



MAURITANIA

**EVALUATION OF THE FOOD AID AND
FOOD SECURITY EMERGENCY
INTERVENTION OF 2002-2003 IN
AFTOUT AND AFFOLE AREAS**

FINAL REPORT

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Report submitted to Oxfam-GB Mauritania by:

**Acacia Consultants Ltd.
P.O. Box 340 Sarit Centre
00606 Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya
Telephone 3746655/3742855
admin@acaciaconsultants.org
Mobile: 0733 780900/0722 203444**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oxfam GB implemented a food aid and food security emergency intervention in Mauritania in 2003 in response to worsening food security following successive years of drought. Annual rains had failed in 2002 and this had followed freak storms which killed many livestock and damaged infrastructure in January 2002. One of the worst affected areas was Aftout a transition zone between the desert in the north and the more fertile agricultural areas along the Senegal River in the south. The Aftout region is inhabited by mixed communities of mostly "white moors" and "black moors" whose livelihood strategies are diverse but marginal. Most households rely on a combination of livestock, recession and rain-fed agriculture, migrant labour and trade. Even under normal conditions there are a high number of households considered food insecure or highly vulnerable and child acute malnutrition levels are high i.e. in the range of 10%.

Oxfam GB has had activities in Mauritania since 1983 and implemented an integrated development programme in the Affole zone east of Aftout up until 2000. When Oxfam left Affole some of the former staff were facilitated to form a local NGO, SLODA, which is now operating programmes in some parts of Affole as a partner of Oxfam. At the time of the drought Oxfam GB had a small office in the capital, Nouakchott, but was essentially non operational. The ongoing programmes in micro-credit, gender equality and advocacy were being implemented through partner organisations.

The Oxfam GB Regional Humanitarian Office in Dakar responded to worsening food security indicators from FEWS Net and the Mauritanian Government's own monitoring system (OSA) in September 2002. Oxfam's partner, SLODA, had also been reporting a worsening situation in Affole since January 2002. A food security advisor from the Dakar office carried out an assessment in September/October and on the strength of this an emergency programme was launched. The Regional team took into account the existing Oxfam GB capacity in Mauritania and decided to establish a separate emergency programme to address the food security problems in Aftout and Affole. The components of the programme in Aftout were implemented directly but the components in Affole were implemented through SLODA. The programme purpose was: *"To improve health and nutritional condition of people in vulnerable households in the target area and to support livelihoods"*. Planned outputs included meeting food needs through distribution of free food and supporting agricultural production. Drought recovery activities in livestock, agriculture and water were added in August 2003, following good rains, as part of the ongoing drought recovery programme.

The evaluation of the emergency and recovery programmes was undertaken in January 2004 by a team of consultants from Acacia Consultants in Kenya, partly in order to share lessons learnt from implementation of drought response activities in East Africa during the 1999/2001 drought. The team carried out extensive fieldwork including discussions and participatory analysis with beneficiaries of the Oxfam programme in both Aftout and Affole. Meetings with key national and regional stakeholders also helped to inform the assessment.

A summary of the effects and impacts of the programmes are presented in Chapter 4 and Lessons Learnt and Recommendations are outlined in Chapter 5 and 6 respectively. These concentrate on four related issues;

The selection of activities in an area with highly diversified livelihood strategies – As a classic emergency food intervention the Oxfam Mauritania programme was well done, but it may not have been the best way to support or protect livelihoods. The programme successfully delivered food to over 30,000 people and food genuinely reached vulnerable households for the first time but the quantities received made a relatively small contribution to household food needs over the year. There is some evidence that support to trade and

food purchasing through price subsidies or even cash payments, may have been more in line with households normal livelihood systems.

The programme had targeted market gardening as an activity done by women, which would provide benefits for households in terms of nutrition and income. As a long-term strategy this has some potential but support to vegetable gardening had no impact on the immediate food needs of vulnerable households at the height of the drought. The timing of inputs, shortage of water and difficulties in trying to introduce new techniques in new communities meant that production of vegetables in 2003 was not increased.

The evaluation found that support to cereal production from dam cultivation had limited impact on food security. Complicated social structures within communities mean that elites control land and frequently harvests. This means that marginalized households are unlikely to significantly benefit from improvements in production from dam cultivation.

Overall Oxfam's emergency programme was designed to replace lost agricultural production but not to protect or support livelihoods. Livelihood systems in Aftout had not been clearly understood by Oxfam staff at the beginning of the programme. The intervention was designed to provide food through free food distribution and increased agriculture but these were not the priority needs of the communities at the time. Agriculture (particularly dam cultivation) was an obvious strategy to support but in reality it contributes relatively little to household food security. Even the most frequently expressed and obvious needs, such as water, could not be met by the Oxfam programme until after the drought. The communities attributed the improvement in food security in Oct 2003 to improved livestock and rained agricultural production (following the rains) not to food relief or agricultural support. The diversified livelihood strategies of households in Aftout required more innovative approaches to really relieve drought stress in highly vulnerable families.

The advantages and disadvantages of operating within a separate emergency programme: - A separate emergency programme, managed by food security specialists was the best way to deliver food to a highly vulnerable population at risk of famine. However it may not have been the best way to support or protect livelihoods. The establishment of a completely separate emergency programme operating in an area that Oxfam was not operational presented various difficulties. The Staff did not know Aftout or any of the communities so had to learn a lot at the beginning of the program. Existing human resources and experience within the development programme were limited and the emergency programme was seen as "separate" and not relevant to Oxfam's development priorities in Mauritania. If the emergency programme had operated in an area which Oxfam staff were more familiar with it would have been easier to implement and could have involved the development programme resources more.

The SLODA team understood the Affole communities and how the drought was affecting them better than the Oxfam team in Aftout. This enabled them to adjust the Oxfam emergency and mitigation programmes to better meet the needs of the drought affected communities (e.g. rapid distribution of pesticides in 2002/2003 and seeds in 2003). Their ongoing livelihood support activities such as loans to small enterprise inadvertently provided the most effective drought relief in many villages.

The importance of community empowerment

Black Moor communities in Aftout are considerably marginalized and removed from power. The programme directly targeted small villages with both food and agricultural inputs. Although the interventions themselves had a limited impact the communities gained a sense of worth from being considered for assistance for the first time. Communities felt that the endorsement of community-based committees by NGOs gave them a voice in deciding how inputs were allocated. This is a significant impact as it is the starting point for empowerment

and community development. Ultimately capacity building and empowerment may have more impact on reducing food insecurity than distribution of inputs..

Needs assessment and rapid response: - Pastoralism and water assessments contributed to understanding of problems at village level. The emergency programme included a provision for the assessments but had no plan, or funds to immediately implement the urgent measures recommended in the reports. The results of the assessments could have been used to carry out immediate interventions in water and livestock support which would have considerably relieved drought effects in 2003. At the same time food distributions, agricultural activities and post distribution monitoring all contributed to Oxfam's knowledge and understanding of communities in Aftout. This knowledge contributed to the better design of the subsequent recovery activities but came too late to influence the emergency programme design. Overall ineffective needs assessment and conventional assumptions about the basis for household food security contributed to the weak design of some components of the emergency programme.

It is recommended that the Oxfam Mauritania programme needs to move to a one programme approach in which the capacity to respond to drought emergencies is built into development activities. This programme should be based on a substantive livelihood assessment at village level. The programme capacity in strategic needs assessment, contingency planning and scaling up interventions should be developed. The details of this approach are outlined in the document "Oxfam Mauritania Country Programme Strategy".

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSA	Commission Securite Alimentaire
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Network
GoM	Government of Mauritania
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MSF	Medicines Sans Frontier
OSA	Observatoire de Securite Alimentaire
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirian Literacy and Community Empowerment Techniques
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme

Map of Oxfam Mauritania Interventions



1. CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

1.1.1 This Report

This report is an output of an evaluation of Oxfam GB's food aid distribution and food security emergency programme carried out in the Aftout and Affole areas of the Brakna region of Mauritania in 2002 and 2003. The evaluation was undertaken in January 2004 by two consultants from Acacia Consultants Ltd., a relief and development consultancy firm based in Nairobi, East Africa (with assistance of an experienced local consultant), together with Oxfam GB staff, earlier involved in the implementation of the Programme. The report presents the details of the programme as planned, the progress realized in the implementation of activities and the results and impacts achieved so far.

This report is in 6 chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It provides the details of the drought emergency programme and the food security emergency project, their objectives and activities, expected outputs and beneficiaries. It also provides background information on the household food security situation prior to intervention. Chapter two outlines the general findings of the evaluation including: analysis of programme preparation, the drought context in the project area, the operating environment, timeliness of the response, appropriateness of programme design, effectiveness of the implementation strategy and the role of other stakeholders in the implementation of the programme. Chapter three presents the assessment of the extent to which expected outputs have been achieved while chapter four details the effects and impacts of the programme. Chapter five gives a summary of the key issues arising from the evaluation and the lessons learned so far. Chapter six contains the recommendations of the Evaluation Team.

1.1.2 Situation prior to Oxfam GB's intervention

Late, low and erratic rainfall in the southern regions of Mauritania between 2000-2002 had destroyed any hope for rain-fed crops. The crop outlook for 2002/3 was bleak and was termed the lowest the country had experienced over the last 15 years. By late October 2002, it was predicted that farming households would face imminent famine and that nearly 750,000 people were already affected by food shortages and malnutrition was increasing¹. The food situation in the country, between the October 2001 harvest season and the July-September 2002 period was characterized by the scarcity of traditional coarse grains (millet, sorghum, maize) in rural markets and exceptionally high prices for these grains in all markets during this period. In January 2002, exceptional cold rains struck the country, causing major damage to rice crops and livestock, resulting in a substantial loss of productive assets for farmers who depend on agriculture and livestock keeping. In July-August 2002, a dry spell of several weeks caused sowing failures and delayed the start of the crop year in many farming areas of the country. This resulted in a particularly long and lean period that ended in late September 2002 with the first harvests, but with many zones of very poor production or no production at all. A joint crop assessment mission was undertaken in October 2002 and compared to 2001, the 2002/03 production estimates were lower by 38%. Compared to the 1987-2001 period, the decline was even lower at 49%².

An increase in cereal (rice, wheat, maize) prices on the international market in 2003 had been anticipated because of the floods in South East Asia (rice), scarcity in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe (wheat, maize) and droughts in East Africa (maize). The negative impact of a meagre international cereal supply and prospects of war in the

¹ FEWS NET Report of July 2002.

² The WFP's Proposal for Emergency Food Aid, October 2002.

Middle East would affect the West African Region and in particular the Sahelian Zone, where rice, wheat and maize imports usually help improve the grain balance sheet.

It was feared that the consequences of decreased food production and probable high prices of cereals in Aftout could lead to food insecurity among vulnerable households in the area. In vulnerable rural and impoverished urban zones, food scarcity resulted in the reduction of the number of meals and the quantity of food consumed per meal. There was an increase in the proportion of rice in their consumption (an indicator of insufficient local and easily accessible coarse grains –maize, millet and sorghum), and a rise in the sell of small ruminants for purposes of increasing purchasing power to access grains and other essential food commodities like sugar and tea.

1.1.3 Food insecurity in the southern belt of Aftout, Affole, Kankossa and W. Brakna areas

The cereal deficits affected the Aftout region, southern Tagant and Assaba (north and south), among other areas, which had negligible or no harvests at all. The WFP's VAM³ surveys carried out in March and October 2002 in the Brakna region and involved a total of 354 and 265 households respectively indicated that drought stress was resulting in food insecurity among vulnerable households. The areas of Aftout, Affole, South East Kankossa, Eastern Trarza/Western Brakna and Southern Hodhs showed that in July 2002, 38% of households were food insecure and that the number had risen to 63% in October of the same year. Subsequent assessments in 2003 showed that 32% of households in the same areas were food insecure in October 2003.

Vulnerable or food insecure households were characterized by:

- Involvement in agricultural activities, although these made up 50% of household activities but generated less than 20% of household income;
- Involvement in activities related to migration and casual work;
- Low asset levels and savings;
- Poor livestock holdings so that livestock production is marginal for such households;
- Sale and consumption of household reserves such as small stock;
- Food expenses exceeding 70% of the household budget.

With three consecutive years of deficient rainfall and crop failure, a reduction in the number of crop types that can be sustained by rain-fed and dam cultivation technologies, declining water availability and a constant reduction of balanced terms of trade (cereal/livestock meat ratios – rising cereal prices and declining livestock prices), coupled with a decline in income generating activities due to reduced purchasing power for most households, most families resorted to depleting their household asset reserves, selling of livestock at poor prices, early migration, involvement of women and children in migratory strategies and consumption of productive assets.

1.1.4 Livelihood Strategies in the Aftout and Affole areas

It is important to understand the livelihood strategies that people employ so that external interventions seek to reinforce and strengthen these strategies as well as to reduce vulnerabilities. Livelihood strategies here refer to the ways in which people combine and use assets that are open to them in pursuit of beneficial livelihood outcomes that meet their own livelihood objectives. Therefore, a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while at the same time not undermining

³ VAM is the World Food Programme's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit.

the natural resource base⁴.

The Aftout and Affole areas are characterised by communities dependent on livestock production, local commerce and agricultural production activities. These areas have some economic importance as they are the link between the pastoralists of the North and the agriculturalists in the South. In this zone, rainfall is particularly low, mostly between 200 –250 mm per annum (lower in the Northern parts of Aftout). The zone in general offers a favourable environment for raising livestock i.e. cattle, small ruminants, camels and equines. Rain-fed agriculture and dam cultivation are practised but problems of unreliable rainfall, pests, poor extension service support, poor choice of crops and destruction of crops by migrant livestock persist. There is a mix of both white and black Moors⁵ (40% and 60% respectively) and the black Moors own very few cattle, if at all, and therefore practice limited migration. The box below provides the main features of livelihood strategies in the two areas of Aftout and Affole.

