loosely monitored this work in the initial stages as the priority was to get food to the areas. There was a great deal of community involvement and commitment to see the activities completed.</p> <p>Average cost per animal in the programme was 30,000 CFA. Average cost per animal at market in July/August was 2,500-3,000 CFA. Oxfam paid 10 times the market rate. The strategy for this intervention was to target the thinnest animals and the animals closest to dieing to protect people's livelihoods.</p> <p>Oxfam created Animal Fairs where selected beneficiaries came to meet approved traders (142 traders in total) to negotiate and purchase high quality (more than 36% of traders had at least one animal rejected at the entrance of the Fair due to</p>	<p><i>"I had no way to transport my wife and children; my donkeys and cattle had all already died. If Oxfam had not come when they did, I would have been forced to leave my family here to die, and go in search of food as my last chance for survival."</i> Man in Dakoro.</p> <p>Oxfam's intervention gave people hope that support was on its way; this hope - communicated through local radio stations and word of mouth meant that people were able to make the strategic decision to stay in their villages. Before then many were ready to take the precarious decision to migrate in search of food.</p> <p>The intervention supported the reduction in the price of cereals in the local markets. With food available in abundance after Oxfam's distributions the local traders were forced to reduce their prices as the supply of food was too great.</p> <p>Before Oxfam GB's intervention, only 26% of targeted populations were eating more than 1 meal per day. After Oxfam GB's intervention, 100% of targeted populations were eating more</p>

	<p>Resources regarding animal veterinary treatment before distribution of animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,017.5 Tropical Livestock (TLU) distributed (56 donkeys, 48 cattle, 7,128 sheep and 4,348 goats) to 1,500 households, 14% were women HH? <i>(46% of all female headed households in this department were selected).</i> • In-kind refunding mechanisms set up at community level to restock extra 408 households – known as ‘mirror beneficiaries’. 25% of animals will be ‘re-funded’ to more beneficiaries in this way (after 8 months/1 year depending on the animal and the reproduction of offspring). • Set up Insurance funds, amounting 22.5 millions FCFA, through local bank in Dakoro. This insurance system was to support the sustainability of the herd and was managed by the Management Committees. • A database was set up to ensure proper follow up of beneficiaries managed in Niamey by Oxfam. All the data collected from zoo-technological monitoring every 3 months will be inputted into this database. • Cash Grant, worth 52.5 million FCFA, distributed to the 1,500 households beneficiaries of the restocking intervention. <p>Cash For Work in Dakoro, Tillaberi and Ouallam Departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,278 households targeted (25,668 people), using vulnerability criteria, including 411 women headed households in Dakoro and 913 women headed households in Tillaberi and Ouallam • Amount of cash injected totalling 48.952 Million 	<p>poor quality), vaccinated animals. Beneficiaries were issued with a paper voucher that they exchanged with a trader. The animals sold at the fair were largely small animals such as goats and sheep, which are more resistant to drought and bad fodder. Oxfam encouraged people to purchase these small animals, as their sustainability is more likely.</p> <p>The animals were then tagged in the ear for easy future identification; they were also vaccinated and given full documentation with the support of community led Management Committees.</p> <p>Animal traders heard about the Animal Fairs through family and friends (45%) or through Oxfam radio / market announcements (40%). The animals were screened using national technical screening techniques, in conjunction with the Government Animal Resource Department Direction (DDRA) – the Government Vet Service.</p> <p>Beneficiary identification carried out through 165 village committees, using participatory tools such as wealth ranking (criteria elaborated by community themselves and adapted to pastoralist system. Names decided by Oxfam based on information given by community.</p> <p>Management Committees are the guardians of the animals and the re-distribution of the first round of offspring to a second round of beneficiaries.</p> <p>194 village Committees were set up. Equipments/Tools purchased and distributed to begin the Community activities.</p>	<p>than 1 meal per day.</p> <p>60.54% of beneficiaries reported that they felt the prices of animals at the fairs were the same, as they would have purchased at a regular animal market. Only 18% of those interviewed stated that prices at the Oxfam Animal Fairs were higher when compared to local markets.</p> <p>76% of beneficiaries reported that they felt the animals presented for sale at the Animal Fairs were of good quality. Only 4.5% of beneficiaries reported that would have preferred to purchase other types of animals not presented during the fairs (camels or poultry for example).</p> <p>Most (81%) of animal re-stocking beneficiaries reported that they would use the Cash Grant issued to purchase food.</p> <p>An Internal Evaluation in February 2006 found that at least 2/3 beneficiaries were satisfied with the CFW intervention. Most people spent most of their money</p>
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	<p>FCFA in Dakoro and 125,352,500 FCFA in Ouallam and Tillaberi.</p> <p>Main community activities carried out under CFW include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms construction (8) • Building of houses for teachers (7) • Warehouse building – to store harvests(42 units) • Building of a mortuary (1) • Fencing of Health Posts (4) and Schools (9) • Digging of half moon dykes (11,168 units) • Pond digging (14 sites) • Village site cleaning (203 sites) • Upgrading of road access (47.9 km) • Soil erosion control (13.320 km) • Windbreak planting – <i>Euphorbiaceae</i> planted in sandy soil - its roots maintain soil and the plant acts as a windbreak (203ha) <p>Food distribution in Tillaberi and Ouallam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food distribution targeting the 2,279 households of the CFW intervention carried out at the end of April 2006 Each beneficiary received 50 Kg of rice, 5 Kg of sugar, 10 litres of oil and 100 grams of tea. 150 metric tons distributed in total 	<p>Supervision of community works carried out in partnership with relevant Technical Departments of the Ministry of Agriculture where appropriate (e.g. Rural Engineering, Environment, etc.)</p> <p>The respective communities decided the type of community activity they wanted to undertake.</p> <p>This distribution was offered after the last round of CFW to cover immediate needs at the start of the hunger period. Food was purchased locally through tendering, organised in close collaboration with <i>Cellule de Crise Alimentaire (CCA)</i>.</p>	<p>on food, or reducing high levels of debt.</p> <p>A more detailed internal evaluation of the CFW interventions in Tillaberi and Ouallam Departments is currently being carried out. Findings available at a later date, upon request.</p> <p>This distribution took account of research that showed high levels of solidarity meant people had saved little of the Cash they earned to act as contingency for the lean period – the CFW therefore had not solved any problems and people remain as vulnerable as they were last year. Clearly a one-off food distribution does not offer a solution to the greater underlying problem of chronic poverty.</p>
Outputs	Achievements	Further Information	Impact
<p>Water and Sanitation</p> <p>Pastoral communities in Dakoro and Tillaberi benefit from improved access to safe water for humans,</p>	<p><i>7 existing traditional wells rehabilitated. 6 new protected wells constructed. 11 boreholes rehabilitated and fitted with foot pumps 12 wells protected with concrete slabs, equipped with improved pulling system, walls, drain and soak away pits. They are located in the villages listed in annex.</i></p>	<p><i>Due to time constraints and the depth of the wells it was not realistic and possible to achieve the planned number of wells in a 4-month period. This was explained in the interim report.</i></p> <p>The intervention in Tillaberi and Ouallam</p>	<p>22,500 people have access to safe water (6,000 households in Dakoro + 16,500 in Tillaberi / Ouallam).</p> <p>The intervention in Tillaberi and Ouallam stopped people migrating, as they normally would have due to a lack of water, and</p>

