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Scottish Government Humanitarian Emergency Fund

Mali 2019 Integrated Report

Mercy Corps



Tearfund



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The Humanitarian Emergency Fund: Response in Mali

1. Executive Summary

This activation of the HEF released £200,000 which was equally divided by Mercy Corps and Tearfund to provide urgent humanitarian support for hundreds of families displaced by intercommunal violence in central Mali.

Tearfund exceeded its key objective by distributing cash to 340 households to purchase food & kitchen utensils, providing hygiene and sanitation kits and mosquito bed nets. As well as increasing food security, the support also boosted the social status of these group and their hopes for the future.

Mercy Corps also exceeded its project aims by reaching 478 households with a combination of vouchers and cash to provide essential food items for the most vulnerable displaced groups in the project area.

Both agencies co-operated with each other as well as local partners and Malian authorities to improve effectiveness of the intervention and to increase safety in a very dangerous operating environment.

2. Context

Mali has had a long standing institutional and security crisis since 2012, with conflicts having a profound impact on the population in the North of the country. There has been widespread displacement of communities, disrupting livelihoods and preventing households from meeting their basic needs.

Whilst a peace agreement was signed in June 2015, implementation has been slow with inconsistent political commitment. Violence continues throughout the North and the centre of the country, with attacks by Islamist groups, bandits and other armed actors targeting the Malian military, UNMISMA, civilians and humanitarian workers.

The population remains extremely vulnerable to the combined effects of conflict and natural disasters such as drought and floods. This is compounded by unplanned population movements of displaced persons (IDPs) and returning refugees, which places additional stress on community resources.

A large part of the population, particularly the most vulnerable, have been very badly affected, with loss of limited productive assets and limited money to purchase seeds and other agricultural items. Frequent vehicle robberies have also badly disrupted market supplies, leaving people vulnerable to food insecurity and unable to meet their basic needs. Fear of attacks has also inhibited the use of farmland, further increasing food insecurity in the region.



The Mopti region has been the epicentre of the inter-ethnic conflict and insecurity over the past two years, accounting for 48% of all attacks in Mali in 2018. In a particularly brutal attack towards the end of HEF funded project work in March, Dogon tribesmen killed up to 200 Fulani civilians (including women and children) in a single village.¹

The increase in IDPs in this area from 2,000 to over 16,000 in six months reflects a huge escalation in the needs on the ground, sadly few agencies had been in a position to respond until these projects.

3. Tearfund project

3.1 Project Plan

The project aimed to provide life-saving support to 320 extremely vulnerable households, including 240 displaced and 80 host families in 3 target villages in the Cercle de Bankass (Bankass district in Mopti) where IDPs hadn't previously received any assistance. It aimed to improve food security and reduce malnutrition for the most vulnerable children, improve living conditions and improve health and hygiene through cash transfers, access to emergency WASH (Water, Sanitation and Health support) and other vital household support. Cash was chosen as the main intervention to better respond to the needs of individuals, reduce programme costs and support the local economy.

3.2 Project Impact

The project succeeded in achieving its objectives by distributing cash to 340 households to purchase food & kitchen utensils, providing hygiene and sanitation kits and mosquito bed nets. The cash allowed 6-7 people to be fed in the same household. The extra food was

¹ Background to Dogon-Fulani (Peulh) conflict <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-47694445>

critical as host communities were already facing shortages and would not have been able to feed the new arrivals. As well as increasing food security, the support also boosted the social status of these group and their hopes for the future. Access to clean water also supported improved hygiene and sanitation whilst mosquito nets helped protect from malaria risk and further reducing vulnerability of the target community.

4. Mercy Corps Project

4.1 Project Plan

Mercy Corps conducted a rapid needs assessment in the Bankass, Koro, Bandiagara and Djenne areas to assess the impact of inter-ethnic conflict, its impact on farming activity and consequent food insecurity and how households were being affected. They responded with a food voucher and cash led project to provide essential food needs to 400 displaced households in conflict-affected communities in the Bankass and Djenne circles for three months.