Box 1: Livelihood Systems of Aftout and Affole areas the Southern belt of Mauritania

Aftout is a transitional zone between the desert and mountainous reliefs of Tagant and Assaba in the north and the fertile plains of the Senegal River Valley in south. It stretches over an area of 47,409 sq km and comprises 33 communes. It has a total population of about 300,000 people.

- The livelihood system in Aftout could be described as diverse; with the majority of the population having lost livestock in previous and recent droughts. There is high dependence on local trade, provision of farm labor, remittances from relatives in towns and cities, keeping of livestock, dam cultivation, vegetable gardening and reliance on relatives for survival;
- The pastoral mode is one of limited movement in search of grazing and water, and of fixed residence for most of the family i.e. only the principal herders move; movement into Senegal and Mali is not uncommon;
- Livestock ownership varies. Cattle, camels and horses are kept by the white Moors, who also own sheep and goats. Black Moors own few cattle and small stock, with a large population without any livestock;
- Local trade is the main source of livelihood for the black Moors, although they spend a large proportion of their time doing dam cultivation. Analysis shows that because of problems with pests, destruction of crops by livestock and land tenure issues, dam cultivation contributes very little to their household food security;
- Many male adults migrate to towns and cities in search of petty trade and employment for part or all of the year. But this is becoming very competitive as rural urban migration rises;

In Affole, water availability is slightly better than Aftout because of rocky terrain and more surface runoff. The population is semi-nomadic and the people's major livelihood strategies consist of:

- Running of small-scale local business enterprises;
- Sheep rearing in particular and livestock keeping in household pens;
- Rainfed agriculture;
- Dam cultivation and vegetable gardening;
- Reliance on remittances from relatives in cities and towns.

Although with improved extension services, dam cultivation has great potential, both in Aftout and in Affole, the land tenure issues between the white and black Moors, the migrant livestock menace and the persistent problem of pests need to be sorted out in order to make investment in this agricultural activity worthwhile.

The best way to intervene for the most vulnerable households in Aftout and Affole is to undertake measures that will strengthen the position of black Moors in terms of land tenure issues and other discriminatory injustices. This could be done through advocacy and policy influencing activities. The

⁴ Adapted from Chambers, R. and Conway G. (1992) Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century. IDS. Discussion Paper No. 296. Brighton:IDS

⁵ The "Black Moor", or "Haratin", are descendants of the people who were enslaved by the Moors. Although they constitute a significant proportion of the population, they are a very marginalized group in Mauritania. They have little access to land and are still affected by very exploitative forms of labour.

second intervention is to support small-scale businesses that will bring direct income to black Moor families. The third is to undertake large scale restocking of black Moor families that have lost their livestock recently. The fourth is to empower them through the REFLECT⁶ methodology of participatory development. This must however, be put in the context of Mauritania and done very carefully, probably disguised as one of the participatory development approaches.

1.2 The Drought Emergency Programme

In response to the threat of malnutrition after a sequence of shocks (droughts and cold weather) on the livelihoods of agro-pastoralists in southern Mauritania, Oxfam GB responded in late 2002 with an intervention that collaborated with national and international actors to ensure that immediate food needs were provided to vulnerable communities and their livelihoods supported. Oxfam GB's Drought Emergency Programme covered two *Moughataas* (*Aleg* and *Maghta Lahjar*) of the *Brakna Wilaya*⁷ and the *Moughataa*⁸ of *Tamchekett, Hodh el Gharbi Wilaya*. The duration of the project was 11 months and was planned to run from November 2002 to September 2003, but later extended to January 2004. The total project cost was approximately GBP 2 million (including food- and trucking-in-kind). The intervention aimed at meeting the immediate food needs as well as supporting livelihoods of people affected. This was to be achieved through 1) food distribution to most vulnerable households, 2) distribution of seeds, tools and fences to support vegetable gardening, 3) distribution of pesticides and other agricultural inputs to support small-dam cultivation.

1.2.1 Goals and objectives

The goal of the Oxfam GB emergency intervention was **to prevent and reduce suffering from hunger**.

The purpose was: *"To improve health and nutritional condition of people in vulnerable households in the target area and to support livelihoods"*.

1.2.2 Expected Outputs

The expected outputs from this intervention were as follows:

1. Immediate food needs, especially of the most vulnerable groups met through free food distribution;
2. Crop production enhanced;
3. Loss of livestock through consumption or mortality reduced;
4. Food security and nutritional status in the target area monitored such that immediate action is taken in case further necessary response is required.

1.2.3 Activities

Activities in Aftout were implemented directly by Oxfam but activities in Affole were implemented in partnership with SLODA (Société Locale pour le Développement de l'Affolé) a local NGO which formed out of Oxfam's former programme in the zone. The activities implemented under this intervention included:

⁶ REFLECT-Regenerated Freirian Literacy and Community Empowerment Techniques – is an approach to adult literacy that integrates core- learning subjects of reading, writing and numeracy skills with post-literacy activities linked to learners' livelihood improvements. The core elements of the REFLECT methodology include: peoples participation, solidarity between development partners and the poor, transformation, empowerment, equity and human rights. REFLECT activities help to strengthen the development of practical and life skills in individuals such as the development of critical awareness, assertiveness, critical thinking, and informed decision-making and problem solving.

⁷ Mauritania is divided into 13 Wilaya, which are the equivalent of regions. A Wilaya is divided into Moughataa, which are the equivalent of district.

⁸ Moughataa are divided into "comunes", the equivalent of parishes/municipality.

- **Targeted food distribution in the Aftout Region** – Oxfam implemented a community-based food distribution programme that aimed to reach 34,000 identified individuals in selected communes within the Brakna governorate in the Aftout Region. The food was supplied by the World Food Programme and given to Oxfam through a Memorandum of Understanding. The distribution was to follow the recommended SPHERE standards⁹ for distribution of food relief.
- **Support vegetable gardening** – Small vegetable gardens are cultivated in the Aftout and Affole areas. Garden farming is either done in the receding water from dams and small dams and /or in small gardens where plants are irrigated with water taken from shallow wells. Gardening is an activity mainly carried out by women in Mauritania. Training and distribution of vegetable seeds, tools, pesticides and fences for vegetable gardens are meant to benefit women who are organized in village cooperatives. Support to vegetable gardening would have to be supervised by agricultural technicians because knowledge on how to effectively grow vegetables is still limited among the women population.
- **Support dam cultivation activities**- many villages are growing sorghum in receding water in the dams. Dams managed communally fill up during the rainy season and the water is progressively released after about 3 months when it has adequately and effectively soaked and saturated the soil. Sorghum seeds are planted in the receding water and crops reach maturity 4 months later i.e. around the end of February. Although accounting for a meagre proportion of cereal production¹⁰, this crop is instrumental in providing grains just before the hunger months of April to September set in. Oxfam provided seeds and technical support to increase crop production. Emphasis was laid on pest control because farmers estimate that 25% of their crop is usually lost to pests. Pesticides are expensive and farmers could therefore not easily afford them during the drought, hence the free distribution of the pesticides.
- **Monitor nutritional status of vulnerable groups as well as household food security situation**- There was need to compare information collected from the field with that from other sources such as WFP, CSA, FEWS and MSF in order to validate or steer Oxfam's intervention in the right direction. Oxfam also participated in the provision of vital information to service providers mentioned above.
- **Undertake pastoralist study** – Livestock had already been severely affected by the cold streak in January 2002 and pastures had been depleted in most areas by late September 2002. Livestock mortality was estimated at 50-60% (in the absence of systematic data collection). Oxfam GB carried out water and livestock development studies in March and April 2003 respectively in order to determine the most cost effective and appropriate interventions in these sectors.
- **Undertake a water study**: Water provision had been identified as an important intervention area but not much information was available to enable strategic and effective interventions to be planned and implemented. A water sector study was undertaken in March 2003 in order to provide more information.

1.3 Drought Mitigation Programme

From the outset of the emergency programme, Oxfam GB recognized the threat to livelihoods. Studies to prepare a follow-up programme were planned and funded as part of the immediate emergency phase. The Drought Mitigation (Recovery) Programme started with the onset of the rains in the second half of 2003. The aim of the Programme was to help those households severely affected by the drought to quickly recover and rebuild their

⁹ People are aware of the quantity and type of ration to be distributed for each distribution cycle and any reasons for differences from established norms are provided; people receive the quantities and types of commodities planned; the method of distribution is readily accessible and scheduled at convenient times to minimize disruption to every day activities; recipients are involved in deciding the most efficient and equitable method of distribution; women are consulted and have equal opportunity to provide input into decision-making.

¹⁰ Oxfam GB final report to DFID on the food aid and food security emergency project in Mauritania, November 2002-January 2004 (DFID ref. OHM0797). Report prepared in January 2004.

assets. The recovery programme is multi-sectoral and was originally expected to run until the end of June 2004 but is now likely to be extended, through the next growing season, to the end of 2004. It is being implemented in two geographic regions that are climatically and socially disadvantaged: selected districts in the North of Brakna *Wilaya* in the Aftout zone, and districts in the East of Hodh Al-Gharbi *Wilaya* in the Affole zone. The activities being implemented are a continuation of the emergency food aid and food security programme implemented earlier.

1.3.1 Goals and objectives

The Drought Mitigation Programme Goal is: **To Prevent and Reduce Suffering Due to Hunger in Mauritania.**

The Programme Purpose is "***To mitigate the impacts of droughts, to protect livelihoods and improve food security of the most vulnerable, rural families in the project areas***".

This purpose is expected to be achieved through several interrelated outputs aimed at boosting agricultural activities and reinvigorating local trade. Livestock production (animal health & husbandry) is being supported to improve livestock production among vulnerable groups in the target area while water development programmes are underway because of the crucial nature of this resource to livelihood support and welfare.

1.3.2 Expected Outputs

The following outputs are expected from this recovery phase of the drought management programme:

1. Commitment to population relief needs are fulfilled
2. Affected populations can be considered to have adequately secure livelihoods, and
3. Early warning systems and emergency response planning in place and response capacity available, and
4. National capacity and willingness to support secure livelihoods exists and
5. Development into a longer term drought mitigation programme led by the country programme and partners , and
6. Oxfam intervention has assured continued interest in drought mitigation initiatives from relevant national and international parties (including national government and international donors)

1.3.3 Activities

Activities being implemented under this programme broadly include the following:

- Undertaking assessments to determine extent of the effects of drought among the communities in the targeted area;
- Collaborating with other partners such as the government, the World Food Programme and other NGOs in collecting information and data through surveys and assessments that would improve availability of information for more effective targeting of response interventions;
- Provide fodder for livestock. This was however not implemented because the rains came and it was not necessary to undertake the intervention since pastures improved;
- Provide animal health care for livestock through vaccination and provision drugs;
- Train community-based animal health workers;
- Restock vulnerable households using small stock in order to encourage traditional livestock redistribution;
- Improve vegetable gardening through provision of technical and material support to women cooperatives;

- Improve sorghum production through support to dam cultivation i.e. the provision of seed, pesticides and technical support;
- Undertake training of farmers;
- Implement water development activities aimed at improving availability and quality of water for both domestic use, agriculture and livestock production;
- Activities in Affole implemented in partnership with SLODA;
- Monitor implementation of programme activities.

1.4 Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The project activities were designed to target the most disadvantaged populations; vulnerable and food insecure groups and villages (women, men and children) in the Affole and Aftout regions of southern Mauritania. Through this programme, Oxfam is targeting women cooperatives and vulnerable farming households. The main community targeted during this recovery programme was the vulnerable and disenfranchised communities. Social issues resulting in constrained access to land for agricultural production and other resource-related aspects and local political conflicts that exacerbate drought impacts and limit options for risk reduction strategies are more pronounced among this target community group.

1.5 Oxfam-GB's experience in Mauritania

Oxfam GB has been working in Mauritania since 1983. Oxfam GB activities have concentrated in the regions of Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Hodh El Gharbi, in the South and South/East of the country. These activities have been implemented through partners and have hitherto focused on food and income security e.g. through SLODA's community work of constructing small dams to improve agricultural production in the Afolle area.

Oxfam GB's programmes in Mauritania involve:

- Supporting food and income security activities of partners;
- Supporting micro-finance activities at national level with micro-finance structures and grassroots organizations;
- Strengthening partner capacity in micro-finance and networking;
- Working with the government to review the national gender strategy in order to improve the status of women;
- Supporting women's associations in campaigning for their rights in order to influence decisions related to their status in society;
- Promoting aspects that enhance the right to be heard, especially among the youth.

In addition to the above, Oxfam GB has over the years developed capacity to respond to emergencies in West Africa and more particularly in the Sahel. In 1999 and 2000, Oxfam GB provided emergency assistance to 4,000 people affected by the floods of the River Senegal, in northern Senegal and Southern Mauritania (Kaedi area).

In Mauritania, following the second failed agricultural season in 2002, in the southern belt, Oxfam GB launched an emergency response after an assessment confirming concerns about potential malnutrition. As an implementing partner of the World Food Programme, Oxfam facilitated the implementation of a community based food targeting and distribution process, in addition to supporting food production through local cooperatives by providing technical and material inputs for cereal as well as horticultural production. Alongside the above, in depth studies in the water and livestock sectors were undertaken in order to better inform intervention planning and response. It is noted that despite many years of presence in Mauritania, inadequate drought preparedness capacity in the Oxfam GB programme and among partners e.g. SLODA meant that delayed response due to inadequate information

and knowledge on the ground (especially in Aftout) was inevitable during this drought emergency.