<p>agriculture and livestock through: - 15 new concrete wells - Rehabilitation of 7 traditional wells</p>		<p>was not originally planned. After a quick assessment following some reports received from the community, Oxfam GB decided to respond to the needs of the communities in Tillaberi and Ouallam.</p>	<p>reduced the distance they had to walk from village to water points.</p>
Outputs	Achievements	Further Information	Impact
<p>Public Health Promotion Component</p> <p>Pastoral communities receive public health assistance through:</p> <p>Organising community during the period of construction of 6 new wells and rehabilitation of 7 wells</p> <p>Sharing on hygiene sensitisation messages with 70 villages</p> <p>Support to 8,000 households in malaria prevention measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 villages targeted. Set up 17 Water & Hygiene Local Committees, which are legally recognized. 150,000 FCFA contributed by each village as guarantee for maintenance of well activities; total of 2,550,000 FCFA deposited in a local bank in Dakoro. Participatory PH strategy developed; responsibilities shared with communities, health district and partner organisation. 2 workshops organised in 2 villages with participants coming from 22 villages. 66 participants attended (23 leaders, 23 men, 19 women, 15 administrative authorities and 9 workers from OGB and Karaka). KAP survey (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) conducted in 21 villages. Main health issues identified in each village. 3 Mass Health Awareness Campaigns organised around the following themes: drinkable water, hand washing, garbage disposal, children's cleanliness, fight against mosquitoes and sanitation in 3 villages- Ahmed Dalo, Tacha Ibrahim and Zongo Zada. Women and children prioritised as beneficiaries of mosquito nets. Women's and the Committee roles legally recognised. Census in 17 villages within 1,719 HH with a total of 10,927 people (among them 1,932 women & 3,212 girls). During the census some HH were in exodus and will return to the villages soon. Purchase of 2,000 and distribution of 1,716 mosquito nets. The remaining nets will be distributed to returning households in June. To help prevent waterborne diseases the following items were purchased: 4,000 Jerry-cans, 4,000 buckets, 4,000 water filters, 40,000 soaps, 105 wheel barrows, 210 shovels, 210 rakes (items purchased). 	<p>Technical teams assisted by villagers in food, water and shelter. This is a standard community strategy for mobilization to look forward and improve local participation.</p> <p>Training modules designed and images for sensitisation activities.</p> <p>Designed regulations on water points management and water collection.</p> <p>The Mass Health Awareness Campaigns used audio-visual material, sketches and songs. We popularised hygiene songs in schools through children and a local theatre group '<i>Initiative Plus</i>'</p> <p>21 villages were targeted, but due to time constraints only 17 villages were reached with a total of 1800 HH. 200 HH were not reached because we only worked in 17 villages out of 21 villages previously planned due to the exodus of pastoral people.</p>	<p>Change of behaviour is a long term process the following results can be observed in villages: villages cleanliness (public & private garbage disposal holes dug), good use of containers to collect water (Jerry-cans, buckets, water filters), use of soaps women talking about hand washing, water quality as a health issue,</p> <p>Community enthusiasm in participating in activities and prioritising the use of mosquito nets by pregnant women and under 5 has been observed during the course of the programme.</p>

Capacity building	<p>Distribution completed for 1,716 households. The remaining will be distributed in June.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of the local Partner Karkara, MoU signed in December 22, 2005.• KAP survey conducted in the 17 villages along with Oxfam GB and Karkara staffs (4 animators and 1 Supervisor).• Committees well structured and well organised in villages – the committee represented the village development activities, and the local PHP animator.		
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1.11 Analysis of Expenditure (additional comments to the Financial Section)

The actual spending in Niger has exceeded the initial budget by less than 1% and although some more significant variations have taken place between sub-budget lines, each section has been spent as planned or nearly (Supplies and Materials exceeds the initial budget by around 5%).

[Figure Removed]

The main areas of change are within the **Supplies and Materials**. It is worth noting that changes were only adopted after internal and external consultations during a contingency planning exercise. As a result, the focus had to shift from Water and Sanitation to Food and Agriculture. This was due to the short time available to build all the wells initially planned and the obvious food insecurity that had been building up in the area of intervention. The decision was then made to scale-up the cash for work activities. The impacts of the revised set of activities (see section 1.10 Achievements against Outputs), in particular the cash for work initiative, suggest how sensible this move was. This was also largely explained during the interim report submitted by the end of February 2006.

As a result of this change, the human resources required to accompany these activities needed strengthening from the initial set-up. More expatriate staff, in particular logisticians and food security experts were deployed to respond, manage and monitor the day-to-day complexities of the cash for work activities. The staff benefit sub-line was under-utilised due to the profile of the staff deployed in the field (un-accompanied) and the low-cost housing arrangements that resulted from it. As for the travel costs, this sub-line exceeded the initial budget commensurate with the staffing revision explained above.

1.12 Lessons Learned

Appropriateness of Projects chosen

Oxfam has conducted an evaluation of all emergency programmes in the Sahel. Many lessons learned and improved practices came out of that study, however, we cannot mention them all in this final report. For the sake of clarity, the lessons learned have been split in programme component, and the main lessons/findings are highlighted.

Voucher / Food for Work Intervention

“The situation here was very bad when Oxfam came: there was hunger, animals died and the food prices were too high. It was the same everywhere. One measure of millet (a small tin can’s worth) cost 1000 CFA, (1GBP). It normally cost 50-75 CFA.” Boundou Barka.

1. Appropriateness:

There are clearly serious structural problems and a background to chronic hunger and poverty that limits the impact of any emergency response. Many people report that they need Cash for Work forever, and this only goes to underline the need for regular income generating activities. The lack of work and employment opportunities, as farming and pastoralism have become less sustainable here adds to the potential for future crisis to return. Oxfam decided to improve the purchasing power of those people affected by providing vouchers that they could use to purchase food from local traders. Oxfam GB and its local partner AREN were able to implement a Food and Vouchers-for-Work programme (VFW) early July 2005 while many other organisations were still trying to import desperately needed food. Vouchers were exclusively exchanged for food to ensure maximum impact. Men and women worked together for three hours at the start of every day - sometimes working together like this for the first time in entrenched Islamic communities where men and

women's lives are more often publicly separated. There are also a high number of female-headed households in many of these communities.

2. Communications:

Some people reported that they waited up to 4 weeks after the community activities were initiated before food arrived and was distributed. Given the logistical constraints people across the sites reported that they were regularly well informed of the time frame. When food distributions began in one site, messengers were sent to inform the others of the day on which the truck would reach them.

"We have never seen anyone or any other organisation do anything like this before here. We will never forget what Oxfam has done. They came to help us at the start of the rainy season when there were deep problems here," Bermo - Intalak (Peul).

3. Price Negotiations:

Price negotiation was a delicate business. The prices were revised (and set down in writing between Oxfam GB and AREN and the Traders' Trade Union) each week according to the changes in market price of the products available. The intervention has undoubtedly had a positive impact, not only on the local economy but also in terms of the organisational capacity of the traders. Before the programme, the local Traders' Trade Union existed in name only. Following the intervention the Trade Union facilitated the traders of Dakoro to organise and assert themselves, owing to their new economic weight, in the face of bigger traders.

Approximately 550 million CFA (550,000 GBP) was injected into the local economy of Dakoro alone (Maradi District of Niger) and 185 small traders travelled to some of the remotest places in the country on the back of donkeys and camels, as well as on trucks. This allowed them to re-ignite their own economic activity, which had often broken down due to the year's hardships. The fact that small traders now have available capital means they can even stock goods locally during the harvest, therefore decreasing their dependence on wholesalers who speculate.

4. Effectiveness

This programme was fast and effective and appropriate given the local context. Before Oxfam GB's intervention 40% of households in pastoral zone, and 22% of households in agro-pastoral zones ate only one meal or less per day. After Oxfam GB's intervention, 100% of targeted populations were eating more than 1 meal per day, and many were able to eat up to three times a day. In December 2005, one month after the project ended, 88% of the households in the agro-pastoral zone and 80% of those in the pastoral zone had at least three meals per day.

Seasonal migrations, mainly for younger men and women, constitute a regular survival mechanism for rural populations in the Sahel. The project reduced these departures and meant large numbers of women did not have to take on the full responsibility for the family alone without support.

People were able to remain in their own communities and not take the long uncertain journey to urban centres in neighbouring countries in search of food or work. The wider impact of halting such risky migratory pattern cannot be counted, but if mass migration had occurred it is clear that vulnerable people making such journeys may not have survived, and vulnerable people left behind to cope alone would also have been at grave risk.



Animal Re-stocking

1. Appropriateness

Animal Re-stocking was appreciated as benefiting the whole community - though the beneficiaries were individuals. *"Giving animals to our community is good; the community benefits as a whole."* Men in Zongo Jiguita.

Oxfam Implemented good plans for ensuring the sustainability of the re-stocking programme. The management committees are in place to support the beneficiaries if things go wrong. The sustainability of the intervention is supported through Vets Without Borders.