4.2 Project Impact

Despite the extreme security challenges, the project succeeded in meeting food needs of 478 households in this period. The voucher-based system used helped give participants flexibility in their choices of food and provide an infusion of cash to support the recovery of local economies. All voucher exchanges were carried out in a transparent and efficient manner, with participants reporting high satisfaction with the goods they were able to purchase. In a strongly patriarchal culture, 35% of the households supported were female led, 75% of the households were from the two main ethnic groups involved in the conflict.

5. Project Approaches

There was good coordination between the 2 agencies in Mali with Mercy Corps initiating a series of meetings in capital, Bamako and in situ with Tearfund and their local partner ODES-Mali.² This enabled a joint review of areas where there was the greatest need amongst IDPs and thus reduce potential duplication of effort.

With a resurgence of intercommunal violence and the presence of radicals and armed bandits in the project area, close contact was maintained with key civil and military authorities as well as community and religious leaders. This allowed regular updates of mitigation plans and operating procedures (SOPs).

Mercy Corps - The project team met village chiefs, municipal officials and other local officials with responsibility for IDPs. They answered concerns and secured verbal agreement to participate and involve community leaders in all project activities.

Key criteria were established to accurately target households with the greatest need in line with humanitarian principles, whilst ensuring those communities were accessible and had

² ODES – Organisme de Developpment Pour L’Esperance au Mali (ODES-Mali)

strong local markets. These included female-led households, those without breadwinners or those with disabilities. An effort was also made to balance support between the IDP and host communities and between different ethnic groups

Food suppliers were also assessed to benchmark commodity prices, ensure they had the right technical and financial skills to handle food vouchers and to assess how risk of local inflation could be minimised. Eight suppliers met the specified criteria and agreed to participate in the voucher exchange scheme

Local committees with key community representatives were set up to distribute the vouchers whilst also introducing suppliers and the food available. The main items bought were rice, millet, oil, powdered milk, legs and salt.

Follow up home visits assessed how the scheme was progressing, the quality, quantity and price of food purchased and to hear of any difficulties experienced by the beneficiaries.

Due to the extreme security situation, the project team also took steps to defuse community tension with mass awareness raising activities on peace and social cohesion. Participatory theatre sessions allowed the different communities to exchange their problems and concerns and help build trust. Eight performances in local languages reached 2500 people including key local leaders an approach now shared by other NGOs as an approach to deliver better inter community cohesion.

Tearfund - Tearfund worked in partnership with Mali based partner ODES. It also recruited a local field agent to liaise with other agencies, relevant UN clusters and the government to ensure its work was coordinated and appropriate.

A needs assessment was carried out to gather the full picture of what support was being provided in the project area and what all agencies were doing to ensure any response was relevant and timely. It also helped establish relationships with the affected communities and local officials.

The project beneficiaries were selected from a refined list of existing registration data in an objective and impartial manner using established criteria to help ensure the most vulnerable were reached. The criteria were developed with input from IDPs (internally displaced people), host families and local authorities. There were 3 phases of cash distributions for food and one for WASH and kitchen kits.

Tearfund and ODES managed the security situation by reviewing the context daily, and by postponing distributions as required (as per the last distribution) when the security context was considered too fragile for staff to visit.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)

Tearfund - The initial assessment provided a baseline for project impact and helped set realistic project targets. User friendly data collection tools were also developed, with staff

and project stakeholders trained to input and consolidate data from different project locations. The project engaged continuously with project beneficiaries, key government stakeholders and other NGOs/INGOs in the project area.