1.6 Objectives and Methodology for the evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation was to review the emergency food aid/food security intervention with a focus on the lessons learned for Oxfam GB, partners and communities in terms of programme appraisal, planning and preparation, implementation strategy and interaction of the different stakeholders. An additional aspect is the assessment of the actual interventions, with a view to providing advice to Oxfam GB and partners on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the interventions. The consultants are expected to suggest interventions that could have been more effective in lessening the negative effects of drought on vulnerable communities. In addition, the consultants would facilitate the formulation of an effective programme that is based on the lessons and experiences learned from implementing drought-related activities.

The methodology consisted of different approaches summarized as follows:

- Review of key project documents, including project reports and proposals;
- A focus on communities was maintained through extensive consultation and discussions with beneficiaries and other community members in the different villages visited. Participatory exercises ensured that all village members (women, men and youth) were kept enthusiastic about the review exercise and this enlisted their much needed participation;
- Field visits in order to meet with different stakeholders and beneficiaries;
- Participatory exercises with beneficiaries to assess impact areas, especially seeking to bring out the priorities of the target communities during the drought and after the drought, with emphasis on benefits from implemented interventions as well as investigation into gender access and control of resources within the households;
- Review of existing information on nutritional assessments, cereal /livestock price ratios, early warning and food security information and surveys in order to formulate a timeline of events that would enable the consultants to assess the programme's answer to the question *"Did the Programme do the right thing at the right time in the right way?- Appropriateness, timeliness and effectiveness"* question;
- Assessment of the quality of the outputs in the field e.g. the livestock purchased for restocking, water facilities constructed etc.;
- Meetings with Oxfam GB partners and collaborators at the national and regional levels;
- Feedback workshops to obtain more information and to clarify data while providing findings to stakeholders in order to enlist input from them.

Two consultants were involved in this exercise (Nancy Balfour and Mike Wekesa) and worked very closely with a local consultant (Coulibaly Baliou); Oxfam GB staff namely: Rendt Gorter (Humanitarian Programme Coordinator); Habib Thiam (Agricultural technician) and Khadija (Food Distribution Supervisor). In Nouakchott, the consultants met representatives of the Poverty Eradication Commission; CSA; FEWS NET; Director of Veterinary Services; World Food Programme and World Vision. At the Regional level, representative of Caritas Mauritania, Lutheran World Federation and Government officials were met and consulted. The full list of the people met and consulted is presented in Annex 3

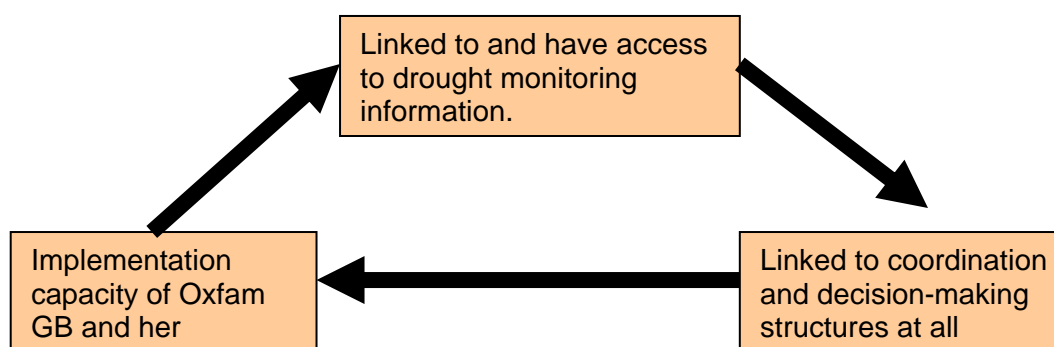
Two feedback workshops were held after the fieldwork in order to share findings and to receive feedback from Oxfam GB staff and other stakeholders. One workshop was held in Aleg on the 22nd of January 2004 while the other was held in Nouakchott on the 29th of January 2004.

2. CHAPTER 2 – GENERAL FINDINGS

This chapter presents an overview of the findings the evaluation team and focuses on the preparation Oxfam GB took before implementing interventions, the operating environment, the appropriateness, timeliness and effectiveness of interventions, programme management-related issues as well as the involvement and participation of other stakeholders in the implementation of Oxfam's interventions during and after the drought.

2.1 Preparation

Preparation involves laying the groundwork for implementation. Effective implementation of drought interventions takes into account the following three aspects of drought management: 1) Use of drought and household welfare monitoring information to target and time interventions; 2) Strong link to coordination and decision-making structures at all levels in order to ensure that interventions are not duplicated and contribute maximum benefit to overall national drought response strategy; and 3) Appropriate and adequate implementation capacity to undertake all planned interventions with communities and households in a timely, effective and efficient manner. This is represented in the diagram below:



Oxfam GB's preparation for the emergency food aid and food security programme can be assessed based on the above model.

(a) Link to drought monitoring information:

It is clear that Oxfam GB maintained a strong link with drought monitoring and household vulnerability assessment organizations.

- Oxfam maintained a strong relationship with FEWS NET (Famine Early Warning Network-USAID project); the World Food Programme and the Government's CSA (*Observatoire de la Securite Alimentaire*) mainly for purposes of obtaining relevant drought monitoring data –in addition to its own field-based surveys and assessments in order to inform implementation. These organizations carry out regular assessments that inform the relief community about the drought situation, cereal availability and nutritional status of vulnerable groups in different areas as well as the response that is planned or being undertaken in specific locations. The CSA undertakes vulnerability monitoring and incorporates data on poverty monitoring as well. It produces monthly bulletins and half-year detailed reports and maps of the situation on the ground. These outputs are available for use by government partner agencies such as NGOs. FEWS NET produces a monthly report on food security, rainfall situation, grazing conditions, agricultural production factors and categorizes different regions according to good, average and poor farming and livestock rearing conditions for that month. It also provides information on the monthly cereal balance sheet, livestock and meat prices. On the other hand, WFP's VAM unit carries out regular assessments to assess the food security supply and access

situation for different groups of people and writes and distributes these reports to other stakeholders.

- Oxfam itself carried out several situation assessment missions. For example, the September 2002 food security assessment mission; the March 2003 *Chris Leather* assessment visit to Mauritania; the November 2002 and April 2003 *Michel Anglade* Missions to Mauritania and the livestock and water studies all informed the programme in useful but different ways;
- MSF-Spain carried out a food security assessment and nutritional survey in Aftout in June/July 2003. This was intended to inform MSF's decision about setting up therapeutic and Supplementary Feeding Centres in Aftout. Results support findings by both Oxfam and WFP.

Oxfam at a Regional level made use of the information available from FEWS Net and CSA to monitor the advancing drought situation in Mauritania. The Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator decided to send a food security specialist to make an assessment of the situation in September 2002 based on the reports from these two agencies. At the time Oxfam Mauritania may not have been monitoring the situation using the same information.

(b) Linked to coordination and decision-making structures

- Village committees were established through community election in each of the 4 communes, where food was distributed. These were designed to have equal representation of both women and men. The committees established relevant criteria to agree on lists identifying the most vulnerable within their communities. In this way, more than 6,700 households were identified as being in need. Each distribution round provided beneficiaries with wheat, beans and oil for two months;
- Oxfam GB was part of an informal NGO forum, which met to agree standards for food distribution under the WFP EMOP programme. There was no formal co-ordination forum for all actors involved in the emergency response activities.
- Oxfam also had a strong relationship with NGOs such as the Lutheran World Federation, World Vision International and ACORD, because these were all partners of the World Food Programme in the food distribution exercise and it was important to maintain links in order to share experiences and to learn from each other;
- At a District Level the CODEP made decisions about targeting for food distributions in each *Moughata*. This body consists of representatives of all relevant government departments and is chaired by the *Wali*. WFP and Oxfam attended most of the CODEP meetings in Brakna
- Government coordination structures at the national level were not in place and the sharing of information between Government departments and other stakeholders was weak.

(c) Implementation capacity of Oxfam and partners:

- **Needs Assessment:** In response to the drought warnings Oxfam sent a food security specialist to carry out an assessment in Mauritania. The assessment covered a number of issues but concentrated on the question of whether it was necessary to provide food to replace lost agricultural production. Having concluded that it was necessary the emergency programme was then designed with this as the primary objective. Livelihood support was considered and the subsequent proposal included agricultural seeds and tools and studies into water and livestock. However the broader impacts of the drought on livelihood were not thoroughly investigated in the beginning and hence opportunities to effectively protect livelihoods at the height of the drought were not included in the emergency programme plans.

- **Availability of funds:** Funds were late to arrive and this delayed planned implementation.
- **Procurement of required materials and equipment:** Once funds were made available, this proceeded without any problems or delays. Food was already available from WFP.
- **Staffing:** the current Oxfam GB Humanitarian Programme Coordinator arrived in May 2003. According to senior Oxfam staff in Mauritania's development programme, considerable improvement in the management and administration of the emergency programme was realized with this arrival. Staff members of the development programme were encouraged to be involved in the programme, links with strategic partners were strengthened and logistical and administrative issues such as staff of the emergency programme were effectively dealt with. Prior to this there had been a high turn over of management staff in the emergency programme.
- **Logistical and mobilization arrangements:** These arrangements were done speedily and appropriately under the management of the new Humanitarian Programme team (coordinator and logistician with emergency experience).

The general assessment of the Evaluation Mission of Oxfam's preparation for these interventions is considered to be average. Preparedness measures e.g. writing of proposals, carrying out strategic needs assessments etc. were not done in good time and showed little understanding of the broader drought effects. However, the execution of food aid distribution and the provision of support to vegetable gardening were implemented properly and as planned. The weakest aspect of preparation was the one of ensuring adequate implementation capacity, including the capacity to build an effective drought response programme based on strategic needs assessment. The decision to set up separate emergency programme in Mauritania was taken after careful consideration of the capacity of the existing, non-operational development programme. In retrospect this set up (two programme approach) was not enabling and did not engender adequate capacity for drought preparedness and response. This is an aspect that can be improved upon in future through substantial investment in programme capacity building and training.

2.2 The Drought Context - The operating environment

The following points summarize the operating environment under which the Oxfam GB drought intervention initiatives were implemented:

- Mauritania was affected by drought stress as a result of 3 successive (2000,2001 and 2002) rainfall failures in most parts of the country;
- Non-Governmental Organizations played a much more active role in drought intervention than ever before, with 4 of them (including Oxfam GB) creating an agreed standard of practice and signing agreements with the World Food Programme for the distribution of food aid;
- This was the first time NGOs were involved in food distribution and the Government department responsible for food aid distribution in the past was not sure how this was going to work out and what the role of the government in such a distribution would be. However, consultation and coordination with government improved during 2003 and Oxfam was seen to have a good working relationship with CSA at the time of the evaluation.
- NGO involvement was appreciated by communities who conceded that this was the first time they were actively involved in the management of food meant to benefit them and that for the first time, a considerable portion of this food reached the targeted households;

- Since July 2003 an informal NGO meeting group has come together to share experiences and jointly lobby WFP for changes in procedure relating to food distribution. For example, Oxfam took the lead in piloting community-based food targeting system, which was based on experience from East Africa, and then shared lessons with other NGOs;
- The Government was implementing drought interventions e.g. provision of subsidized human and livestock food; distribution of free food aid in some locations and investment in the rehabilitation of dam cultivation structures. This is indeed commendable as the Government recognized its responsibility to save lives and livelihoods threatened by the drought. However, information on what the government was doing in terms of response to the drought was not effectively shared with other stakeholders because of weak or inadequate coordination and information sharing structures. Also the NGOs and other external agencies did not agree with the government views on targeting criteria
- The set up of the Oxfam GB programme in Mauritania did not have humanitarian response capacity at the on-set of the drought. Therefore preparedness measures were not in place at the time the drought was worsening in 2002. In addition, the high turnover of humanitarian response staff meant that continuity in activities and relationships with partners was inadequate and there was high probability of losing institutional memory on the experiences and lessons learned from this drought;
- As a result of the lack of adequate time and information to effectively prepare for the drought, Oxfam's food aid and food security programme was a typical emergency response that was implemented with little reflection time available. This may also have led to Oxfam's decision to implement an emergency programme in Aftout, an area it had little livelihood and contextual knowledge of. Oxfam had hoped to use its partner in Aftout, Nissa Bank, but this partner had no capacity for implementing programme activities and Oxfam implemented the programme directly.

2.3 Timeliness of response

The sequence of events shown in Table 2.1 overleaf is useful in discussing the timeliness of interventions implemented by Oxfam. The definition of drought stages used here are as follows:

- Normal – Livelihood and welfare indicators within normal expected range;
- Alert- Indicators fluctuating out of the normal expected range but communities still able to employ majority of coping strategies;
- Alarm – high fluctuation of indicators outside expected range and drought stress is evident through declining environmental, economic and household welfare performance;
- Emergency – severe drought stress is evident in the lives and livelihoods of households characterised by low purchasing power, loss of livestock and agricultural production, high malnutrition rates among vulnerable group, poor availability and access to water and food;
- Recovery – improving environmental but household welfare and rural economy indicators still require time to fully return to normal.

These drought stages are based on CSA, FEWS NET and WFP Drought Monitoring Information. It is clear from this timeline that the majority of Oxfam GB activities implemented were reactive and often came too late to achieve the desired impact. The main reason again is the limited information available on the livelihood situation of people in Aftout and the late kick-off of preparation and implementation of activities. The lack of capacity in the country development programme to undertake preparedness measures without promptings from the Regional Management Centre is an observation that is noted.

Table 2.1: Timeline showing progression of the drought and action taken by Oxfam and partners.