The team reports that the community felt that if animals were given to the poorest of the poor, then a 'sustainable breeding system' would not be possible. Animals were therefore given to those who had the resources or the means to be able to look after them.

2. Normal Market Prices

There was a concern that the Animal Fairs might cause inflation in the normal market; however as animal fairs were conducted over time and as they were spread over a large geographical area this was not found to be the case. 60.54% of beneficiaries reported that they did not think that animal prices were higher at the market than otherwise available. The animals available at the fairs were of top quality and were checked by the Government Vet service and VSF-B. 76.5% of beneficiaries reported that they felt the animals were of a very high quality.

Best Practice

Diversity was recognised in Niger's intervention with the representation of different ethnic groups and both men and women on the Management Committees.

3. Re-Stocking not enough

Following an emergency animal re-stocking is not a sufficient intervention on its own to restore people's livelihood. It will take the beneficiaries 1-2 years to benefit from them. There is a need for complimentary support such as Cash Grants of CFW; re-stocking on its own does not work.

4. Training

A key learning is that animal distribution should be coupled with technical training in herd management. In this last crisis communities waited until the very last minute before engaging in de-stocking (selling of their animals when they became very thin to release their capital). When the terms of trade become poor it is important that herds are managed differently - in a non-traditional way, to avoid the catastrophe of selling only dying animals as a last resort.

Cash For Work

1. Appropriateness:

"We are doing work that we really see the benefits of. Previously we had no road access, especially in the floods in this area of the village. Now when it rains vehicles will be able to reach us. We are very happy that this organisation has come to help us. We were sleeping before Oxfam came; you have woken us up with this kind of work. It is getting much hotter though and we would like to see a reduction in the number of hours we work." Thaim village

Targeting of women and women headed households was a priority for this intervention with many women remaining in their villages as effective widows with their husbands away for so many months of the year in search of work in the off season.

Best Practice

Women headed households were defined as those women who were widowed, divorced and separated, as well as women whose husbands travelled for more than 6 months of the year.

Women were able to work fewer hours than the men in the CFW programmes, so that they could undertake other daily tasks – women appreciated that they could do this.

Cash payment allowed beneficiaries to pay off their debts accumulated during the 2005 food crisis. Debts following the crisis were at a record level, and many people felt that the ramification of high levels of debt would have implications for the years to come until livelihoods could be restored and incomes generated as normal again.

2. Beneficiary Selection

Decision making at community level regarding beneficiary identification and type of community activity to be carried out gave empowerment and ownership to communities. There was a great deal of pride involved to undertake community work..

Public Health Promotion

1. Appropriateness

There is a growing awareness amongst communities about public health issues (waterborne disease) and the relationship to chronic malnutrition. Communities have become mobilized and involved in raising this awareness. Women are particularly involved in mobilizing their communities by sharing information at community level meetings. Behaviour change has already been observed through people's daily practices.

5. Conclusions

This emergency response offered a great deal of challenges. Despite these challenges Oxfam was able to adapt and be flexible in our approach, to best address the needs on the ground. We undertook site selection in line with a functioning coordination mechanism and we supported the needs of the most vulnerable people in some of the remotest parts of Niger. We focused on the needs of some of the most marginalized and vulnerable communities of pastoralist who are struggling to adapt their ways of life according to a changing environmental context.

The number of meals was our primary indicator and our response showed that the number of meals consumed by people in the first phase of the response increased to three meals a day. Food for work and Vouchers achieved their short-term goals.

The latter interventions of CFW need to be complemented with longer-term income generating activities to ensure depth of impact. There has been a high level of solidarity demonstrated thus reducing the objective of ensuring contingency for the lean period is met. support.

Despite time constraints, DEC funds have been of great importance during this programme. In a short period it allowed to address needs of **119,790 beneficiaries** in food security, water and sanitation as well as public health promotion.

Some needs; however, have not been covered. . Oxfam did not solve the problems here in this intervention; we were only able to place the preverbal band aid over the worst case scenario last year. There is the potential to loose impact gained this year if immediate needs are not supported. Oxfam GB is putting in own funds and is seeking out other external donors to ensure our good work in Niger continues.

2. MALI

DEC Disaster Response Programme Final Report

Country:	Mali
Localities:	Region of Gao (Gao, Menaka, Bourem, Ansongo)
Thematic Areas:	Food Security and Livelihoods, Water & Sanitation, Public Health Promotion
Lead Agency:	Oxfam GB
Partners:	ADESAH, TASSAGHT, GARI

2.1 Project Summary:

- **Name of Project:**

Mali Disaster Response Programme

- **Project Cost**

£1,313,141 was spent in Mali.

The DEC funds, as a percentage of overall project budget is around 59%. (Oxfam GB's total spent in Mali was £2,237,046).

2.2 Aim and Objective(s)

The programme aimed to protect lives in the Gao region of Mali, covering the Communes of Gao, Menaka, Bourem, Ansongo, through food security, and support to public health. It also aimed to reduce vulnerabilities to further disasters by rehabilitating eroded livelihoods and supporting water and sanitation needs.

Specific objectives:

1. To improve immediate access to food and help rebuild livelihoods
2. To begin to help rebuild livelihoods through the provision of assets that were previously eroded. The emergency Cash for Work (CFW) scheme will give families access to a range of goods of their choice
3. Pastoral and agro-pastoral households benefit from productive inputs (restocking), training and access to seeds, (for arid zone vegetable gardening and rain-fed crops).
4. To further support affected pastoral households through animal fairs and livestock vaccination campaigns.
5. To address immediate water needs and reduce future vulnerability to drought by developing water sources to improve water human consumption, for livestock, and for agricultural production.
6. To help reduce morbidity, malnutrition and mortality through the implementation of public health activities closely tied to improved water sources and better access to food. This will focus on the provision of public health items (mosquito bed nets, etc.) and on hygiene promotion.

2.3 Outputs

- I. **33,600 people** have improved access to food (through CFW as direct and indirect beneficiaries). A further 15,600 people have improved access to productive assets to re-build and/or protect livelihoods, as direct and indirect beneficiaries, through vegetable gardening, income generating activities (IGA), and re-stocking activities.
- II. **100,000 people** have access to water for human consumption and livelihood activities.
- III. **100,000 people** are sensitised on public health issues related to water and hygiene promotion for reduced morbidity, mortality and malnutrition rates.
- IV. Oxfam-GB, partners and allies' have had training to run and support an efficient **Food Security Monitoring System**.
- V. An **Advocacy Plan** dealing with pastoralism and livelihoods issues has been developed.

2.4 Partners

Oxfam GB established partnerships with three local NGOs in Mali: Association de Développement Endogène du Sahel (ADESAH), Groupement des Artisans Ruraux Intadeyne (GARI), and TASSAGHT, as well with technical services of Malian government (Hydraulic and Environment, Health and Veterinary).

2.5 Targeting Criteria

2.5.1 Site Selection

The four Circles of Gao region Oxfam works in are a mixture of parstoralist and agropastoralist communities. Our three partners supported the process of site and village selection within the Communes. Oxfam worked closely with the local authorities to assess needs of the identified sites. Of critical importance was that Oxfam reached the poorest as well as the most remote sites and communities in this region where chronic poverty is prevalent.

For our water and sanitation activities one of the criteria for village selection was on the basis of whether they had a school and needed protected water point. Constructing water points in large sedentary areas would facilitate the scope of these communities to build their infrastructures further. Some villages were chosen because they wanted to construct a school and needed water points to facilitate this process. In general, this worked well although more time was needed to consult more people before making the final choice. Investing water points in these areas will also facilitate the process of settlement for those who want to, with the knowledge that they have quick access to basic services such as water and schools. Given our knowledge of the current sedentarisation process the targeting criterion for water points was strategic.

2.5.2 Beneficiary Selection

Agriculturalists and pastoralists were both hit hard with failing crops following a third successive year of poor rains. The reduced harvests were further badly hit following an invasion of birds and locusts, which ravaged what crops remained; this had never before happened in Niger or Mali, but has been a common phenomena in Mauritania.

The food crisis hit the most vulnerable families the hardest with access to cereals seriously reduced following the sharp rise in market price for grains. Many sites report that the price of cereals increased up to ten times their normal rate.