Mercy Corps – A comprehensive post distribution monitoring report was produced to provide a clear framework to learn from project activities and lead to future improvements in consultation with beneficiaries, partners and funders. Monitoring is carried out by a separate team to ensure there is no direct link with programme implementation to give senior management an independent view of the project performance. A number of local monitors were trained to interview 40% of the beneficiary population with an appropriate questionnaire. This provided information on the gender and age of beneficiaries to help assess the extent to which the most vulnerable groups had been reached. Care was taken to remove any potential bias from the surveying by beneficiaries who might be inclined to characterise their situation negatively in the hope of receiving further aid.

7. Key Challenges

The biggest challenge for both projects was the serious security situation which deteriorated significantly during implementation. In late March, more than 130 nomadic Fulani (Peulh) villagers were killed by what appeared to be attackers from the rival Dogon tribe. which prompted Malian authorities to formally advise against NGO operations in the area. The insecurity prompted changes to target areas and approaches. It also affected broader agricultural production and transport, but cash support helped beneficiaries with a wider choice of where to spend their money.

Tearfund – In addition to the security challenges the project diverted resources from a planned nutritional survey as that had recently been carried out by another NGO. The money was diverted to increase number of beneficiaries receiving cash and non-food items (NFIs). In addition, a potential overlap of target beneficiaries was identified with another NGO, but this was corrected and resources diverted to other equally vulnerable IDPs.

Mercy Corps – Repeated armed attacks and continuous population displacements sometimes made project interventions very difficult and monitoring activities very complicated. There were frequent changes in strategy, such as changes to distribution times and locations to reach participants. Tribal threats to some suppliers at one location forced them to withdraw from the voucher scheme, forcing a rapid replacement with direct cash transfers.

The unprecedented scale of food insecurity with unplanned surges in displaced people meant that the project team was sometimes overwhelmed by demand. Participants complained of long waits at food suppliers and frequent lengthy price negotiations. A staggered schedule will be considered for future interventions. Transport was also a challenge as many participants wanted to exchange all their coupons in a single visit to reduce personal risk but couldn't easily carry their goods back to their homes. They were encouraged to cooperate to reduce transport costs. Others complained of the shortage of fresh food, but these are not easily deliverable through a voucher system due to a short shelf lives. The vouchers did though help the independent purchase of fresh food.

8. Finance

Tearfund - The only minor change to the budget was due to the potential project overlaps outlined above. These funds were diverted to provide cash for food, hygiene kits and mosquito nets to an additional 20 households and kitchen kits to an additional 15 host families. The HEF coordinator approved the revised budget and the final project expenditure was in line with this revised budget.

Mercy Corps - There were only minor budgetary adjustments due to exchange rates and savings made on a few programme lines, allowing additional families with severe needs to be supported.

9. Conclusions

Tearfund - By working through local partner, ODES, Tearfund has supported localisation and strengthening of capacity. Together with the direct benefits of cash support for the local economy this will help provide sustainable impact. The MEAL approach yielded a number of lessons learned and will inform future project design, implementation and reporting. With severe ongoing security concerns, Tearfund will seek to continue this work by seeking funding for peacebuilding initiatives.

Mercy Corps – Despite the security challenges, close cooperation with all stakeholders helped deliver project operations without major incidents to help meet the immediate food needs of the target population. Community peace building were well attended and received, indicating need for continued interventions to restore peace in Mali. The project was inundated by demand from both the local authorities and the volume of internally displaced families. The overall security situation remains very worrying with many subsistence farmers unable to access their land with consequent widespread and severe food shortages expected to persist for some time.