Month/Year	Drought stage	Activity undertaken by Oxfam GB/Partner	Comment about timeliness
2000-2002	Alert/Alarm. Three consecutive years of deficient rainfall and crop failure.	No drought management action by Oxfam GB but continued development activities in Aftout and Affole through Nissa Bank and SLODA respectively.	The development programme of Oxfam GB did not have capacity and mandate to intervene against the drought.
January 2002	Alert/Alarm	Exceptional cold rains struck the country, causing major damage to off-season crops, rice crops, livestock and dwellings, causing substantial losses of productive assets for farmers who depend on agriculture and livestock keeping.	Oxfam developed an intervention to provide shelter for livestock but this was never implemented mainly because of lack of adequate capacity.
March 2002	Alert/Alarm	WFP's VAM assessment predicted a bleak picture of the crop outlook for 2002/3 harvests in Mauritania and probably the lowest the country had experienced over the last 15 years.	Oxfam maintained close monitoring of the situation through the EWS and through information from partners.
July 2002	Alarm	July-August 2002, a dry spell of several weeks caused sowing failures and delayed the start of the crop year in many farming areas of the country.	
Sept. 2002	Alarm/Emergency	FEWS NET issued a warning on imminent famine.	
Sept. 2002	Alarm/Emergency	Joint Oxfam GB and Intermon Oxfam assessment mission.	This mission was led by the Oxfam GB food security specialist. In terms of responding to FEWS NET signals, this was timely.
October 2003	Emergency	International appeal by Government to help 800,000 people affected by drought.	Oxfam GB prepares a proposal to DFID and other donors. This was too late because funding usually takes a long time to arrive.
Nov. 2002	Emergency	Oxfam GB initiated the emergency intervention and was ready to participate in the April/May distribution round of WFP's EMOP	The evaluation team is of the opinion that in terms of food aid distribution, this was timely positioning by Oxfam.
19/12/2002	Alarm/emergency	WFP approves a region EMOP to benefit 420,000 drought affected people	There was a delay of nearly 4 months between this approval and the arrival of the food.
March 2003	Emergency	First food distribution undertaken by Oxfam in Aftout and Affole areas.	
March 2003	Emergency	Oxfam water intervention study	In real sense, the water and livestock studies were meant to be strategic needs assessments. The water study would have been timely only if funds and plans were in place to start recommended activities immediately. As it was no water activities were started before December 2003, after the rains.
April 2003	Emergency	Pastoral and Livestock Study in Aftout and Affole	Studies timely for recovery interventions. Missed opportunity to intervene to provide supplementary feeding, especially to small stock belonging to poor vulnerable households at the height of the drought.
Sept. 2003	Recovery	Oxfam GB launched a recovery programme to cover Aftout and some parts of Affole. This consisted of livestock and agricultural support to vulnerable households.	Livestock recovery intervention i.e. restocking, training of auxiliary veterinary workers and carrying out vaccinations on animals distributed was timely.
November 2003	Recovery	Official end of food distributions	Some food distribution would still go in hunger gap (May-July 2004) and food for work planned up to April 2004.
January 2004.	Recovery	Water Pilot Project	Revised objectives make this appropriate for recovery but some activities would have been very appropriate at the height of the drought in mid -2003.
January 2004	Recovery	Formulation of a drought sensitive country programme based on a one-programme approach and on lessons learned from the 2000-2003 period in Mauritania.	Considered a timely initiative, which will address a lot of the challenges experienced in the implementation of both the emergency and recovery interventions during this drought.

2.4 Appropriateness of programme design

The food aid and food security intervention had the following components:

- Food security support to vegetable gardening through cooperatives;
- Distribution of free food aid to 30,000 beneficiaries;
- Oxfam carried out two studies, one focusing on water and sanitation and another focusing on livestock, with the objective of informing programming in the two sectors.
- Monitoring of the nutrition and food security situation.

In terms of food aid distribution, the Programme design was appropriate because for the first time communities felt recognized to have the capacity to be involved and take charge of their own food. This was largely made possible through the community-based food aid targeting system that was based on SPHERE standards. Most community members acknowledged that for the first time, food meant for households reached them as opposed to previous droughts where the government-led food distribution hardly reached the communities. However, communities re-distributed the food among all households, meaning that household targeting was unnecessary and that vulnerable households received less food than had been envisaged (see Section 2.5 for details).

The evaluation team is not convinced that free food aid distribution was the most effective and efficient method of ensuring that food was available and accessible to communities. Other options such as cash transfers or providing the food through cereal banks and private retail shops would have gone a long way in ensuring availability and access to food by vulnerable households. This also had the potential to boost the local economy. However it must be recognized that for Oxfam at the time, this was the best option available. Food was provided by WFP and there was insufficient time to “think outside the box” because of late preparation for intervention. Coupled with this, the September 2002 food assessment mission by Oxfam GB (led by a food security specialist instead of a team of drought management and livelihood specialists) recommended that crops had successively failed and therefore there was a shortage of food. In order to address this food shortage, food needed to be brought in and distributed free to vulnerable households. This recommendation inevitably influenced the way Oxfam would go with regard to food aid intervention. Assessments with community members during this evaluation have however shown that communities would have preferred other forms of food provision during this time (Refer to Chapters 3 and 4).

Food security support to vegetable gardening through cooperatives, though a very good intervention during the recovery and normal periods, was not appropriate for implementation at the height of the drought because this activity is heavily reliant on access to water. At this time, women were struggling to obtain water for domestic use and it was not feasible for them to walk long distances to fetch water for gardens. It was not a priority for them. In addition, there was a considerable sum of money in the budget to provide fencing material to secure the vegetable gardens. This financial assistance could have been used more effectively on some other drought relief activity (See chapter 4 for more discussion).

The water and livestock studies were appropriate but the timing was poor for the water study. Its outputs were not implemented when it was most critical (at the height of the drought), although the fact that activities in this sector are now being implemented in the recovery phase of the drought is still positive and if done well will go a long way in contributing to improved water situation in the programme areas.

Support to cereal production through dam cultivation, while in itself a good intervention, may not necessarily benefit poor and disenfranchised households because of issues related to land ownership and access (See chapter 4 for more discussion). SLODA in Affole

appropriately redesigned the dam cultivation intervention and succeeded in protecting existing cereal crops during December 2002 and January 2003.

Overall, it is apparent that the design of the food aid and food security programme was driven by a shortage of time as the drought was already on. The activities planned were executed well but there was too little time to think through what would have been most effective and efficient. With regard to the drought mitigation programme, there was considerable improvement in the design and appropriateness of interventions. The livestock study informed choices for activities to be implemented and these have been done successfully. The water programme is underway and is based on the water study undertaken in 2003. Support to vegetable gardening is still ongoing and vegetables are currently being grown by a large number of the targeted women cooperatives. However, it suffices to point out that targeting 100 cooperatives for this activity was probably an over-stretch of the programme's agricultural extension and support resources.

2.5 Effectiveness of Implementation strategy

2.5.1 Targeting and Distribution

Geographical Targeting

Oxfam GB had operated a programme in Affole up to 2000 and is currently working with partners in several parts of Southern Mauritania, including Affole. As the drought advanced in 2002 the Observatory for Food Security (OSA) identified areas of extreme food insecurity, which included Aftout and Affole. Aftout appeared to be worse affected than Affole and in general had a higher proportion of highly food insecure households (30% versus 18%¹¹).

WFP was working in four areas;

- East Trarza and West Brakna
- South West Assaba and East Gorgol ("Aftout")
- East Assaba and North West Hodh Gharbi ("Affole")
- South Assabe and South of the 2 Hodhs

Oxfam initially agreed to work in both Aftout and Affole but later pulled out of Affole because it felt it did not have the capacity to work in both areas. There were other NGOs who were operational in Aftout (including World Vision and LWF) so Oxfam agreed to work only in four communes in Aftout: Male (Aleg Moughata), Dionaba, Wad Amour and Sangrava (in MoughataLajar).

Communes within each *Moughataa* were selected based on information from OSA about levels of food insecurity. According to this information *Djonaba* and *Wad Amour* were categorised as "extremely vulnerable" whereas *San Grave* and *Male* were categorised as "very vulnerable". This categorisation affected the food ration that households in these areas received.

Every village within the identified communes was targeted for food distribution. Post distribution monitoring identified a few problems with this system. In particular it did not take into account variations between villages. Some villages were worse affected than others but received the same proportion of food aid. Also some villages, which happened to be on the wrong side of an administrative boundary received nothing while their neighbours received a full distribution.

¹¹ WFP, VAM Report Oct 2003

The reason for Oxfam's choice of Aftout over Affole appears to have been made on the basis of the worse food security situation. It is worth noting that none of the staff employed from the programme were from Aftout and very few of them had much experience working there. This lack of knowledge of the area and communities made it more difficult for Oxfam to implement the emergency programme.

Household Targeting

The CSA uses a methodology for food targeting within highly vulnerable communes. This is based on an estimate of the proportion of the population in a particular region who are considered poor. In Brakna the proportion was around 58% and in other areas only 33%. This figure was applied to an estimate of the number households in each commune and hence a target number of households were arrived at. The CODEP then played a critical role in determining the number of target households allocated to each village.

Oxfam adopted a community based targeting and distribution system in Aftout for both food and agricultural inputs. Village committees were formed and asked to identify vulnerable households in their village. The criteria for doing this was explained to them by the Oxfam staff and most villages managed to draw up a list of vulnerable households which included a high proportion of women headed households. These were then taken as the target households and food was delivered to the village to be distributed to these households by the committee.

This system was considerably different from previous food distributions when the commune administration and the village chiefs were responsible for distributing food. The village chiefs tended to distribute food according to their own priorities and there were frequent reports of food not reaching villages or vulnerable households. All communities reported that the targeting adopted by Oxfam was a great improvement and for the first time they were in control of the food and could see where it went. A frequent comment was that for the first time food reached people who really need it.

Despite the efforts of Oxfam and the village committees to target vulnerable households the communities chose to redistribute the food within the village. In almost all villages the people reported that food was combined and redistributed to all households in the village. This reflects the strong sense of solidarity within poor villages and the recognition that all families needed assistance. According to Oxfam's post distribution survey the redistribution resulted in vulnerable households receiving less than 30% of their allocated daily ration.

Vegetable gardening inputs were supposed to be distributed to women's cooperatives who were already doing vegetable gardening. The identification of these cooperatives was left to Oxfam's partners; SLODA in Affole and Nissa Bank in Aftout. SLODA was already working with a number of women's cooperatives and had no difficulty in identifying 30 to target for the emergency programme. Nissa Bank had limited activities in the target communes and had only worked with women's cooperatives on micro-credit for small trade activities. The initial list of cooperatives had a number of problems and for the second round of distributions (under the mitigation programme) the cooperatives were newly identified and evaluated.

Inputs to support dam cultivation were initially targeted to the 15 most vulnerable households in selected village. In both Aftout and Affole the teams recognised that in a communal dam cultivation system distribution of inputs to only 15 households was not really feasible. In Aftout the Oxfam team asked the village committee to select households who had the capacity to produce with the inputs. In Affole, SLODA obtained the consent of Oxfam to ignore the 15 household target and convert other parts of the budget from the emergency programme and use it to provide more pesticide so a larger proportion of the dam cultivation could be covered.

The newly formed village committees did targeting for livestock restocking. These committees were elected by village assemblies and then carried out a household survey exercise to draw up lists of beneficiary households based on criteria of need which were well understood by the communities. Oxfam staff then carried out household interviews to select a sub-group of beneficiaries (50-75% of the proposed list). A large number of women headed households were selected.

Food Distribution

The food distribution went reasonably smoothly considering the difficulties of organising movement of large quantities of food in an area that the staff are not familiar with. There were delays in starting each distribution but these were mostly caused by a shortage of food from WFP and difficulties with road transport. Heavy rains and poor roads hampered the July and August distributions.

Distribution of Agricultural Inputs

The planting season for both dam cultivation and vegetable gardening tends to be between October and November. Inputs for agriculture were actually delivered in early February 2003 which was too late for most farmers. Pesticides were used in some areas but seeds and tools for dam cultivation were held back and used for the 2003/04 season.

Vegetable seeds delivered between January and February were used by some cooperatives but many of these depend on wells to water the gardens and these tend to dry up, especially during a drought. Many cooperatives did not have enough water and it was too hot to grow vegetables at this time. SLODA had more success in delivering inputs early enough for them to be used.

The inputs delivered for the 2003/2004 growing season under the recovery programme were mostly on time and could be used by the farmers.

Distribution of Livestock

The Livestock restocking programme faced some delays because of the difficulty of purchasing goats and sheep in the country following the drought. Prices were high and the team had to go long distances to get animals. These are now being vaccinated and delivered in both Aftout and Affole. The livestock team has invested a lot of time and effort into selecting healthy animals then working with the communities to identify beneficiary families and ensure a smooth hand over of animals.

2.5.2 Community approach

Establishing community based targeting and distribution in multiple villages takes a considerable amount of input from field workers. This is extremely difficult if there is no prior relationship with the communities. However in the subsequent phase of the programme the experience gained up that point proved already very valuable. Some of the villages in Aftout had complicated internal politics and it was not possible within the timeframe of the programme to understand these and find ways to work round them. The result of this was that some villages were excluded from the agricultural support part of the programme. In Affole SLODA knew the villages they were working with and could work out how to deal with issues as they arose.

The mitigation programme recognised some of these constraints and built in more community follow up and training for selected members. However there is still no evidence of real participatory approaches and community involvement at all stages of the programme.

Centralised training courses have been conducted for selected community members (vegetable gardening techniques and animal health skills) but the Aftout programme lacks a commitment to demand driven processes and community capacity building. There is little evidence that the activities are based on priority needs expressed by the communities and their involvement in planning has been minimal.