However, of this group of most vulnerable agriculturalist and pastoralists, the pastoralists were particularly hard hit. Not only due to the reduced availability of pasture for animal fodder but their terms of trade deteriorated as their livestock became thinner and weaker, relative to the increase in the price of agricultural commodities, which led to destitution and a

loss of livelihoods and assets. Their contingency to future disaster was also further reduced. The pastoralist areas were found to be in the most need of food, water, and public health promotion.

Women in Mali are often left to support their families - effectively becoming women headed households for up to 6 months of the year. Their husbands are forced to travel far a field in search for money to cover the annual hunger period. The role of women varies from one community / ethnic group to the next, however women are clearly a vulnerable group here and were prioritised to benefit from all activities. Nearly 50% of CFW beneficiaries were women. All of the beneficiaries of the animal re-stocking were women; in most areas all of the beneficiaries of vegetable gardening were women, and the income generating activities through the micro-credit schemes to women's associations indeed were all women.

Oxfam formed Management Committees (MCs) – generally consisting of 2 men and 2 women, and gave them the ownership to lead a community process to decide beneficiaries. For both CFW and for the animal re-stocking the community were involved in self-targeting after our partners and Oxfam set minimum vulnerability criteria. With the Re-stocking Oxfam staff conducted follow-up interviews to cross check the communities selection process and targeting, and to ensure specific minimum criteria had been met.

The suggested basic minimum criteria Oxfam set was to support the selection of the poorest of the poor. The criteria included women headed households, the elderly and the disabled. People who were unable to work (the elderly and disabled) were included as CFW beneficiaries, as Oxfam best practice, as 'free beneficiaries' where the community agreed.

2.6 Coverage

The project has covered Gao region especially the North East (Menaka), the South (Intillit) and the North West (Bourem). Chronic poverty defines this area. People suffer from an annual hunger period for agriculturalists during the dry season – just before the harvest is reaped. For the pastoralists the lean season (May-June and July) occurs just before the pasture re-growth. By July 2005 an estimated 43% of people were at risk in Bourem alone. Global Malnutrition rates revealed 15% malnutrition.³ We were able to work in coordination with other INGOs and the local authorities to ensure our coverage of affected areas was as wide as possible.

Since June 2005, we have been collecting monthly food security indicators across Gao region to monitor closely the situation.

2.7 Inter-Agency Co-operation

Oxfam GB participates in a monthly meeting on food security in the Gao region led by the Governmental Early Warning System (Système d'Alerte Précoce, SAP). We regularly meet with World Food Programme (WFP), Action Against Hunger - Spain (AAH) and local NGOs to share information on the ground related to food security and cereal price and market trends more broadly. We coordinate our interventions in the circle of Bourem with Save the Children Fund (US) because we have a common local implementing partner (ADESAH) who also uses DEC funds.

In addition, we worked with Action Contre la Faim Action (ACF) on developing a joint nutrition survey with WFP, Italian Association of Volunteers (LIVA) and Save the Children (UK) by sharing experiences, with SAP (Early System Warning) and the Regional Hydraulic

³ Figures from WFP / Centre pour la Sécurité Alimentaire assessment in July 2005

Office. ACF undertook the nutritional survey in Anderamboukane, Menaka Circle, funded by Oxfam and DEC, We are sharing information regularly to ensure as many areas as possible are covered as a part of our longer-term disaster preparedness plans.

2.8 Challenges and Constraints:

2.8.1 Logistic challenges: The main constraints are the bad status of the roads in Gao region. Staff have to travel in either a 4X4 vehicle or where they are based in the field use motorbikes. It hinders the speed with which Oxfam is able to implement and be present on the ground). The extreme heat is also a hindrance.

2.8.2 Political Constraints: Gao region is one of the most politicised areas in Mali. Political leaders are putting pressure on workers and want some time to dictate activity plans according to their own agenda. The choice of sites in one area (Bourem) created some difficulties and delays, as there were inherent local political problems. This was resolved by holding a meeting with local leaders. The interest of the Malian Government to support and sustain pastoralism is marginal.

2.8.3 Geographical challenges: It has been difficult to respond effectively and rapidly to support the needs of beneficiaries spread out over vast areas. Identification of beneficiaries has not been easy with many people living nomadically, no lists available to confirm who lives in a village or site, and a strong system of solidarity between sites. Oxfam used a deliberate strategy of targeting sedentary communities to spread the message of Oxfam's intervention. The geographical constraints and the constraints of communicating directly with people has meant confident targeting of the most vulnerable people has been difficult. Due to the geographical distances it has not been possible for Oxfam staff to always cross check information has been communicated as we would have liked it, to the most vulnerable people.

2.8.4 Poverty constraints: Chronic poverty, lack of resources and environmental change are continuously jeopardizing the sustainability of livelihoods for all groups, especially those with nomadic lifestyles. High market prices and extremely remote pastoralist areas lead to very high cereal prices. Unfavourable terms of trade for animals reduce the purchasing power of pastoralist families. Outbreak of animal diseases increases risk of additional loss of livestock. Traditionally used coping strategies are exhausted or very limited, and many families are continuously forced to deplete their animal stocks or other assets when things become difficult. The most vulnerable livelihood groups are the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Gourma and Northern Bourem. The most vulnerable households are those of pastoralists, where women and children are left behind and men are on transhumance with their animals.

2. Achievements Against Objectives: Outputs and Impact

Outputs	Achievements	Further Details	Impact
<p>Food Security</p> <p>28,000 people (4,000 households) in agro-pastoral communities have their food needs met</p>	<p>Cash for Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,600 men and women benefited from CFW activities (direct payment). A further +28,000 people benefited indirectly – the beneficiaries wider family gained from the income. • 65 sites built infrastructures. This included watering trees and bushes planted during the emergency phase (funded through other donors), building or improving community buildings, pond digging, and dam and small dyke construction. • Average of 45 worked days per beneficiary (total of 258,355 work days) 	<p>Following our experience in response to direct food insecurity in the Gao region, and considering that DEC funds were used in a post-emergency context, CFW seemed the best solution to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable people.</p> <p>A payment of 750 F CFA per person per day was calculated as the equivalent of 3 kg of cereals per day (the daily ration for a 7-people per household, according to Sphere standards).</p> <p>Communities identified the activities they wanted to undertake through CFW.</p> <p>One activity was to harvest fodder seeds for pasture regeneration next year – however given the environmental conditions (the lack of rain this season) this activity was not fruitful.</p>	<p>According to our monitoring and evaluation, more than 50% of cash distributed was used to meet basic needs, such as food. The remaining was used to pay school fees, health expenses, to pay debts from the emergency phase or to restart an activity (e.g., small business and/or buying goats or sheep).</p> <p>The beneficiary figures do not include the wider community who benefited indirectly further from the community activity and the increased cash in the local economy.</p>
Outputs	Achievements	Further Details	Impact
<p>Livelihoods</p> <p>45,000 pastoral households vaccinate their animals.</p>	<p>Vaccinated 285,000 cattle against peri-pneumonia and nodular dermatitis, at a 50% subsidised cost.</p> <p>Contract signed with the Government of Mali (GoM) for the Vaccination Campaign</p> <p>Animal Re-stocking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,200 direct beneficiaries (all women) (+6,000 indirect beneficiaries) in 17 sites received goats and sheep via animal fairs. 	<p>The Vaccination Campaign is part of the Malian Government's Livestock Policy. It was supported by Oxfam (our 3 partners sensitised herders) and organised by the Regional Veterinary Services (including bearing of administrative costs). In a region where the main activity is animal breeding, it is essential to protect this livelihood, especially in the months following a major crisis.</p>	<p>The campaign was a measurable success, as the number of vaccinated animals is above the 80 % target required by the Government nationally.</p> <p>People who benefited from animal stocking are able to restart their animal breeding activities; a vital asset in the Sahel.</p> <p>Following our seed distributions for the</p>

