



European
Commission

CASE STUDY

MALI



SPaN
Supporting people through crisis



Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus

DEVCO
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NEAR

Background to the Case Study

The Mali case study was produced as part of the “Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus” (SPaN). It is the outcome of an initiative jointly led by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) with the support of DEVCO Unit 04 and the MKS programme.



CASE STUDY

MALI

Type of shock	Social protection instrument	Way the social protection system was used (typology)
Slow onset natural disaster (drought)	Unconditional cash transfer	Alignment (ex post)

Scene setting

Mali has high levels of poverty and is beset by recurrent and cyclical droughts. **Without formal social protection systems, this has led to the need for seasonal humanitarian assistance to address repeated food and nutrition crises.** Political turmoil in Mali in 2012-2013 combined with severe drought led to another major food and nutrition crisis in the country, particularly in insecure areas in the north. An EU 'Linking Relief to Recovery and Development' funding envelope of EUR 23 million, managed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), was set up to facilitate provision of basic social services by international NGOs until state services were restored. An additional EUR 10 million was provided for emergency cash assistance, to improve access to food and non-food items for the poorest, and lay foundations for social transfer programmes for resilience building for more than 40 000 very poor households in northern Mali. These led to the establishment of a common urgent response framework, helping people not only to meet their basic immediate needs, but also to invest in property to generate income and start a recovery process. The action of this Cadre Commun sur les Filets Sociaux (CCFS) initiative started in a context of urgency but with a view to a transition to sustainable development in line with the linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) concept.

The **social protection system in the country was just emerging** and political interest in the need for long-term social transfers was growing. In the south of the country the World Bank was supporting the Government of Mali in the design and implementation of a pilot poverty-targeted cash-based social transfer programme, known as "*Jigisemejiri*". This delivers Central African Franc (CFA) 10 000 (USD 16) a month to registered households for three years, with the first 'pilot' cohort of 5 000 households enrolled in 2014 and 44 000 households reached by 2015. Due to the

security crisis, this first phase of implementation was limited to only 100 of Mali's 700 communes in the south and first transfers in the south of the country only began in early 2014.

Following a Commission-driven initiative to have informal consortium-like groupings of NGOs with clear funding guidelines developed in 2013, the major international NGOs operational in Northern Mali came together to design two successive, joint humanitarian Cash Transfer Programmes (CTPs), **the Cadre Commun sur les Filets Sociaux (CCFS)** and the Cadre Commun Transferts Sociaux (CCTS). These had the intention of complementing on-going in-kind humanitarian response whilst also engaging and influencing development actors on the importance of moving to long-term and predictable social transfers in the north.

The **Emergency Safety Net Programme** (with European Development Fund (EDF) envelope B funding from the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)) called CCFS, and subsequent follow-up programmes were designed in close collaboration between DG ECHO and EU Delegation in Mali from 2013 onwards.

The humanitarian food assistance interventions in 2012/13 implemented separately by various NGOs sought to improve coordination among humanitarian actors in the north of Mali. The aim was to **lay the foundations of a future national social assistance system** and to provide incentives for development donors to get involved, in order to ensure sustainability, based on shared responsibility among donors, e.g. by mobilising alternative funding sources on top of humanitarian funding. The main strategy adopted consisted of: (i) common Human Resources to increase technical expertise, (ii) grouping NGOs in an informal consortium so they become a valid interlocutor for government and development donors; (iii) improved

capacity to facilitate advocacy on key messages, and (iv) strengthened Monitoring & Evaluation competence to produce and disseminate knowledge.

The work done by development and humanitarian actors in Mali on safety nets can be seen as an example for the value of ‘**alignment**’ as it was aiming to develop