2.5.3 Sustainability

The emergency programme was seen as a rapid intervention to save lives and had only limited activities, which could contribute to longer term livelihood support. The mitigation programme has more livelihood support and recovery objectives and aimed to improve capacity and infrastructure.

The sustainability of the livestock restocking activities is being addressed through the training of auxiliary veterinary workers in each village. There is a problem of lack of support for these workers under the current government policy. The agricultural support component has included a limited amount of training for individual farmers but sustainability of improved crop production techniques will depend on the level of follow up by Oxfam technicians and the availability of affordable inputs. The water programme is starting too late to give the team sufficient time to really address sustainability issues for the wells and *digettes* but some community training activities are planned. SLODA in Affole is already working on a programme of awareness raising to improve maintenance of barrages, *digettes* and wells.

In recognition of this, Oxfam is planning to follow up structures and capacities created (livestock, water, agriculture) as part of the extended rehabilitation phase.

2.5.4 Gender Sensitivity

The Oxfam programme made a deliberate effort to involve women in decision making within the community based targeting and distribution process. In fact many villages in Aftout have very few men resident all year round and this had forced women to take more of a role in leading the village. At the time of the drought the level of women headed households (either temporarily or permanently heading the household) was close to 80% and this was reflected in the gender balance of committees.

Oxfam correctly identified vegetable gardening as an activity, which would directly benefit women since most cooperatives are women's groups. Dam cultivation is mostly carried out by men but in the absence of a male in the household the women will cultivate land that is allocated. Given the demographic balance in the villages it would be reasonable to expect more women than men to benefit from programme activities and this does seem to have been the case.

The evaluation team carried out some analysis of gender access and control to resources in Aftout. The results of these exercises showed that the frequent absence of male heads of household has placed full access and control of resources in women's hands. This finding was validated by a number of people with experience working in Aftout communities. Some of the Oxfam staff confirmed that they had been impressed by how empowered women appeared to be within the communities and the extent to which their opinions are respected.

2.6 Management and program-related issues

During the emergency and the recovery phases, the implementation of the programme was managed by the humanitarian coordinator, who reported to the Sahel Regional Program Manager. A programme officer was recruited and based in Aleg in order to oversee implementation in Aftout while emergency activities in Affole were implemented by SLODA.

Oxfam recruited an agricultural technician to work on the agricultural component of the emergency and mitigation programmes in Affole. The technician was placed with SLODA but lines of communication and reporting between him and the Oxfam programme were never really established. The management of this individual was inadequate and up to now details of what was actually done in Affole are not available in the Oxfam offices, with regular reporting not occurring until the rehabilitation programme was in place in late 2003. This was due to the absence of communication means and lack of capacity to ensure regular supervision until October 2003. It is not clear why SLODA was not given full responsibility to implement these activities themselves. However, a new agreement signed in September made this responsibility explicit. Eg SLODA's request to adapt the 15 beneficiaries per dam to wider distribution stemmed from them accepting responsibility and changing a programme plan drafted by themselves in the first place.

Communication with SLODA at the on-set of the drought was probably inadequate and there was poor reporting of the actual situation on the ground and on the progress made in implementing Oxfam-funded activities. This was however, rectified with the coming of the current Humanitarian Programme Coordinator in May 2003.

2.7 Interaction between main stakeholders

The main stakeholders in Oxfam GB's emergency and drought mitigation programme included the following:

Table 2.2: Main stakeholders in Oxfam GB's Emergency and Recovery Programme

Stakeholder	Level	Role
Affected communities	Community	Recipients
Village Committees	Community	Responsible for distribution of inputs within the village
Women Cooperatives in Affole and Aftout	Community	Responsible for use of vegetable garden inputs
Nissa Bank	Regional	Draw up list of women's cooperatives in relevant communes in Aftout
World Vision International	National/Regional	WFP partner/food distribution in Aftout
Lutheran World Federation (FLM)	National/Regional	WFP partner/food distribution in Aftout
SLODA	Community/Regional	Community mobilisation, distribution of inputs and follow up
World Food Programme	National/Regional	Provision of food, transport and post distribution monitoring
CSA (Government Department)	National	Distribution of food in some areas, coordination of subsidised food distribution, food storage
Ministry of Rural Development	Regional/National	Responsible for some non-food aspects of Government emergency response
FEWS NET	National	Collection and dissemination of EW information
Government of Mauritania	National	Coordination of emergency response through special committee at ministerial level
WA-RMC Oxfam GB (Dakar)/Oxfam Oxford	International	Fund Raising, publicity, staff recruitment, organising assessments
Donors (e.g. DFID & private British donors in the UK)	International	Funds

Oxfam sought to involve as many relevant stakeholders as possible in the implementation of the programme. Of significance is the link with regional and local government authorities in the project areas. Implementation was carried out with their full knowledge and approval. At the national level, Oxfam was part of the informal NGO consultative forum on food security and drought management, which had the objective of formulating a common approach and best practices with regard to the drought and to use the lessons from implementation to influence relevant government policy and practice. Oxfam was effectively linked to the drought monitoring information network at the national and regional levels and used some of the information in preparing its interventions.

Overall, the evaluation team is satisfied that the participation of other stakeholders in Oxfam's interventions was adequate and that the future programme has the challenge to maintain this visibility and involvement of these stakeholders in planned activities.

3. PRODUCTION OF OUTPUTS

3.1 Emergency Programme

3.1.1 Output 1 – 30,030 Extremely Vulnerable People provided with a daily full ration of food for 11 months

Three distributions were completed in 4 communes; Male, Dionaba, Wad Amour and Sangrava in Brakna Region under EMOP 2002 and EMOP 2003 as follows:

- March - May 2003 (EMOP 2002) – 13, 000 beneficiaries targeted, 2596¹² households received a reduced ration for 5 people for 2 months
- June-July 2003 – 33, 765 beneficiaries targeted, 6752 households received a standard ration for 5 people for 2 months
- August-November 2003 – 33,765 beneficiaries targeted, 6753 household received a standard ration for 5 people for 2 months
- December 2003 – Distribution cancelled by WFP

Food was distributed in a total of 188 villages in the four communes. The 2002 and 2003 EMOPs targeted 33% and 58% of the estimated population respectively. In reality the accuracy of the targeting was affected by difficulties caused by households moving during drought and the attempts by officials to inflate the number of people in each village. Ultimately it was established that almost all families received some food because of systematic redistribution in each village. WFP estimates conclude that target households probably received about a third of their allocated daily ration during each distribution period. One obvious failing is the limited period of the distribution. During the 12 months at the height of the drought (July 2002 to July 2003) vulnerable households received food rations for only 4 months. There were other food distributions prior to Oxfam's involvement but these were not particularly effective at reaching the most vulnerable households. This means that the food distributions made a fairly limited contribution (estimated at 23% by WFP¹³) to overall food needs in the target households. This was supported by the findings during the evaluation when families reported that food lasted for between 2 weeks and a month depending on the size of the family. This is somewhat contradicted by Oxfam's post distribution monitoring which showed that in April 2003 (in the period just following distribution), 80-90% of households reported that they currently were dependent on the food relief as their only source of food.

WFP assessments show that food insecurity was reduced from more than 60% in the food insecure and extremely vulnerable categories in October 2002 to around 32% in October 2003, which can be partially attributed to the food distribution. Child

The resources required to put in place a free food distribution are considerable and there were a number of problems, especially concerning the availability of food from WFP. There may have been better ways to improve access to food during the drought and this was recognised by Oxfam's humanitarian support staff as early as March 2003. There is also evidence that free food may not have been the priority need for many families and improving purchasing power may have been more important. Making food more accessible in other ways, for example using the approach, suggested by Caritas, to make food available at a subsidised price through community run shops (boutiques), might have been worth experimenting with.

malnutrition rates were hardly affected at all (more than 17% acute malnutrition in under 5's throughout the programme period). This can be attributed to the facts that child malnutrition appears to be due to a number of factors and not just food availability. These include:

- Disease (the incidence of diarrhoea correlates closely with malnutrition)
- Inappropriate feeding practice
- Consumption of supplementary foods (such as Unimix) by the whole family.

¹² Average household size is estimated to be 8 according to Oxfam post distribution monitoring but planning figure for WFP is only 5.

¹³ VAM assessment, October 2003

It is important to note that Oxfam in Mauritania had no capacity to implement emergency food distribution at the start of the programme but managed to train staff on the job and create a competent team for a major operation by the middle of 2003. This was a considerable achievement.

3.1.2 Planned Output 2 – Increased vegetable production for 147 women cooperatives

94 villages were targeted for the initial distribution of fencing, seeds, tools and pesticides. Inputs were then distributed at the end of January and in early February (see Table 3.2 for details). The normal cultivation season for vegetable gardens is after the rain-fed crops are harvested (in October) and before the weather becomes too hot and the wells dry up (around March). The seeds were therefore distributed late for the 2002/2003 season and many traditional wells were already dry or inaccessible. Many villages did not have sufficient water to grow vegetables at that time and this was not taken into account before inputs were delivered. However some cooperatives (especially those with permanent water sources) did plant and succeeded in getting some harvest in May.

Unfortunately there were no post distribution monitoring reports indicating the level of harvest achieved by the cooperatives so it is difficult to measure the exact output. However amongst the women interviewed during the evaluation very few reported any significant harvest before the rains in 2003.

The programme design correctly identified market gardening as an activity which is mainly carried out by women and hence improvements in production would contribute directly to household food security for vulnerable households. This was potentially a good activity but it was not easy to implement as part of an emergency programme in Aftout because;

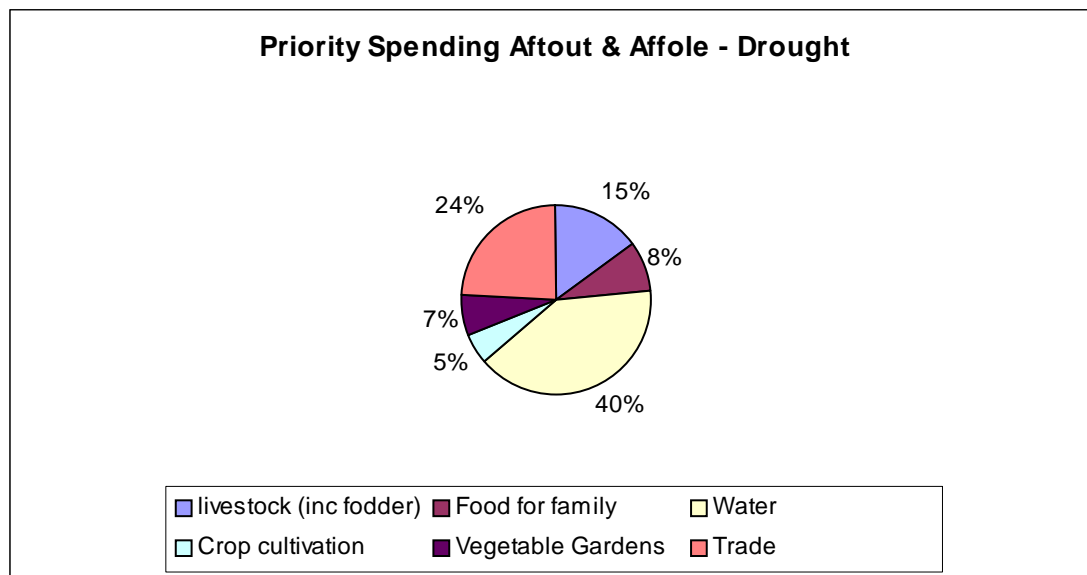
- The agronomists did not know the cooperatives or their gardens and hence did not know which ones could realistically make best use of the inputs being provided.
- The number of cooperatives targeted was huge and the agronomists could not give adequate support to each to ensure that they used the correct techniques and applied pesticides where necessary
- Vegetable gardening is relatively new in Aftout so families have not had access to vegetables before and are unfamiliar with cooking or eating them.

30 cooperatives in 30 villages in Affole received vegetable seeds, tools and pesticides in January. These were all cooperatives that had existing vegetable gardens and most of them had already had some support from SLODA to improve their cultivation techniques. Again there are no post distribution reports but there were reports of some harvest in some of the cooperatives.

There were different approaches to working with communities in Aftout and Affole during the emergency programme. The Aftout agronomists insisted on working with only one co-operative per village. If the community couldn't work together that village was excluded. In Affole the SLODA team spent time negotiating with the village women and in some cases ended up working with more than 1 co-operative. In the complex socio-economic climate in many Aftout and Affole villages negotiating which of several cooperatives to work with takes time and good understanding of village politics. It was not possible for the agronomists in Aftout to do this sort of negotiation as they were all new to the area and were rushing to deliver the inputs. This probably contributed to the less than optimal use of the inputs in Aftout.

Discussions and analysis during the evaluation indicates that vegetable gardening was not a priority for most communities during the drought. During the evaluation, a random sample of women and men in several villages carried out a proportional piling exercise to indicate what

they would have done with funds during and after the drought. The chart below shows the analysis of what activities they would have prioritised during the height of the drought.



Notes: Water = domestic water, Livestock = animals and fodder, Trade = petty trade and boutiques

It is clear that in most villages water was a critical need and priority investment. The women appreciated the support for their vegetable garden enterprise but they probably would not have prioritised spending this themselves. In addition there is little evidence that the vegetable gardens produced enough to provide vegetables for any significant household consumption in 2003.

3.1.3 Output 3 – Increased sorghum production for 1,100 households in Affole

Distribution of seeds, tools and pesticides was planned for vulnerable families in 10 villages in the Moughata of Tamchakett.

The experience of SLODA in the area enabled them to adjust both the objectives and activities of the planned programme in order to achieve a better impact on the ground. SLODA recognised that increasing production from the dam cultivation crops, which had already been planted by the start of the programme, was unrealistic. Instead they chose to protect the existing crop by expanding the planned distribution of pesticide to cover the whole crop area behind a limited number of barrages.