<p>4,800 affected pastoral and agro-pastoral households benefit from productive inputs (restocking), training and access to seeds.</p>	<p>Vegetable Gardening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 370 direct beneficiaries (all women) (+1850 indirect) in 11 sites received seeds for vegetable gardening, skills training and follow up during the agricultural season to see how the gardens were progressing. 1.5 ha of garden created. • 35 beneficiaries received training in pilot “micro-gardening” techniques. • 3 partner staff trained in micro-gardening in Dakar, Senegal. • 4 Women’s Micro Credit Associations given capital to develop their credit scope. 12 representatives of these Associations received training to refresh their knowledge on finance management. • 4 Associations or GIE (<i>Groupements d’interet Economique</i>) specialised in waste management formed as running businesses with provision of money and tools. 	<p>Oxfam subsidized both vaccines so the herder paid only 50%, to encourage them to take future responsibility for vaccinations.</p>	<p>vegetable gardening people have been able to diversify their diets by eating what they produce. If they are near to a market they can earn a little cash by selling some too.</p> <p>In terms of sustainability of the gardens – Will depend on their access to seeds – the women’s associations has managed to set aside funds to maintain them, which should ensure sustainability.</p>
<p>Water and Sanitation</p> <p>25,000 people from pastoral and agro-pastoral communities have improved access to water.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 new boreholes drilled and equipped with hand pumps. • 8 boreholes rehabilitated (6 with new hand pumps). One was fitted with a wind pump, which will deliver twice as much water as a hand pump). • 2 wells constructed to take advantage of shallow groundwater in areas where water points exist, exploiting deep groundwater. These have too much dissolved solids - so not advised for drinking water use. • 2 wells rehabilitated, one of which has greatly improved access to water for a local Women’s Association vegetable garden. • 1 solar pump repaired for a village of approx. 2,500 inhabitants. • Committees set up in all villages and training 	<p>12 boreholes planned but 3 did not have water, and water in the fourth had too much dissolved solids for safe human consumption. All the boreholes were protected with concrete slabs, walls, drain and soak away.</p> <p>These wells currently dry but after the rains they should hold water for most of the year. This is a seasonal effect where there is more water in the upper part of the ground. This should greatly help the community.</p>	<p>21,000 people have improved access to water of quality. Village committees have been trained which will improve water point management in the future and possibly other local development activities. Awareness of hygiene has been raised and activities, which were identified and agreed by the communities themselves, have begun to improve sanitation in the villages.</p>

	<p>given to maintain water points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hygiene education given on water related diseases. Plans developed by each village to improve sanitation (e.g. construction of soak ways or latrines). Efforts made to support the local economy with 10 local businesses involved in the project as contractors – mainly for well construction and rehabilitation, and delivery / installation of pumps. 		
Outputs	Achievements	Further Information	Impact
<p>Public Health Promotion</p> <p>25,000 people from pastoral and agro-pastoral communities are sensitised on public health issues related to water and hygiene promotion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 000 people have been sensitized in PHP key messages. 23 health promoters from the Regional Health Direction of Gao trained in Public Health Promotion (PHP) MOU signed with the Regional Health Direction for the implementation of the programme through 25 Community Health Centres. Formed and trained a network of 128 Community Health Workers (CHWs) – elected by the respective communities. 44 women registered as representatives (34% of total representatives), with 84 men. CHW's have trained their respective communities in personal hygiene; environmental sanitation; preventive measures against illnesses linked to water; hygiene sanitation and malaria; building and using latrines – (sensitisation for follow up interventions planned). 16,000 impregnated mosquito nets supplied to Reference Health Centres - in turn distributed to the most vulnerable people (pregnant women and children aged 0 – 11 	<p>Communities were asked to make a contribution to the work and this amount was put into savings for pump maintenance.</p> <p>Special emphasis on giving voice to women; 3 female 'awareness raisers' in charge of ensuring this.</p> <p>We worked closely with State technical Services / Ministry of Health, other local and international NGOs, Reference Health Centres, Community Health Centres and Community Health Association delegates to gather health information and to form a central database related to the health situation on the region. We now have good knowledge of how Community Health Centres Function, how far people use them, and how public health problems are met by the community. Our future interventions are being adapted to meet these gaps and needs.</p> <p>We planned to target 142 CHA's, and have reached 90% of this planned target.</p>	<p>It will take longer to assess the results of the training and awareness campaigns delivered by the CHW to their communities. However, initial follow up visits indicate an improvement in child cleanliness – with Mothers taking more charge; awareness of the need for drinking water treatment before</p>

	<p>months, and the elderly).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latrine maintenance kits distributed to 4 Reference Health Centres in the region of Gao and 20 schools. Supplied with sensitisation and sanitation tools as recommended by the planning workshop held at the end of December 2005. 	<p>Training for the CHW's was translated into Tamasheq. The training was supported by Oxfam and ESSC (Social Health Team of Circle).</p> <p>Latrine Maintenance Kit consisted of: 40 loudspeakers, 80 wheelbarrows, 160 rakes, 160 brooms, 284 pairs of gloves, 160 shovels, 142 pairs of boots, 200 masks, 200 plastic rubbish bins to these CHA's.</p>	
<p>Advocacy</p> <p>An advocacy plan dealing with pastoralism and livelihoods issues is developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,000 booklets on the "pastoral charter", (national law regarding natural resources and pastoral issues), printed (in French and two local languages), and distributed to herders. • 23 sensitisation sessions organised, one in each of the 23 Communes, in order to sensitise representatives of pastoralist communities, community representatives, technical services and administration. The booklets on the "pastoral charter" were distributed at the end of those sessions. • 6 vaccination parks were built in the Gao region. Management committee for vaccination park and their monitoring strategy plan has to be put in place in the next phase 	<p>This activity was implemented through a local NGO and through the Regional Herders Federation that Oxfam helped to create through its ongoing pastoralist development project.</p> <p>The literacy level of beneficiaries is low but people who are literate gave general explanation of the Charter during meeting as well as in peoples homes.</p> <p>Vaccination park used during the campaign; community and technical services are under community control.</p>	<p>Around 700 people attended the sensitisation sessions, but we estimate that 35 000 people will have access (directly or indirectly) to the pastoral charter content as a result of this intervention.</p>

3. Analysis of Expenditure (additional comments to the Financial Section)

The overall spending in Mali was also in line with the initial budget (99.9%). There are two major areas of significant changes but as explained these have been contained within the overall budget except for the Non-personnel (+22%) and Personnel (+24%) sections.

The overspent in the first one (Non-Personnel) is explained by the presence of more staff than had been the usual to respond to the crisis. As a result of this, Oxfam had to move into a larger office to accommodate project management/monitoring functions and the administrative support cost built-up along the same line. In the Personnel section, the travel and accommodation sub-line mirrors very much this increase of staff related costs although some savings could be made to offset these costs from the Staff benefit sub line (£23,851 spent against £42,799 budgeted). A lot of these increases find also their rationale from the increased monitoring activities that took place during this campaign.

Although we have actually under-spent under the Supplies and Materials section, it is worth noting that some key changes did take place in order to respond better to the situation faced by our staff. The Health and Agricultural components were indeed more invested into. Mosquito nets were distributed to the most vulnerable beneficiaries namely women and children to prevent fatal malaria cases to build-up and this accompanied by health promotion initiatives. In the Agricultural sector, animal restocking and vaccination initiatives eventually helped reconstitute the income basis of the targeted households.

[Figure Removed]

4. Lessons Learned

"The pond has enabled us to construct 2 mud houses and begin the construction of a school on our site. Our older children now will be able to go to school when the pond has water in the rainy season. With water here we will transform the way we live We will no longer live in straw huts, but will live in houses -we will abandon the old way of living," Beneficiaries in Tinagadoubou, Intilit Commune.

1. Sustainability

The programme has some good examples of sustainable activities such as the re-forestry programme in schools, where head teachers have supported the projects and encouraged children for example to look after the trees, particularly in the dry period where there is a risk that the young trees may not survive. There is also dyke construction in Tessit, which Oxfam supported the completion of. People there have already reported an improved rice crop. There were also a number of ponds, which communities extended in depth and width, which will have long-term benefits in terms of provision of water.

2. Cash for Work

A Cash Programming approach works and is highly effective in delivering cash to people quickly. It gives people the choice regarding how they spend it. In places where proximity to market was close cash was greatly appreciated. There is scope to open up the debate on Cash Programming in a context like Mali further as a part of longer term learning: different sites and villages have different relationships to markets, different ethnic makeup, and differing gender relations, different experiences of local conflict; this needs to be understood

and programme better tailored to meet these varying needs for our transition / long-term programming.