Appendix

Tearfund Budget

Project Document Budget					
BUDGET			FINAL REPORT		
Code	Description	Total (GBP)	Total (GBP)	Change (%)	Comments
SUM - A	SUPPLIES/MATERIALS	84,507	84,507	100%	
A1	WASH	10,224	10,388	102%	
A2	Health	-	-	0%	
A3	Shelter	-	-	0%	
A4	Nutrition	-	-	0%	

A5	Camp Management and Coordination	-	-	0%	
A6	Education	-	-	0%	
A7	Protection	-	-	0%	
A8	Livelihoods	-	-	0%	
A9	NFI	-	-	0%	
A10	Food	-	-	0%	
A11	Unconditional Cash-transfer & Vouchers	63,070	63,070	100%	
A12	Multi-sector; integrated programmes	-	-	0%	
A13	Accountability to Affected Populations	2,331	2,286	98%	
A14	Capacity Building	-	-	0%	
A15	Others (Monitoring and evaluation)	8,883	8,764	99%	
SUM - B	LOGISTICS			0%	
B1	Transport	-	-	0%	
B2	Storage/security	-	-	0%	
B3	Office	-	-	0%	
SUM - C	PERSONNEL	8,133	8,133	100%	
C1	In-country locally engaged staff	8,133	8,133	100%	
C2	In-country expatriate staff	-	-	0%	
C3	Off-shore project staff	-	-	0%	
SUM - D	Personal Support	800	800	100%	
D1	In-country locally engaged staff: subsistence / travel	-	-	0%	
D2	In-country expatriate staff: subsistence / housing / travel	-	-	0%	
D3	Out of country staff: subsistence / housing / travel	-	-	0%	
D4	Communications	800	800	0%	
D5	Security	-	-	0%	
E	TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	93,441	93,441	0%	
	Indirect Cost Recovery @ 7%	6,541	6,541		ICR as applicable
	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	99,982	99,982		

CHS	Funds transferred to*:	97,982	99,982	0%	
	1. International NGOs	10,474	10,874	0%	
	2. Southern international NGOs (SINGOs)	-	-	0%	
	3. Affiliated national NGOs	-	-	0%	
	4. National NGOs	87,508	-	0%	
	5. Local NGOs	-	89,108	0%	
	Cash Transfers	63,070	63,070	0%	
	Funds distributed through cash transfers	63,070	63,070	0%	
	Additional costs related to cash transfers	-	-	0%	

Mercy Corps Budget

 MERCY CORPS	Donor Name:	Scottish Government
	/Region:	MALI
	Program Name:	Support to displaced Households affected by the Fulani/Dogon conflict in Mopti Region
	Program Dates:	<i>01/01/2019 - 31/03/2019</i>

BUDGET			FINAL REPORT		
Code	Description	Total (GBP)	Total (GBP)	Change (%)	Comments
SUM – A	SUPPLIES/MATERIALS	69,600	65,794		
A1	WASH	-	-		
A2	Health	-	-		
A3	Shelter	-	-		
A4	Nutrition	-	-		
A5	Camp Management and Coordination	-	-		
A6	Education	-	-		

A7	Protection	-	-		
A8	Livelihoods	-	-		
A9	NFI	-	-		
A10	Food	61,000	58,396	96%	
A11	Unconditional Cash-transfer & Vouchers	-	-		
A12	Multi-sector; integrated programmes	-	-		
A13	Accountability to Affected Populations	3,600	2,215.93	62%	
A14	Capacity Building	-	-		
A15	Others (specify in comments)	5,000	5,182.40	104%	
SUM - B	LOGISTICS	8,724	4,257		
B1	Transport	2,250	3,411.75	152%	
B2	Storage/security		-		
B3	Office	6,474	845.63	13%	
SUM - C	PERSONNEL	15,134	12,099		
C1	In-country locally engaged staff	10,277	3,961.95	39%	
C2	In-country expatriate staff	4,857	8,136.86	168%	
C3	Off-shore project staff	-	-		
SUM - D	Personal Support	-	-		
D1	In-country locally engaged staff: subsistence/ travel	-	-		
D2	In-country expatriate staff: subsistence/ housing/ travel	-	-		
D3	Out of country staff: subsistence/ housing/ travel	-	-		
D4	Communications		-		
D5	Security	-	-		
E	TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	93,458	82,151	93%	

	Indirect Cost Recovery @ 7%	6,542	5,751	7%	ICR as applicable
	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	100,000	87,901	100%	