There were some reports from farmers that the pesticides helped to reduce the pest damage to Maize and Sorghum and SLODA's own analysis suggests that the harvest would have been even worse without the pesticides.

3.1.4 Output 4 – Better understanding of the underlying causes of malnutrition in Aftout area, especially the links between malnutrition, water and hygienic conditions

Water and Sanitation assessment carried out in March 2003. The assessment was intended to assist Oxfam to decide whether to implement water activities in Aftout and to identify appropriate strategies for this.

The report was a comprehensive analysis of the existing water conservation and water access techniques. It clearly identified strategies for Oxfam's intervention in the water sector by looking at ways to improve existing structures and develop new supplies. The consultant

also recognised the importance of improving the quantity of water available rather than just concentrating on the quality of the water.

The assessment included detailed analysis of water quality in existing wells in villages around Aftout. This gave an indication of the level of contamination of wells and predictably showed that open wells are more contaminated than improved wells with handpumps. Subsequent WFP monitoring reports indicate a close correlation between diarrhoeal disease and malnutrition in Aftout. It is not clear whether child malnutrition data was available at village level but it might have been useful to verify this correlation by looking at water sources in villages with high malnutrition rates.

Oxfam used the results of the assessment to develop a proposal for a water component for the drought mitigation programme. Unfortunately this did not get funding until December 2003 and hence Oxfam had no water interventions during the drought despite water being the expressed

The importance of strategic needs assessment

Water was an expressed priority need of many villages during the drought. SLODA recommended intervening in water in September 2002 but this was not taken up in the first proposal. It would have been possible for Oxfam to identify certain strategic water needs for the most affected villages and intervene even while waiting to carry out a more comprehensive study. For example, women collect water from distant, permanent wells when their own village wells dry up. They use donkeys and carts for this but in 2002 many donkeys had died from the cold rains in January 2002 and the lack of pasture later in the year. One obvious, quick intervention would have been to give vulnerable households replacement donkeys to allow them to collect water more easily. Saving women's time and effort during a drought has a huge impact on family well being.

priority need of many villages. It appears that there may have been a missed opportunity to carry out small scale water interventions in villages where water was critically short. The contingency funds had already been allocated to fund the initial emergency response and thus no funds were available for any water development activities. Output 5 – Improved Monitoring of key nutritional and food security indicators in two regions

Oxfam carried out a post distribution survey in May 2003 covering the April food distribution in Aftout. The food distribution team was well trained by Oxfam experts and carried out an efficient and thorough survey. Most of the team were also able to interpret the results and understand how their implications for future operations. Data was analysed and documented and Oxfam is now using the results to lobby for adjustments to the targeting and food distribution approach in the country. Oxfam also carried out a post distribution monitoring in November 2003 but the results of this have not yet been analysed.

There is a problem of standardisation of monitoring and analysis techniques between agencies. At present it is difficult to arrive at agreed food security figures and there appears to be considerable variation between results from WFP, OSA and Oxfam.

Throughout the programme the emergency programme coordinator in Nouakchott monitored key food security and nutrition indicators produced by WFP, OSA, UNICEF and other agencies. Oxfam is actively involved in bringing together relevant NGOs to review information and lobby WFP and CSA for relevant action. Oxfam does not have its own surveillance system in place in either Aftout or Affole but this seems unnecessary given the level of monitoring being carried out by other agencies, particularly OSA.

3.1.5 Output 6 – Reduced Livestock mortality through livestock study

Alongside the food aid and food security programme, Oxfam begun implementing a drought recovery programme after the rains in August 2003. With regard to the livestock/pastoral sector, a decision was made to undertake a study that would better inform the formulation and implementation of interventions since there was inadequate understanding of the situation on the ground. This study was undertaken in April 2003. It pointed out the rising livestock mortality due to inadequate food, water and a rising level of livestock morbidity. It noted that most vulnerable households had lost between 70-80% of their livestock due to the

cold freak in January 2002 and the prolonged effects of the drought. Implementation of some of these activities was started in September 2003. An animal health, restocking and re-distribution project was formulated based on this study.

3.1.6 Output 7 – Increased access to affordable staple food during the hunger gap period for 6,250 highly vulnerable people in Affole

This activity was cancelled after the government announced that it would distribute subsidised cereals in Affole through CSA. It would have been useful for Oxfam to try out this intervention in at least one commune to see whether the approach of making food available through village shops would have been successful. This would probably have been justified in some villages as government subsidised food was not reaching the smaller villages and was reportedly being exploited by traders in larger towns.

3.2 Drought Mitigation Programme

3.2.1 Component 1 - Animal Health & Production

The project aimed to benefit 900 families and reach a total of 7200 beneficiaries under a programme of re-distribution of livestock. The budgeted cost of this project was approximately 72,000 pounds sterling. Table 3.2 shows the strategies used in implementing the project and an assessment of their effectiveness.

Table 3.1 - Strategies used in implementing livestock drought recovery project

Strategy	Effectiveness of strategy	Comments
Provide fodder plus veterinary packages to 20 vulnerable household in each of the 15 villages.	No fodder distribution was undertaken because the rains came before the intervention and therefore it was time-barred.	The government implemented a fodder provision programme in the same area at 50% subsidized prices. However, the evaluation team found that the Government intervention targeted people with sufficient purchasing power and with large numbers of livestock. The intervention did not therefore benefit the small livestock keepers who own between 5-10 small stock
Acquisition of the livestock to be distributed	Oxfam could not buy livestock in the zone as planned and was forced to purchase them directly from other parts of the country. These were delivered to each village on a specific day when the animals would be checked, vaccinated and treated before they are handed over in the presence of the whole community.	Village development committees would supervise the handing over of livestock, giving unconditional ownership of the livestock to the recipients.
Carry out restocking programme	Distribution of 5 small stock to each identified household targeting 300 families was nearly completely achieved at the time of the evaluation. Inspection, vaccination and treatment of the animals purchased for distribution was also undertaken. Intervention targeted women headed households.	A total of 240 families in Afout had already received 5 small stock each while the remaining 60 families in Affole would receive theirs shortly. A restocking committee was set up in each village to identify beneficiaries based on clear criteria and to supervise the distribution of the livestock.
Redistribution	The first kid/lamb from each animal would be passed on to the next beneficiary. This is based on the solidarity among households that is inherent in this particular community.	This would ensure on-going benefits to the community. The village development councils would oversee the continuing re-distribution. While re-distribution of livestock by re-stocked families has

Strategy	Effectiveness of strategy	Comments
		proved an elusive result in other communities in Africa, it was pointed out by Oxfam GB staff that re-distribution was traditionally practiced in Mauritania and that the solidarity that exists among the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries would ensure continuity of the re-distribution process.
Train veterinary auxiliary staff at the community level.	In each of the 15 villages, one veterinary auxiliary staff was identified by the community and trained by Oxfam. They attended a 10 –day practical and theory training course and were provided with an initial veterinary kit to start off with. Three women were trained out of 15 trainees.	The trainees were tested by the evaluation team and the conclusion was that the training had been adequate and effective, although as with many auxiliary staff, follow-up and refresher training is mandatory.

The evaluation team found that this intervention targeted vulnerable members of the community who had recently (one or two years ago) lost their livestock due to unfavourable weather conditions. First, restocking with small stock has the advantage of quick multiplication rates and lower herding labour requirements because long distance mobility is not necessary. Moreover, supplementary feeding of small stock with concentrates during the drought period has shown that goats and sheep can continue to provide households with much needed milk even at the height of the drought. This would have a direct benefit to malnourished children even when household food security is still unstable.

Secondly, the restocking of vulnerable disenfranchised households gives back a powerful resource to the households. In an environment where exploitation of vulnerable households through land tenure injustices and unfair dam cultivation systems by elites in society is rampant, direct ownership of small stock by vulnerable families is an effectively poverty and food insecurity reduction strategy. At least such families will have full ownership of the livestock thereby guaranteeing access and control of the resource. More re-stocking should be planned under the new programme to ensure that more families benefit, as long as mechanisms are put in place to ensure that future losses to drought and other climatic vagaries are minimized through appropriate and timely interventions.

However, issues of concern under this livestock drought recovery intervention have to do with the need to establish a sustainable and accessible community-based animal health service that would benefit poor households in this community. As a result of privatisation, government-led animal health services in the arid and semi arid rural areas of the country have considerably reduced. In these areas socio-economic conditions are not attractive to private veterinary practitioners, who prefer to remain in big urban towns such as Kiffa and Nouakchott. It may therefore be useful for Oxfam to undertake the following activities as part of follow-up to on-going drought recovery activities:

- Establish and test a service provision system with the project supporting a veterinary auxiliary staff network through the supply of drugs and provision of technical supervision;
- The project should be based on sound, small business development principles;
- The project should act as a pilot system to inform policy on veterinary provision in rural, dry and remote areas of the country.

Overall, the evaluation team notes that so far, the livestock intervention seems to be one of the most successful interventions of the drought recovery programme implemented by Oxfam.

3.2.2 Component 2 – Water Supply & Management

This component only received funding in January 2003 so is in the initial stages of implementation. The team plans to start with improving 12 wells (9 in Aftout and 3 in Affole) on a pilot basis using a contracted team of well diggers. Village committees will be issued with tools to assist them to take up the responsibility of carrying out repair and maintenance of wells, digs and diggettes. At this stage the focus is on the technical construction and there are plans to address community water management aspects later in the programme. Water management was identified as a weakness for villages in Aftout in the assessment report and there is a danger that the programme staff do not have enough time or experience to address this issue adequately. SLODA has experience of working with village water committees and has an ongoing programme to build capacity for community operation and maintenance of barrages. This experience could be used to develop the community management part of the Aftout programme.

Despite the obvious and well identified links between water related disease and malnutrition the programme has no component for assessing and improving hygiene practices. It would not be feasible to address latrine coverage at this stage but working to understand the reasons for high incidences of diarrhoeal disease would be desirable.

The programme is planning to use Food for Work to assist in the rehabilitation of family dykes (digs and diggettes) as part of the water component. This may be complicated to manage because it is often one family rather than the whole community that uses a particular dyke. Experience in other countries has shown that Food for Work programmes have to be well prepared and supervised in order to produce usable and sustainable structures in the community.

3.2.3 Component 3 – Agriculture Inputs, training & support Vegetable Gardening

A second round of seeds, tools and pesticide distribution was organised under this programme which started in August 2003. The details of this are given in Table 3.2. It should be noted that Oxfam is currently undergoing an exercise to put information on villages and inputs delivered under the two programmes. Prior to this it was extremely difficult to get information on what input was delivered where and when.

Table 3.2 Oxfam Mauritania Emergency Programme

Seeds and Tools Distributions under the Agricultural Component

Area	Component	Item	No. Beneficiary villages/Coops	Average Quantity Distributed per village/Coop	Total quantity distributed
Aftout	Maraichage - 1st phase	Seeds	94	800g	75.4 kg
		Pesticide	94	?	?
		Tools	94	6 units	564 units
		Fencing	94	?	?
Aftout	Maraichage - 2nd phase	Seeds	75	1750	147kg
		Pesticide	75	3250	227.5kg

		Tools	75	8 units (various)	600 units
		Fencing	75	8 rolls fencings, 49 posts, 2 rolls wire	600 rolls fencings, 3675 posts, 150 rolls wire
Aftout	Dam Cultivation	Seeds	180 families	14kg	2520kg
		Pesticides	180 families	3kg	720kg
		Barbed Wire	180 families	40 rolls	430 rolls
Affole	Maraichage - 1st phase	Seeds	30	2kg	70kg
		Pesticides	30	Not available	Not available
		Tools	30	20 units	642 units
		Fencing	30	6 rolls, 43 posts	80 rolls, 470 posts
Affole	Maraichage - 2nd phase	Seeds	30	270g	8100g
		Pesticides	30	6kg	180kg
		Tools	30	9 units	270 units
		Fencing	20	6 rolls	120 rolls
Affole	Dam cultivation	Seeds	90 families in 6 villages	11kg	765kg
		Pesticides	90 families in 6 villages	1.5 kg	950kg
		Barbed wire	90 families in 6 villages	?	?

Notes

Tools were a mixture of hoes, spades, rakes and pick axes

Vegetable seeds included around 10 varieties of vegetable

The amounts distributed to each cooperative depended on the size of the garden

Oxfam organised a training for 24 women representatives from vegetable garden cooperatives in Aftout at an agricultural training centre. The women were selected based on their potential to pass on information and skills to other women. Topics in the training included preparation, planting and treating vegetables. The training was comprehensive but organized at a central location and benefited very few women (not even one per cooperative). It also relied, to some extent, on formal teaching so illiterate women could not follow very easily. The extent to which new skills were passed on to other women is difficult to measure but very few of the women interviewed referred to the training. The agronomists have been able to carry out some follow up and demonstration to women on land preparation and planting techniques for vegetables. In Affole, SLODA organised its own training for women cooperative members. This follows a similar syllabus and has been organised in three phases;

- Preparation & planting
- Pest control
- Preserving vegetables

Many vegetable gardens supported by Oxfam (especially in Affole) had considerable production of carrots, aubergine, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, radish and cabbage, even by

the time of the evaluation. Women reported that they share the produce amongst members of the cooperative after they have sold what they can. There was very little evidence of vegetables being traded commercially in the villages and it is clear that eating habits do not include vegetables if other food is available. However there were vegetables in the markets in major towns so it seems likely that traders do come to the more accessible villages to buy vegetables for sale in town.