Best Practice

All of the sites visited had a quota of vulnerable elderly and disabled people who they paid (voucher / cash) though they did not need to work. This ensured that the most vulnerable people in a community (those who are unable to work) are able to benefit from the intervention.

3. Management control

There is a direct correlation between effective programming and good community-based programme management practices (careful targeting, cultural awareness, understanding of local practices, understanding local market, proximity of markets, understanding of value based systems, and community etc).

Transparency is a challenge in the Sahel in sites that are geographically vast and where there are high levels of illiteracy, and consequently reliance on a few key people to lead communications about our interventions. We need to build our knowledge of the relationship and power dynamics for those people who hold information in communities. We need to better understand 'how' communities communicate with one another and between themselves.

In general the choice of projects for the Public Health component was appropriate and we achieved a good mix of new and rehabilitated water points. However, the plan had been to construct two large diameter wells. These were not achieved due to time and budgetary constraints.

5. Conclusions

A longer-term development strategy that builds on existing local capacities must be put in place in order to stop food crises becoming emergencies. In order to achieve this, organisations like OGB and the donors need to recognise that the primary issue, and therefore a central theme in terms of programme approach, is strongly linked to access.

The first phase of the DEC Sahel emergency programme has achieved its stated objectives and utilised all the funding. Oxfam used an approach based on; community involvement and mobilization, the provision of an integrated "package" of mitigation support, integration into the existing WFP cereal bank and FFW programme and use of Cash programming. Programme teams delivered what was promised and large numbers of vulnerable people were able to mitigate the food insecurity and start planning for the future. During the programme, OGB also used a number of innovative approaches (cash programming, access to water, flexible response) and worked in remote and difficult areas.

3. MAURITANIA

DEC Disaster Response Programme Final Report

Country:	Mauritania
Localities:	Aftout Region
Thematic Areas:	Drought Mitigation, Food Security and Livelihoods, Water & Sanitation, Public Health Promotion
Lead Agency:	Oxfam GB
Partners:	Oxfam GB is fully operational in Aftout, and works through SLODA in Affole.

3.1 Project Summary

- **Name of Project:**

Disaster Response Programme (*Niger Crisis Appeal*)
Mauritania, August 2005 – April 2006

- **Duration of Project:**

9 Months

Project cost (indicate DEC funds as a percentage of overall programme budget)

£ 616,641 was spent in Mauritania.

The DEC funds, as a percentage of overall project budget is around 66%.
(Oxfam GB's total spend in Mauritania was £ 932,076).

3.2 Aim and Objective(s)

In the first phases the programme aimed to protect the lives of 36,000 people through improved food security and support to public health; rehabilitation of eroded livelihoods; and reduced vulnerability to natural disasters in the Aftout Region, Mauritania. In the latter phase beginning in October 2005 this number of 36,000 people was increased to include a further 24,000 people in the Aftout region. And, in January 2006 – following an assessment - 1,800 people in 6 villages were reached with drought mitigation in Affole.

Specific Objectives

Objective 1: To rebuild assets lost during the 2005 food crisis for households in 100 communities

Objective 2: To improve the basic infrastructures for water and agriculture for communities in 40 villages, so they have a greater capacity to withstand drought conditions

Objective 3: Communities in 40 villages have a greater understanding and awareness of public health risks and are taking measures to reduce morbidity and mortality.

3.3 Outputs

I. 62,500 people have access to food protect and develop their livelihood through:

- Distribution of vegetable seeds to 72 women cooperatives
- Distribution of flood agriculture seed to 4000 households
- Deworming of small animals for 3371 households
- Restocking for 100 households
- Training of 26 para-vets
- Training of 50 women in gardening techniques and vegetable conservation

II. Water and Sanitation

- Geophysical studies of 12 sites
- Construction of 5 boreholes for 25 villages in Aftout
- Rehabilitation of 4 hand-pumps in 4 villages
- Drilling of 4 new wells for 18 villages
- 20 committee members trained

III. PHP Outputs

- Setting up of 40 village PHP committees, 5 members each 51% women
- Construction of 40 latrines in 20 village schools
- Distribution of hygiene material to 8 232 households

Each village selected 5 people for their village health committee. We advised them to have more women where possible as 51 % of the community members are women. These 40 committees had been divided in 4 training groups and 4 workshops of 3 days were organised in 4 different villages. The training was the opportunity for show them the relation between hygiene and health. We shared knowledge with them on 'disease routes' and how to break these routes to disease.

Members were also given communication skills so that they can go on to share this knowledge with others in their communities.

1. We insisted on the use of soap and soap had been distributed in the villages.
2. 2 cabins latrines constructed in 20 schools. The communities were involved in the latrine construction. They provide sand gravel and water, and the village committee was in charge of the work.
3. After the latrine construction we organised animation sessions in the school on latrine importance and use.
4. Soap had also been given to school.
5. The communities were very enthusiastic to do some thing by themselves and for themselves.

3.4 Partners

Oxfam was fully operational in both the first (July 05 – September 05) and second phases (October 05– April 06) of the response in the Aftout region.

In the second phase (October 05– April 06), most of the DEC funds were used. We decided to expand our operations to the Affolé Region, following an assessment, and increase the number of villages we worked in Aftout. This assessment showed that there were pockets of considerable vulnerability with the loss of livelihood assets following the locust and drought emergency.

Oxfam worked with SLODA, an old partner of Oxfam’s development work, the communities were familiar with Oxfam and SLODA and this facilitated the work in this area.

Oxfam also worked closely with the **Ministry of Rural Development** to develop the concept of seed fairs. Representatives of this department (technical level) were invited to visit the fairs to check the quality of the seeds and to be involved as consultants to the process.

The water and sanitation teams also worked closely with the **Ministry of Hydraulics** who we coordinated and consulted with for the provision of water points. As we worked operationally for the water intervention, the Ministry acted as a point of contact to link Oxfam to private contractors.

3.5 Targeting Criteria

3.5.1 Site Selection

Aftout is one of the poorest regions of the country. People have developed extraordinary coping mechanisms over many decades in order to survive the regular drought, and recently the regular invasions of locusts and birds that eat away the already limited crops. Instead people travel to the capital Nouakchott to find unskilled work as labourers leaving behind their wives and children to manage survival in this harsh environment.

Oxfam has worked in Mauritania since 1983, and in the region of Affole since this time. Oxfam is well know in the area – has good visibility and the indeed it was our staff who rang the alarm bell that the situation was becoming difficult on the ground.

. When the locust invasion returned in 2004 with the food crisis again emerging, Oxfam decided to intervene in the aftout area again with the WFP. The area was divided into 4 main areas: Sangrava, Male, Wadamour and Djonaba. The most vulnerable villages were selected, with an emphasis placed on the zone of Male, which has the largest geographical expanse, the largest population and the most vulnerable sites and households.

A full assessment of need was conducted and villages on the basis of WFP technical criteria for the first phase. Villages were selected based on their vulnerability, and on the basis the availability of a concrete building for use as a Cereal Bank to store grain. Oxfam decided to continue to work in these villages. Other selection criteria we focused on included vulnerability, the accessibility of the site and the absence of local tensions. We also prioritised villages amongst those selected that were ‘focal points’ for other villages. These villages were larger, had good access to markets, were largely sedentary and were easily accessible to neighbouring villages passing through.

Oxfam’s experience of Affole guided our intervention in the region. Affole is characterised by high levels of community solidarity. Where one person gains financially from an NGO, this gain is consciously re-distributed to others who may not have been included in the original beneficiary list. With this local knowledge Oxfam decided to divide the areas of intervention

by geographical location – knowing that any gains would be divided between the neighbouring villages.

3.5.2 Beneficiary Selection

The project activities targeted both vulnerable male and vulnerable female agro-pastoralists with priority to women and women headed households. The main target of the intervention was the whole household and in this area 65% of the households are women headed.

