



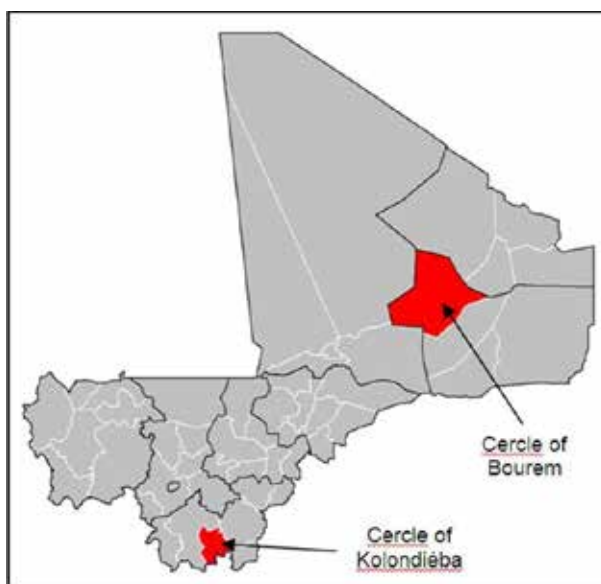
Mali

Resilience

2013/14

Enhancing food security

This project includes two related initiatives that have been carried out by Oxfam and partners since 2010 that are aimed at building food security and resilience among vulnerable people in southern Mali. The 'Food Facility' project was implemented between 2010 and 2011, providing cash transfers, training and agricultural inputs. This was a pilot initiative, intended to test a model for carrying out cash transfers, generate learning, and provide a basis for advocacy with government and donors. The more recent 'Food Security Support Project' has, since 2012, provided a combination of cash transfers, training and agricultural inputs, as well as developing land in several communities for kitchen gardening, training and supporting women's groups in the production of infant formula, broadcasting a radio show and using the 'Reflect' approach to community mobilisation to promote positive agricultural practices and good nutrition.



Map of Mali. The two areas included in this Effectiveness Review are shown in red.

Project date: January 2010 - May 2012

Evaluation: April 2014

Publication: March 2015

Evaluation Method

The review sought to evaluate the impact of two projects among those households directly supported by these projects. A 'quasi-experimental' evaluation design was used whereby data from interviews with project participant households, and with households from nearby communities who had not been supported by the projects, were analysed using propensity-score matching and multivariate regression. The household survey was complemented by a number of focus group discussions to provide deeper insights into the impact of the project than could be captured in the quantitative survey. See the document 'How are effectiveness reviews carried out?' for more information on evaluation design. Full details about the specific evaluation design used in this case are contained in the full report of the Effectiveness Review.

Results

| Project outcome | Evidence of positive impact | | Commentary |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| | 'Very poor' households | 'Poor' households | |
| Adoption of improved agricultural practices | YES | YES | Use of improved seeds was higher among those in the project communities than in the comparison communities – and not only among those who received distributions of seeds directly from the project. |
| Production of staple crops | NO | NO | Total quantity of staple crops produced in 2013 did not differ between those in the project and comparison communities. |
| Production from a kitchen garden | YES | YES | Households in the communities where the kitchen garden intervention was implemented produced a considerably wider range of crops than those in other communities. |
| Borrowing and indebtedness | NO | YES | 'Poor' households supported by the project relied less on borrowing during the year prior to the survey. |
| Livestock ownership and savings | YES | YES | 'Very poor' households supported by the project were more likely to own livestock, but 'poor' households were less likely. Both groups are more likely to have a useful amount of savings than comparison households. |
| Dietary diversity | YES | YES | Those supported by the project were consuming a wider range of food types than those in comparison communities. This effect is not restricted to those supported in kitchen gardening. |
| Total food consumption | YES | NO | Total food consumption among the 'very poor' households appears to be approximately 16 per cent higher than among the corresponding households in comparison communities. |
| Indicators of resilience | Not clear | NO | There is evidence of an impact from the project on some specific indicators of resilience – but little evidence of impact on the overall index of resilience. |

Going forward

Learning from this effectiveness review will be incorporated into future projects in Mali. The review helped to highlight which interventions are most suitable for different objectives. For example, if projects target rapid short-term impacts on means of subsistence and food diversification, then cash transfer and market gardening support activities would be most suitable. On the other hand, if the objective is to boost households' capacities to deal with shocks and shore up long-term food security, activities aimed at supporting farming production and strengthening growers' institutions may be more appropriate. The importance on targeting was reaffirmed, and discussions have already taken place with the offices of the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry for the Solidarity Economy, with a view to harmonising targeting methods. Further, in response to the review findings, efforts will also be made to more effectively couple projects activities with advocacy measures. In particular, the review highlighted the need to couple future interventions with advocacy measures concerning access to factors of production (land and equipment) and access to drinking water, a determining factor in the fight against malnutrition. A post-exit review of the two projects will be conducted in 2016.

Photo credit: Ami Vitale/Oxfam