Dam Cultivation

Inputs were delivered to 10 villages in Aftout and 6 in Affole. The villages were selected on the basis of having functioning barrages and viable cultivation areas. Seeds and pesticides were delivered late in some cases and in Aftout pesticides were only distributed for use on part of the crop at each barrage. Similarly fencing was distributed to target families but since the dam area is cultivated by hundreds of families together and covers an area up to 100 hectares the fencing for a few metres was unusable.

There was originally a plan to use the inputs on a "demonstration" plot basis. This would have made sense in most villages as the agronomists could have provided more support to one demonstration plot and worked with farmers to assess the results with different seeds and pesticides.

In Aftout, it was difficult to see any measurable difference between crops within the dam cultivation areas which had apparently benefited from Oxfam inputs and those which had

"Agriculture has produced nothing here for many years. The barrage field is green and full of growing crops but she is sure it will produce nothing. It will be eaten by insects or birds or will dry before harvest. Livestock is much more important to us because it produces milk and is much less risky"
A woman in Le Kra Djonaba, Aftout

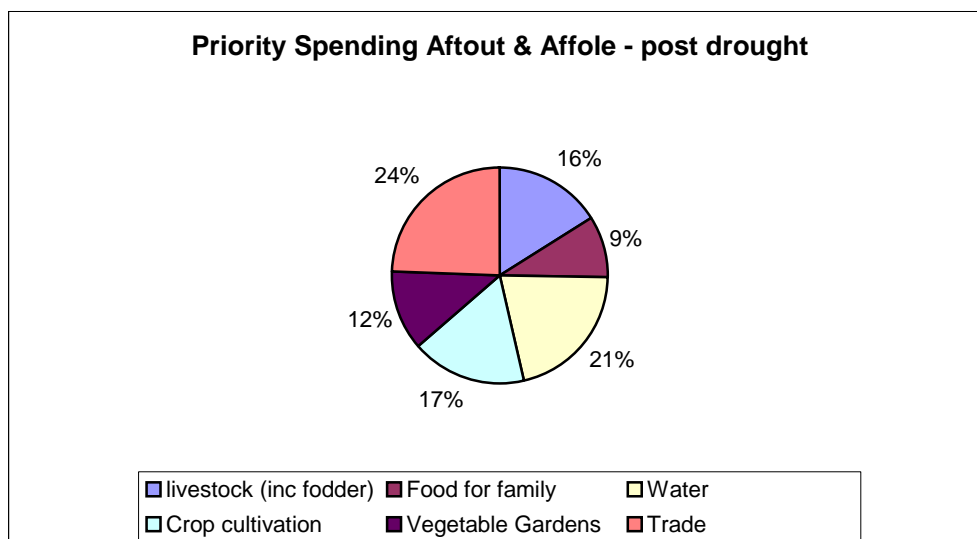
not. In fact in many areas the Oxfam seeds were planted later and the maize looks likely to dry out before it flowers and produces.

Dam cultivation is a viable agricultural practice for crop production in the project area.

However, the contribution of dam crops to food security of vulnerable black Moor families is relatively small (estimated to contribute 20% of household needs) because:

- Crops are damaged by animals and pests (up to 30% crop losses reported, more in a year when there are locust attacks);
- The most appropriate crops aren't always grown (beans would be more resistant to pests and are a higher value crop)
- Families that cultivate do not always get the maximum benefit from the harvest because they are obliged to give up a portion of the crop. (see box below)

This problem is reflected in the communities' own prioritisation of activities it would undertake if funds were available in the recovery stage (see chart below)



Fencing was included in the programme but realistically is not cost effective and should not be supported in future. The complex social position of many of the target households means that they are unable to prevent livestock from feeding on the crops even if they fence the crop area. It is therefore an expensive input, which is unlikely to have any real effect on reducing crop damage.

Access and control of crop production
 Black moors cultivate land behind dams, some were allocated land to cultivate, many cultivate someone else's land and therefore share the output, others are obliged to share outputs because of complicated allegiances and debts. Crops are frequently eaten by livestock from nomadic herds and this is accepted as the "right" of the livestock owner (who may also own the land to some extent). The net result of this limited ownership of production is that the meagre crop output ends up benefiting everyone except the family who grew it

SLODA in Affole had to reduce its number of target villages because several dams were damaged during heavy rains in July and August 2003. SLODA felt that training selected individual farmers would not be effective and obtained Oxfam's consent to use the budget to provide additional seed to cover more of the dam cultivation in the 6 target villages.

4. SUMMARY OF EFFECTS AND IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

Oxfam intervention in marginalized communities in Aftout gave people a sense of hope and self worth. This may have been the most valuable impact of the drought programme

The Programme delivered food to more than 6,700 households in drought-affected areas of Aftout

The programme successfully reached individual, vulnerable households using community based targeting and distribution. The communities appreciated being involved and many stated that food had reached the people who really needed it for the first time. This demonstrated the efficacy of this approach, which helped WFP to resist government pressure to use their administrative structures.

Food distribution improved food availability and access overall but had limited impact on child malnutrition rates

Limited geographical targeting and community level redistribution, combined with delays between distributions meant that households received only a small proportion of the planned daily ration. This meant that the contribution of the food relief to household food needs over the year of the drought was relatively insignificant. Child malnutrition levels remain high in Aftout despite the food intervention. There is some indication that households could access food in the market during the drought and their priority need was improved purchasing power not necessarily free food.

Support to vegetable gardening had no impact on immediate food needs of vulnerable households

The timing of inputs, shortage of water and difficulties in trying to introduce new techniques in new communities meant that production of vegetables in 2003 was not significantly increased and vegetables did not contribute to nutrition or income of households at the height of the drought. The second round of inputs within the drought mitigation programme has resulted in considerable vegetable production in 2004. It seems likely that promotion of vegetable gardens will result in additional food and income sources for households in the longer term, provided eating habits can change to incorporate more vegetables in the diet.

Distribution of pesticides in Affole helped to protect crops remaining from the cultivation of 2002/2003

SLODA effectively targeted cereal production inputs in villages it was familiar with and there is some evidence that production was higher than it would have been without the pesticides. The Oxfam intervention for dam cultivation in Aftout has had no tangible results so far.

Benefits of support to dam cultivation may not reach most vulnerable households

Complicated social structures within communities mean that elites control land and frequently harvests. This means that marginalized households are unlikely to benefit from improvements in production from dam cultivation.

Pastoralism and Water Assessments contributed to understanding of problems at village level.

The emergency programme included a provision for the assessments but had no plan, or funds to immediately implement the urgent measures recommended in the reports. The results of the assessments could have been used to carry out immediate interventions in water and livestock support, which would have considerably relieved drought effects in 2003.

Impact of training for women cooperative members was limited

The training on vegetable gardening techniques was too theoretical and benefited only a small proportion the most literate cooperative members. The extent to which the skills were passed on to other women appears limited. Practical demonstration by Oxfam technicians in the gardens had more effect.

The programme gave Oxfam a chance to collaborate and influence key actors in food security in the country

Oxfam was an active partner in the WFP food distribution and has been instrumental in bringing NGOs together to lobby WFP and government bodies for better food security approaches.

Oxfam gained better understanding of livelihoods in Aftout

Food distributions, agricultural support and post distribution monitoring all contributed to Oxfam's knowledge and understanding of communities in Aftout. This allowed the programme to adjust its objectives and activities for the subsequent drought mitigation programme to take into account community priorities such as livestock and water. Unfortunately this understanding came too late to influence the emergency programme design.

SLODA's activities in Affole may have been more successful at reducing drought affects.

The SLODA team understood the Affole communities and how the drought was affecting them better than the Oxfam team in Aftout. This enabled them to adjust the Oxfam emergency and mitigation programmes to better meet the needs of the drought affected communities (e.g. rapid distribution of pesticides in 2002/2003 and seeds in 2003). Their ongoing livelihood support activities such as loans to small enterprise inadvertently provided the most effective drought relief in many villages.

Overall Oxfam's emergency programme was designed to replace lost agricultural production but not to protect or support livelihoods.

At the start of the programme Aftout livelihoods were not understood by Oxfam. The intervention was designed to provide food through free food distribution and increased agriculture but these were not the priority needs of the communities at the time. Agriculture (particularly dam cultivation) was an obvious strategy to support but in reality it contributes relatively little to household food security. Even the most frequently expressed and obvious needs, such as water, were not met by the Oxfam programme. The communities attributed the improvement in food security in Oct 2003 to improved livestock and rained agricultural production (following the rains) not to food relief or agricultural support. The diversified livelihood strategies of households in Aftout required more innovative approaches to really relieve drought stress in highly vulnerable families.

5. SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM IMPLEMENTATION

As a classic emergency food intervention the Oxfam Mauritania emergency programme was well done.

Oxfam managed to mobilise a new team and start up a medium scale food distribution quickly and efficiently. A separate emergency programme, managed by food security specialists was the best way to deliver food to a highly vulnerable population at risk of famine. However it may not have been the best way to support or protect livelihoods.

People needed water not vegetable gardens!

Ineffective needs assessment and conventional assumptions that household food security depended on cereal production led to inappropriate interventions which contributed little or nothing to relieving drought stress. Promoting vegetable gardens is a good long-term strategy to improve household nutrition and income for women but it was not an effective drought intervention. Only after working for 6 months in Aftout did Oxfam have enough experience to design effective drought mitigation activities. This meant that opportunities for appropriate and timely drought responses (e.g. water and livestock fodder) were missed. Oxfam could have made better use of SLODA's experience in Affole to guide the programme design.

Diversified livelihoods require diversified drought response strategies

The limited impact of Oxfam intervention in Aftout demonstrated the need to "think outside the box" in designing drought responses. In Affole SLODA's micro-credit scheme provided loans to the community shops, which enabled community members to access food and other goods at affordable prices, which reduced their indebtedness to exploitative traders. This was not technically a drought intervention but it had a huge impact on the households' ability to survive the drought.

Separate emergency and development programmes limited use of experience and constrained implementation.

The establishment of a completely separate emergency programme operating in an area that Oxfam was not operational presented various difficulties. The Staff did not know Aftout or any of the communities so had to learn a lot at the beginning of the program. Existing human resources and experience within the development programme were not utilised because the emergency programme was seen as "separate" and not relevant to Oxfam's development priorities in Mauritania. If the emergency programme had operated in an area which Oxfam staff were more familiar with it would have been easier to implement and could have involved the development programme resources more.

The importance of understanding community priorities

Communities themselves did not prioritise dam cultivation activities because they know how little it contributes to their household needs. Vulnerable households have few livestock but value them highly and wanted to save them.

Success of Livestock Redistribution Initiatives

The livestock re-stocking programme included an element of sharing benefits by redistributing offspring of donated small stock. In other countries this has never worked but in Mauritania the strong sense of community solidarity meant that redistribution of livestock was completely acceptable. The concept of sharing livestock reinforced communities own coping mechanisms and was willingly carried out by beneficiary families.

The need to measure impacts

Post distribution monitoring helped the food distribution team learn a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of intervention. There was no attempt to monitor the impacts of the support to vegetable gardens and cereal production.

The Added Benefit of Empowerment

Communities in Aftout are considerably marginalized and removed from power. The programme directly targeted small villages with both food and agricultural inputs. Although the interventions themselves had a limited impact the communities gained a sense of worth from being considered for assistance for the first time. Communities felt that the endorsement of community-based committees by NGOs gave them a voice in deciding how inputs were allocated. This is a significant indirect impact as it is the starting point for empowerment and community development. Ultimately capacity building and empowerment may have more impact on reducing food insecurity than distribution of inputs.

The value of community based food aid targeting approaches

Food reached small villages and individual, vulnerable households for the first time in Mauritania's long history of food distributions. This demonstrated the effectiveness of community-based systems which allow communities to take control of their own food allocation and see it distributed in a transparent way.

Partnership relationships need more investment in time and capacity building

The existence of Oxfam partners in Aftout and Affole meant that Oxfam felt it had capacity to implement the emergency programme. In reality the partners had no experience of drought response work and in some cases could not take on the challenge. Oxfam partners need considerable capacity building and mentoring to allow them to scale up and contribute to drought relief efforts in their areas of operation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this section focus on issues, which will help to improve the ongoing Drought Mitigation Programme. Some general recommendations on the direction that Oxfam could take in developing its new Mauritania programme are included but these will be presented in more detail in the document "Oxfam Mauritania Programme Strategy".

One Programme Approach

The Oxfam Mauritania programme needs to move to a one programme approach in which the capacity to respond to drought emergencies is built in to development activities. The details of this approach will be outlined in the accompanying document "Oxfam Mauritania Programme Strategy".

Livelihoods Assessment

The extremely diversified livelihood strategies within communities in Aftout merit further study. It is recommended that as part of Oxfam's new programme, a substantive livelihoods assessment at village level is undertaken. This could also be an opportunity to provide some baseline data for monitoring future interventions.

Gender and Diversity

The extent to which resources are controlled and utilised by different groups within Aftout communities is critical to their ability to achieve a sustainable livelihood. Gender equality appears to be less of a constraint than previously thought but ethnic identity is a considerable factor in determining access to, and control over resources. Oxfam has proposed studies into gender and cultural diversity (age and diversity) but it is recommended that these aspects be examined more carefully within the framework of livelihood assessments.

NGO co-ordination

The existing informal NGO forum should be formalised and recognised as a coordination and experience sharing body for food security in Mauritania. This will provide Oxfam with a more effective platform for lobbying on key issues related to food security.

Cash or trade subsidies not food in highly cash based economy where majority of food needs are met by purchasing food.