In all of the areas of activity, Village Committees were formed. These committees were independent from local political bias, Oxfam and broader political affiliations. The Village Committees were given guidance by Oxfam in terms of set up and beneficiary selection criteria. The Committees comprised at least three women and included representation from the various ethnic groups as well as represented both black and white Mores. As a beneficiary explains:

“Before every activity there was a public meeting putting every ones names forward; different people were selected every time. Names of people can be removed or added. The village Chief is responsible for telling everyone about the meetings – if people are unaware - each Chief is responsible. The Chief of the village knows everyone and visits everyone,”

Vegetable Gardening

Women were the targets of the vegetable gardening. The process was to strengthen existing Cooperatives. Gardening is rightly seen as hard work and a difficult chore that adds to the workload burden of women (not least because fetching water in some of the sites can take up to a day on donkey back). However, by targeting, training community nominated trainers to train the Union of Cooperatives, and by turning the gardens into nutritional and financial sources has in fact empowered women.

Cash for Work

In the two areas of work the priority was to reach the most vulnerable households with CFW activities.

In Affole it was very difficult to persuade communities to consider the concept of free beneficiaries. Communities here felt that everyone should participate in the CFW – as a result of the strong sense of solidarity. Despite the emphasis placed on women headed households the communities all felt that because they all shared a high level of vulnerability there was no special emphasis given to women headed households

3.6 Coverage

Oxfam has implemented emergency responses in the two regions covered in previous years (2002 and 2003).

The international community acted quite quickly in response to the Mauritanian Government’s call for massive food aid in November 2004 and WFP launched an emergency programme to provide 31,500 MT of food to the 400,000 most vulnerable people of the country. The WFP made dire predictions for the 2005-2006 estimating that 60% of households living in farming areas will not have enough to live.

In the first phase of this response we decided to respond to Aftout, as this region had already suffered a locust invasion from which they were not yet fully recovered, making the area even more vulnerable. With the 2005 crisis and lack of rain, and Oxfam’s knowledge of the area, this region was chosen for the first intervention.

Later on an assessment was carried out in Affole region, which concluded that intervention in water supply (wells) and management (dykes) was necessary. Oxfam implemented its cash for work in the region for this purpose.

The programme has covered 190 villages in four districts in the Aftout area, and a further 6 villages in Affolé area.

3.7 Inter-Agency Co-operation

Oxfam is engaged in a forum which groups together all international NGOs working in Mauritania. At a regional level Oxfam is closely involved in regular meetings with local authorities and other stakeholders.

3.8 Challenges and Constraints

1. Logistical challenges

The DEC Programme started with logistical delays, due to the volume of the material to be purchased and transported to the sites and the organization of the team's movements around the field

The intervention area is very large – this provided logistical and geographic constraints. The logistical requirements to purchase and transport equipment was not easy. (21 trucks, 5 pick-up 4x4 and 6 Oxfam vehicles to transport staff). Radio communications between vehicles was also not optimal at the beginning of the emergency intervention.

2. Political constraints

Following the coup in Mauritania in 2005 the new Government has facilitated the interventions of NGOs. The political climate has not hindered our work here. However Mauritania is prone to political coups and these in themselves can set the back drop of political uncertainty in which we operate.

3. Geographic constraints

There are vast geographic distances between the local field offices in Aleg. The Commune of Male is 200 km away for example, and local field staff stays in the villages – and cover the 190 villages on motorbikes. This of course poses challenges of time, coverage and programme monitoring, which have all had to be taken into account when planning the intervention.

Output	Achievements	Further Information	Impact
<p>Food Security</p> <p>To rebuild assets lost during the 2005 food crisis for households in through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by providing productive inputs, training and access to seed through seed fairs (for arid zone vegetable gardening and rain-fed crops). 	<p>35,000 people had their assets rebuilt and received food security support.</p> <p>72 Women Cooperatives received a range of quality vegetable seeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Cooperative received 2 kilos of good quality vegetable seeds. • 110 women trained as trainers in vegetable gardening techniques and vegetable pickling. • 4,000 households received seeds for rain fed cultivation at 3 Seed Fairs organised by Oxfam, (Included distribution of sorghum, maize, niebe beans, for cereal production). <p>20,000 cows vaccinated in coordination with the Government's National Campaign for Animal Vaccination</p> <p>De-worming Animals 36,165 small animals (sheep and goats) belonging to 3,371 households (including 814 women heads of households) in 125 villages had their animals de-wormed.</p> <p>Animal Re-stocking 500 small animals distributed to 100 households in Aftout - women headed households were prioritised (80% of beneficiaries were women). The animals were vaccinated at 4 Animal Fairs, the animals are monitored so the first round of all offspring are re-distributed to a further round of new 100 household beneficiaries.</p> <p>22 Veterinary assistants were trained in Animal Health and Animal Medicine, and equipped with first aid drugs and vaccinations.</p> <p>2 Aleg based (our field office) agronomists trained on micro-gardening techniques in Senegal. There is a plan in the next phase to go on to train beneficiaries. 10 industrial-scale grinding machines delivered to 10 focal point villages. (These villages are near market centres</p>	<p>Women's Cooperatives were already existing and further strengthened by Oxfam with the formation of Unions – pooling together Cooperatives where more than one existed in a village. Each Cooperative has approx. 50 women members. Oxfam strategically trained the marginalized black Mores for the vegetable training. They then went on to train the others in their respective communities.</p> <p>With the recurrent drought, seeds are not available (which kind?), or are very expensive and of poor quality.</p> <p>Oxfam contracted Government services as a private team to support with the vaccination.</p> <p>De-worming animals can increase their potential to have healthy offspring and produce more milk.</p> <p>Animals were distributed to the poorest families who had some experience and the means to look after and sustain the animals. It is normal here for women to own them and so they were prioritised to receive them.</p> <p>The vets' assistants are to be paid for their services. The village committees will monitor this. Oxfam strategically trained the marginalized black Mores for the training. Intervention builds on previous training given.</p>	<p>20 hectares of land – often in very dry settings have been either established or developed as vegetable gardens.</p> <p>Women are able to contribute to improving the nutritional quality of their families diets</p> <p>The production has increased in quality because the activity has begun on time and the quantity is sufficient. .</p> <p>The distribution of rain fed seeds through the seed fairs have reduced the dependence on debt (with more crops to eat) and increased the production of cereals.</p> <p>The de-worming has increased animal production of milk and avoided miscarriage. This intervention made use of Oxfam's locally trained para-vets (from a previous intervention) as well as other individuals to administer the medication. There is an increased awareness of the benefits of de-worming.</p> <p>Reconstruction of the most important source of resources for the vulnerable families. 18% of the distributed animals came with offspring.</p> <p>Improved knowledge and skills of para-vets that benefited local communities. Para vets have been able to generate an income as a result of their new skills, and have increased their social status amongst the more dominant white Mores.</p>

	have many nearby villagers passing through). This was linked to the drought mitigation activity below where 10 grinding mill shelters were constructed through CFW.	Grinding millet is expensive and time consuming especially for women who often have to travel	
<p>Drought Mitigation</p> <p>To improve the basic infrastructures for water and agriculture for communities in 40 villages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing of dam's cultivation areas. 30 new vegetable perimeters have also been fenced. • 4 wells rehabilitated and 3 filtering dykes built in Affolé area • 10 grinding mill's shelters have been built in Aftout • 6 boreholes for potable water constructed and equipped with hand pumps (using contractors) • 4 existing hand pumps repaired in Aftout. • 4 new wells dug in Affolé • 14 Management committees set up and members trained to ensure the management and maintenance of water sources • 10 ha pasture reserves created in 5 villages (areas fenced off for grazing reserved for lean period) 	<p>Fencing is a recurrent need among Aftout farmers. It is the only one way to secure their crops against animals that belong to "former" masters or high rank army officers.</p> <p>Geophysical studies have conducted in 12 locations conducted by local contractor - but water found in only 6 sites</p> <p>The pasture reserves provide food for small animals during dry season. Reduce the need for de-stocking for food purchase.</p> <p>A cost recovering system has been set up for the 10 water points in Aftout and Affolé (the communities pay a small amount of cash to a pool managed by the community to maintain the pumps)</p>	<p>Water availability, quality and access improved. Women and children devote less time to fetching water. Reduced the distance of about 25 villages to the water points from an average of 14 km to 5 km.</p> <p>20 Communities members trained in maintenance operations for pumps, and 3 regional repairers trained. The spare part seller identified in Nouakchott and the communities and the repairers know how to reach him.</p> <p>The well construction uses community involvement and self- management as the basis of their approach.</p> <p>60% of the direct beneficiaries are women. 70% of the beneficiaries are black Mores (the most vulnerable)</p> <p>There has been a benefit to local traders and the local economy as a result.</p> <p>These operations have provided a substantial amount of Cash to the community through CFW</p>
<p>Public Health</p> <p>Communities in 40 villages have a greater understanding and awareness of public health risks and are taking measures to reduce morbidity and mortality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 volunteer public health promoters trained • 40 water and hygiene committees set up • 200 resource people trained (53.5% were women) in health promotion campaign. • Distributed health and hygiene materials. Soap to 8,232 households, and to 20 schools in Aftout. • 40 latrines have been built in 20 schools 	<p>Used appropriate cultural and participatory methodologies for health and hygiene education.</p> <p>The planned objective was to reach 4,000 households. This number was doubled and schools integrated.</p>	<p>Sustainability programme likely due to high involvement community.</p> <p>6000 school children initiated to latrine use and maintenance</p>

3.10 Analysis of Expenditure (additional comments to the Financial Section)

The overall spent in Mauritania is in line with the initial budget (99.97%). Some key changes did take place within the Supplies and Materials section mainly as a response to the risks identified in the gap between the technical proposal submitted for the rehabilitation of the Aftout dam and the actual capacities of the engineering company. Completion of boreholes in the Aftout area cost less than planned due to penalties (delays in work completion) charged to the company and as a result more funding could be transferred to other activities. Indeed it was felt that a shift into the Agricultural sector would bring along better impacts for the beneficiary communities as outlined in this report.

The salaries section was overspent and there are several reasons for this. First, an annual salaries review for local staff was not built into the initial budget. Secondly, additional staff was needed either temporarily (drivers to cope with the annual leave absences of permanent ones) or as a key contribution to the overall management of the project (Project Support Manager) in particular with the overall in-country financial monitoring activities; a local accountant was also brought in to help manage the increased cash for work activities.

The variance in the travel and accommodation sub-line is only due to under-budgeting problems at the initial proposal stage. This was not necessarily picked-up at the interim report due to the slower spending in the first part of the project.

[Figure Removed]

3.11 Lessons Learned

As per above sections on lessons learned, the main points per programme intervention will be highlighted.

Vegetable seed distribution to Women's Cooperatives

"We were very weak with hunger before Oxfam came." 2005 was our hardest year – we suffered until the rains came later that year. Zagoura village (Male Commune).

1. Women's empowerment

The vegetables gardens were greatly appreciated by Women's Cooperatives as they allowed them to produce vegetables in dry areas where planting was largely deemed to be impossible / or where it had not been successful previously. The vegetables improved the nutritional value to people's diets and also allowed some to generate an additional income by selling the extra harvests. Women were also given training on how to preserve appreciated transformation and conservation of vegetables.

Some villages chose to protect their gardens from grazing animals by selecting fence construction as their CFW activity when asked to decide which community activity they would like to undertake. Other communities did not select this activity - but in evaluations have highlighted this as a need for the future (the community may have prioritised small dyke construction or another activity for CFW. This is something that could be developed for a further intervention.

2. Cooperatives

There is a culture of Cooperatives in Mauritania; they are often seen as ways of gaining financially from either the Government or NGOs. Using existing bodies such as this - which is an efficient way to distribute fast and effectively - always runs the risk of exclusion of those people who are not members. Oxfam strengthened these in villages where more than one operated – to form ‘Unions’ of cooperatives. The single Cooperative then decided which beneficiary to train. Oxfam guided this decision to ensure, where possible, that a black More and a white More (where both lives in the same village) were nominated to be trained for the vegetable gardening.

3. Training

Women were also targeted for skills training for the vegetable gardens. This training was very well received – even in sites where women had existing gardens before this intervention.

The beneficiaries targeted to participate in the training of trainers programme were largely from the more marginalized communities of the black Mores. This strategy was designed to support the black Mores in gaining increased social standing. The white and black Mores have a difficult historically dependent (master –slave) relationship in Mauritania, which still exists today even though it has been made illegal.

Animal Re-stocking and Vaccination

The beneficiaries of this activity were able to restart their livelihoods through animal breeding – though it will take some time for the financial benefits to occur. This will help them having animals and also milk.

3. Conclusions

The situation in Mauritania is similarly difficult as in Mali and Niger with the problems stemming from overall poverty and general vulnerability of the land. With our ongoing programme on the ground, Oxfam was able to respond rapidly and has helped many people in remote and difficult areas. Also, in Mauritania there was a strong link between the emergency intervention and the ongoing development programming. Second phase DEC money will be used in Mauritania to further develop this link.

4. Overall Conclusion Oxfam Emergency Response Sahel

“If Oxfam had not come when they did, I would have been forced to leave my family here to die, and go in search of food as my last chance for survival.” Said a man in Dakoro, Niger. DEC funds, together with Oxfam’s Sahel Appeal have made it possible to assist more than 350,000 men, women and children like him across the three Sahel countries of Niger, Mali and Mauritania.

The programme has had a tremendous impact as described in this report.

Activities have been implemented in three difficult country policy environments, with governments not always willing to admit the extent of the crisis. Official information on stocks and production levels were not always reliable. We have made an effort to work with government, WFP and other actors to improve collaboration and reinforce the capacity of communities to face future shocks.

What have we learnt?

This report highlighted our learning and best practices across the programme. These have been discussed with staff and partners. During a Sahel Learning Forum organised by Oxfam in Dakar in May 06, we have also shared these learning with colleagues from East and South Africa. Reported best practices come mostly from:

Targeting: Taking time to select the most vulnerable communities has made our support very valuable. More importantly, the lifestyle of pastoralists has made it difficult for many agencies to work with them. Within these communities, local groups have been key in the identification of different categories of beneficiaries, taking charge in programme implementation processes.

Approach: It was useful to adopt a flexible cash-based programming, consistent with the root causes of the crisis. This was coupled with a close monitoring of market trends and parameters to detect and correct impact. Also, based on the policy-related nature of the crisis, we developed a series of advocacy training and activities to help partners influence their governments. In Niger we realised that leading and promoting inter-agency coordination has allowed Oxfam to significantly reduce the tension that was steaming through the press between government, the UN and INGOs.

The Road Ahead

As we submit this report, the situation in the Sahel has slightly improved in most places, despite pockets of severe vulnerability in all three countries. Overall animal conditions and market prices are reasonably stable across the Sahel. However, high levels of debt and the extensive loss of productive assets in 2005 have left households extremely susceptible to minor fluctuations in price and the external environment

In Niger market prices are steady even though, in extremely vulnerable areas notably Tillabery, availability of grain is declining, and productive animals found in the market with terms of trade unfavourable for breeders. The situation will continue to deteriorate until October 2006. Oxfam is planning for an urgent action.

In Mali current market prices and pasture situation are as same time last year. Prices may rise in the coming weeks. The greatest risk currently is security situation, which has led to slowing of grain trade because merchants fear attacks and ambushes

In Mauritania market prices are currently higher than this time in 2005. Southern belt suffered bad harvest due to floods & bird attacks. A great proportion of animals found on the market have terms of trade that continue to deteriorate. Families are having difficulties accessing food. The situation will continue to decline until October. Oxfam's request to DEC will be used to mitigate these conditions for the most vulnerable households.

In the coming period, Oxfam will focus on ensuring, wherever this is possible a transition of the programme to a regional Livelihood intervention, integrated into our education and pastoral programmes. This means long-term approach to food security and pastoral activities, basic services approach to water, sanitation and education programmes.

Advocacy efforts will also continue, targeting national and regional decision-bodies to improve the agricultural and trade policies that exacerbated the crisis in the first place, and to adopt/support systems that will reinforce the coping mechanisms of traditional societies.

As indicated above, we already know that an emergency will occur again in the Sahel. Oxfam and other agencies need to be ready to accompany local communities through this.

Appendix 1:

Case Study: Niger

[Appendix Removed]

Appendix 2

Case Study - Mauritania

[Appendix Removed]

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