There is some evidence that support to trade and food purchasing through price subsidies, or even cash payments, may have been more in line with households normal livelihood systems. There are no positive examples of the impact of these approaches because government food subsidies did not really reach the rural areas of Aftout or Affole. Oxfam could examine ways to provide economic support in future droughts with the aim of protecting livelihoods and avoiding the need to deplete household resources. The experience of Oxfam GB implementing a Cash-for-Work programme in 2001/2 could be useful in this case.

Links between water, hygiene and good nutrition

The correlation between high malnutrition rates and diarrhoeal disease is clear. Even without detailed studies it is easy to conclude that use of open and unreliable water sources contributes to the incidence of diarrhoeal disease. However improvements in water supplies alone are unlikely to have any impact on disease levels unless hygiene practices are also improved. The value and use of good quantity and quality of water for health needs to be understood by all households and this will require an intensive hygiene education programme. It is recommended that Oxfam consider this as a component of water activities in the future programme. Oxfam GB has good experience of this type of work in other countries, which can be drawn upon for designing effective, participatory approaches for learning at a village level.

Food for Work

The drought mitigation programme is planning to use Food for Work to achieve some its targets on the water component. This needs to be carefully planned and worked out with the villages in order to achieve the dual objectives of rebuilding livelihoods for the vulnerable households and constructing sustainable structures (dykes for slowing down runoff for rain-fed agriculture) in the village. Details of who should work on the project and what unit of work entitles the worker to food should be drawn up with the village committee. Oxfam's experience implementing Cash for Work programmes in Kenya in 2001/2 could guide this activity.

Follow-up on livestock interventions:

It is recommended that the current recovery interventions should be expanded such that more vulnerable families are restocked and the animal health component is further strengthened through the establishment of a pilot but sustainable community animal health service in the project area.

Learning and Scaling Up

Oxfam needs to build mechanisms for monitoring and learning from programme experiences and impacts into its current drought mitigation programme. These will help the staff to understand how to effectively scale up and build on current activities in the next programme.

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Annex1- Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Oxfam's food aid and food security emergency intervention in Mauritania and for the design of a drought mitigation programme

1. BACKGROUND

In 2002/03, parts of Mauritania faced a severe food crisis.

The main causes of this food crisis were identified as:

- Mauritania's 2002/03 rain-fed harvest was very poor, as late, low and erratic rainfalls in June and July 2002 have delayed the start of the cropping season. As a result, rainfed crops completely failed in some parts of the country.
- This poor agricultural season was worsened by the cumulative effect of two successive years of drought and by significant loss of livestock caused by freak storms in January 2002.

This bleak situation led the USAID Famine Early Warning System FEWS to issue mid-September 2002 a food security warning, which stated that "farming households in Mauritania face imminent famine".

Some of the characteristics of this severe food crisis were:

- Worsening nutritional situation
- Limited access to food
- High livestock mortality and sale of livestock at unfavourable exchange prices
- Increased migration, especially of men towards main urban centres

Oxfam GB responded to this worsening food security situation by:

- A close monitoring of the situation through the Early Warning System (FEWS, Observatoire de la Sécurité Alimentaire) and through information, though limited, provided by Oxfam partners in Mauritania.
- An assessment mission in September 2002, carried out jointly by Oxfam GB and Intermon Oxfam, and led by an Oxfam food security specialist.
- A food aid and food security response, launched in November 2002.
- A reconstruction/recovery programme launched in September 2003, consisting in agricultural and livestock support.

The food aid and food security intervention had the following components¹⁴:

- Food security support to vegetable gardening through cooperatives
- Distribution of free food aid to 30,000 beneficiaries
- Monitoring of the nutrition and food security situation.

This intervention was based on the Oxfam guiding principles for response to food crises and aimed at protecting both lives and livelihoods. In the course of this intervention, Oxfam GB carried out two studies, one focusing on water and sanitation¹⁵ and one focusing on livestock¹⁶ with the objective to inform programming in these two sectors.

To date, Oxfam GB is initiating the process of phasing out progressively from the food distributions (the bulk of the food distribution will stop by December 2003. Limited distribution will continue until April 2004).

¹⁴ Comprehensive information on the food aid/food security intervention are contained in the document "Proposal for a food aid and food security emergency project in Mauritania", Oxfam GB October 2002.

¹⁵ Water and sanitation assessment in Mauritania – Oxfam GB March 2003

¹⁶ Etude de faisabilité agro-pastorale – Oxfam GB April 2003.

Oxfam will continue to supervise the agricultural and livestock support, which form part of the reconstruction/recovery phase (planned to be phased out by June 2004).

Oxfam GB is now keen to develop a comprehensive drought mitigation strategy and programme in one area of Mauritania¹⁷. Mauritania, as several Sahelian countries, is prone to recurrent drought. Drought mitigation will be understood as measures taken to lessen the effects of drought on already vulnerable conditions/communities and to strengthen existing capacities of people to resist the impact of drought; mitigation involves recognising vulnerabilities and improving local resilience¹⁸. It must be recognised that instruments on information collection, sharing and dissemination (FEWS, OSA) as well as processes on drought management already exist in Mauritania and these elements should be taken into consideration in the Oxfam strategy. Gender and diversity are important determinants of vulnerabilities in Mauritania and Oxfam GB feels that it is crucial to take into consideration these aspects in a drought mitigation strategy. It is anticipated that one consultant will particularly focus on this dimension and assess access and control to agricultural, livestock and water resources disaggregated by gender and diversity. This assessment should inform the drought mitigation strategy and should be seen as an integral part of it.

It should be noted that Oxfam GB has been working in the Affole region of Mauritania since 1983, with a strong focus on various food security and income generating activities. Lessons learnt from this Affole programme will also be helpful to inform the drought mitigation strategy in the Aftout region.

In this perspective, the overall objective of the evaluation will be two folds: (i) assessing the intervention and its rationale, (ii) and based on the findings of the assessment of the intervention, develop a drought mitigation strategy to reduce future loss of lives and livelihoods resulting from drought.

2. Objectives

Throughout the evaluation and to meet these objectives, Oxfam GB expects that the evaluator will keep in each step of the evaluation a strong community focus. The evaluation is also expected to be gender sensitive and to look at the role of men and women in i) the emergency intervention, ii) in the design of the drought mitigation approach. This gender approach would be supported and enhanced by the assessment on gender and diversity responsibilities.

The rights-based approach developed in the SPHERE standards will also be expected to be used to shape the evaluator's approach. The Oxfam "Guiding Principles for Response to Food Crises" and, more generally the livelihoods approach to food crises should also support the overall approach of the assessor.

The drought mitigation expertise developed by Oxfam would also be a relevant support to design a drought mitigation strategy in Mauritania¹⁹

1. To review the emergency food aid/food security intervention so far, with a focus on the lessons learnt for Oxfam GB, the partners and the communities in terms of:
 - **Preparation:** including the monitoring, appraisal and assessment of the food crisis. Within this to evaluate the appropriateness/relevance of the designed response.

¹⁷ Mauritania drought mitigation strategy – Context and rationale – Oxfam, August 2003

¹⁸ DFID policy and planning implementation – Key sheets for drought mitigation in support of sustainable livelihoods

¹⁹ In Kenya, Oxfam GB developed from 99 onwards a comprehensive drought mitigation programme in some of the arid districts of the country. An extensive evaluation of this programme took place in 2002 and highlighted several important lessons. These documents will be made available to the consultant.

- **Implementation strategy**; including the methodology of targeting and distribution, the impact of the response in the different sectors and its monitoring. To include the immediate impact, its sustainability as well as the gender sensitivity of the response.
 - **Interaction** between the main stakeholders (Oxfam GB, partners, villages committees, Government of Mauritania and its administrative structures)
2. Considering the strengths and the weaknesses of the intervention and the main findings of point 1, to assess the activities Oxfam and its partners could implement or promote to lessen the effects of drought on vulnerable communities in the Aftout region of Mauritania.
 3. To design an overall drought mitigation programme for Oxfam and its partners in the Aftout region of Mauritania, including the role Oxfam and its partners could play in terms of monitoring of the situation and early warning.
 4. Together with Oxfam staff, to organise a workshop with key Oxfam staff to discuss the findings of the evaluation and the proposed drought mitigation programme.

3. Methodology

The evaluator will be expected to use participatory methodologies. Participation to the evaluation of men and women who benefited from the intervention will be considered as instrumental in providing a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention and in proposing potential drought mitigation activities. In this regard, the evaluator will work in close collaboration with the Oxfam team in Mauritania, the local partners and the communities that were targeted by the intervention and will ensure that they are associated to each step of the evaluation.

In terms of methodologies that can be applied:

- A review of programme documents
- Briefing meetings and further discussion with relevant Oxfam staff and partners
- Visit to the areas of intervention (both Affole and Aftout)
- Interviews with key informants/stakeholders at all levels
- Focused groups discussions with beneficiaries from the intervention

4. Timeframe and Location

The evaluation is scheduled for 30 working days for one consultant (as mentioned in the background paragraph, another consultant will more particularly focus on vulnerabilities disaggregated by gender and diversity).

Itinerary for the review mission will be further detailed with the evaluator.

5. Reporting

The evaluator will report to the Mauritania emergency coordinator and to the Mauritania Programme coordinator.

6. Expected outputs

- A written evaluation report that clearly highlights (i) the key findings and lessons learned from the intervention, (ii) the justification and rationale for a drought mitigation strategy in the Mauritania context, (iii) the design of a drought mitigation programme for Oxfam GB with proposed activities, timeframe and plan for baseline study, monitoring and evaluation.
- Verbal debriefing and feedback to partners and to Oxfam staff in country.

- A workshop report summarising the outcomes of the discussion.

Oxfam GB would like to be able on the basis of the consultancy report i) to prepare a donor proposal, ii) develop internal capacities accordingly.

ANNEX 2 – ITINERARY FOR THE EVALUATION MISSION

Date	Place	Activity	Purpose
10/1/04	Nairobi - Nouakchott	Travel by Air	To undertake evaluation mission
11/1/04	Arrival in Nouakchott	Rest	Preparation for evaluation mission.
12/1/04	Nouakchott	Meeting with HPC	Briefing on the assignment
13/1/04	Nouakchott -Aleg	Prepare for fieldwork	Understand interventions in the field
14/1/04	Aftout villages	Fieldwork	Assessing interventions and meeting beneficiaries.
15/1/04	“	“	“
16/1/04	“	“	“
17/1/04	“	“	“
18/1/04	Afolle villages	Fieldwork	Assessing interventions and meeting beneficiaries.
19/1/04	“	“	“
20/1/04	“	“	“
21/1/04	Affole - Aleg	Travel to Aleg	To prepare for feedback workshop
22/1/04	Aleg	Feedback workshop	To discuss preliminary findings and to receive input from programme staff
23/1/04	Nouakchott	Writing up	To prepare evaluation report
24/1/04	Nouakchott	Writing up	To prepare evaluation report
25/1/04	Nouakchott	Meetings with stakeholders	To obtain more information and understanding about collaboration
26/1/04	Nouakchott	Writing up	To prepare evaluation report
27/1/04	Nouakchott	Meetings with stakeholders	To obtain more information and understanding about collaboration.
28/1/04	Nouakchott	Prepare for workshop	To lay groundwork with Oxfam staff for programme strategy development
29/1/04	Nouakchott	Programme Strategy Workshop	To discuss mainstreaming of DCM into a livelihood support programme
30/1/04	Nouakchott	Present and discuss draft Programme Strategy with Oxfam officials.	To obtain consensus on programme strategy framework with Oxfam GB in Mauritania and from the West Africa Regional Management Centre.
31/1/04	Nouakchott	Prepare evaluation report	To present final evaluation outputs to Oxfam GB
1/2/04 to 3/2/04	Nouakchott - Nairobi	Travel back to Kenya	Prepare to finalize evaluation report, key sheets and programme strategy.
4/2/04 to 9/2/04	Nairobi	Preparing final outputs of the evaluation	For Oxfam GB's comments and suggestions.
9/2/2004	Nairobi	Submit email version of report outputs to Oxfam GB	To present final outputs to Oxfam GB.

ANNEX 3 - PEOPLE MET AND CONSULTED DURING THE MISSION

	Name	Position	Organization
1.	Abass Seck	Coordinator	SLODA
2.	Aliou Kissima Tandia	Programme Coordinator	Oxfam GB
3.	Fatumata Kane	Micro-Finance Project Officer	Oxfam GB
4.	Sokhna Barro	Country Programme Manager	Intermon Oxfam
5.	Rendt Gorter	Humanitarian Programme Coordinator	Oxfam GB
6.	Eric	Agriculture Programme Coordinator (Aleg)	Oxfam GB
7.	Haruna Ndongo	Livestock Development Technician	Oxfam GB
8.	Habib	Agriculture Sector Technician	Oxfam GB
9.	Khadija	Food Distribution Supervisor	Oxfam GB
10.	Coulibaly Baliou	Consultant and Assistant to evaluation team	Oxfam GB
11.	Mohamed Salek	Regional Coordinator (Brakna/Gorgol)	LWF
12.	Dr. Doumbja Baba	Veterinary Officer (<i>Animateur du Remema</i>)	Ministry of Rural Dev.
13.	Haroune O. El Hanefi	Director de L'Action Humanitaire	Commissariat a la Securite Alimentaire (CSA)
14.	Isselmou O. Cheikh	Dir-Adjoint de OSA	L'Observatoire de la Securite Alimentaire (OSA)
15.	Xavier Rouillard	Assistant Technique Principal	Commisison EuropeenneU/CSA
16.	Patrick Fouga	French Cooperation Specialist (Economist)	Ministry of Agriculture
17.	Michel Anglade	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	Oxfam GB
18.	Mohamed Shee	Coordinateur, Brakna Region	LWF
19.	Sy Hamady Sanba	Representant du Projet	FEWS NET
20.		Representative of the Wali of Brakna	Government of Mauritania