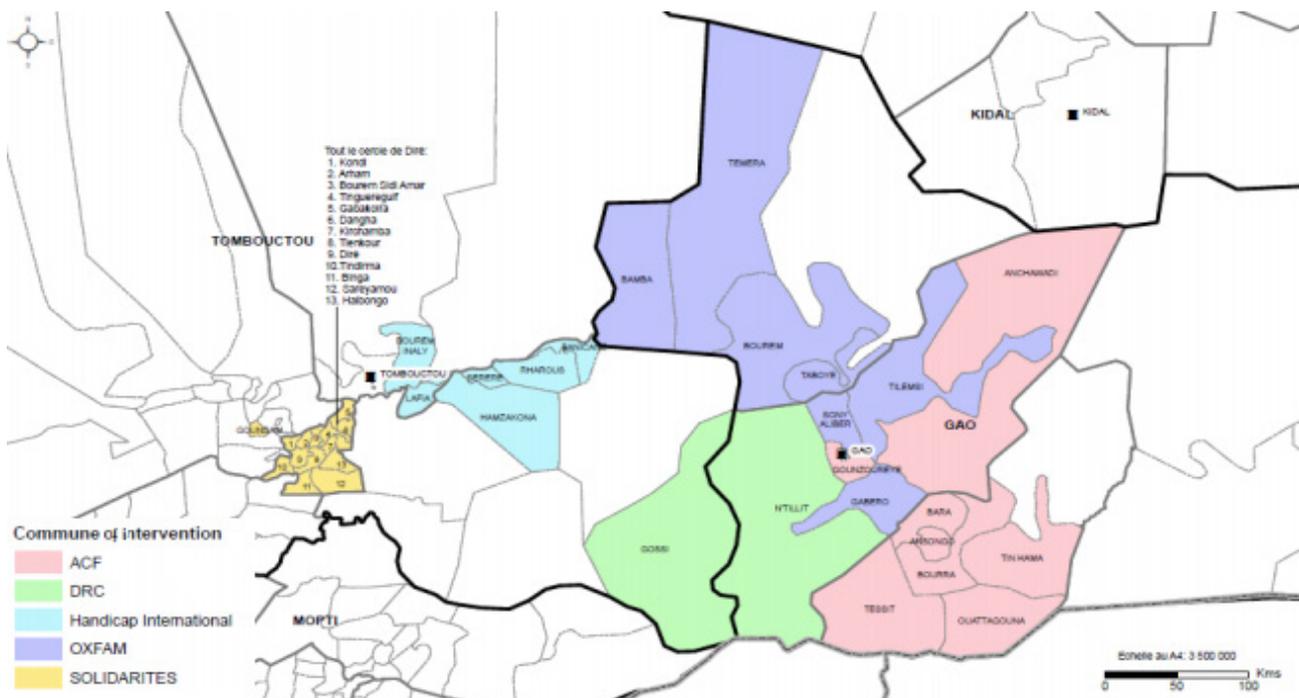
a humanitarian response that aligned as closely as possible with the requirements for a possible future non-contributory social protection (SP) programme system. The goal was to lay the foundations for a potential future SP system, thereby addressing the lack of a relevant functional social assistance programme in Mali at the outbreak of the conflict in 2012.

What it looked like

Humanitarian interventions in Northern Mali were being used largely to respond to recurrent, predictable seasonal needs. Since 2012, the humanitarian interventions responded to an additional major crisis, on top of structural seasonal food and nutrition insecurity, conflict-related constraints on food security and food availability such as .g. difficulties in accessing markets, the supply of markets, and interruption of animal movements, etc. An objective of these emergency safety nets was to better link this annual seasonal assistance to the government’s emerging long-term national social protection system, and eventually to relieve humanitarian agencies of having to respond to seasonal needs. It focused on how an international development donor such as the World Bank (WB) could consider lessons-learned and best practices developed by humanitarian agencies when entering this new field.

The CCFS programme in 2014 covered 37 communes of the two northern regions (Gao and Timbuktu) and reached a third of all households (40 000 households or 350 000 beneficiaries). International NGOs (INGOs) established a common

design and independent administrative processes and systems, laying the foundations of a future system and sought **to support WB-programming for the future *Jigisemejiri* programme.** Each INGO focused on a different geographical location and led a specific technical or operational programming issue (Danish Refugee Council (DRC): accountability; Action Contre la Faim (ACF): nutrition; Oxfam: advocacy; Solidarités: Monitoring & Evaluation; and Handicap: household registry). Households received three cash instalments, giving a total transfer of CFA 100 000 per household over the year. This was about one-third of typical household income in a normal year and was complemented by blanket supplementary feeding and nutrition education. The CCTS project was implemented by six NGOs in 2015-16 and the cash transfer value was set at CFA 120 000 (USD 194) equivalent to the transfer value in use on *Jigisemejiri*. However, this amount was found to be too low, according to local market analysis done in the north. During the first DG ECHO managed phase in 2014-15, this amount was transferred in addition to in-kind food distributions and supplementary feeding, taking place in the same area.



This fed into a three-year project, **KEY**, which was set by the EU Delegation and the DG ECHO office as a common framework for intervention. The project had a specific objective of supporting the creation of a national social protection system through coordination, lesson-learning and advocacy.

Establishing close collaboration with all concerned actors was a priority for the INGOs and DG ECHO, despite the fact that this created a high level of extra workload. This included engaging government staff in training and lessons-learned workshops, impact evaluation, organisation of a national conference on social protection, and creation of a dedicated donor group involving the Ministry.

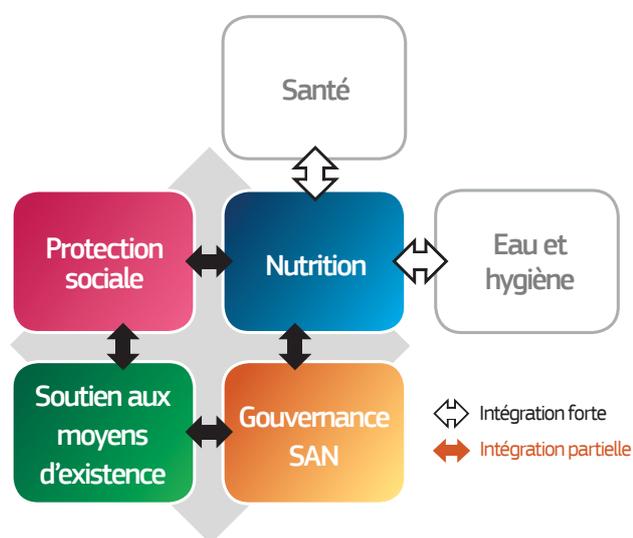


Figure 1 - Areas of intervention of KEY project
Source (ARC 2017)

The project framework was structured around the strategic pillars of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) (social protection; Nutrition; Livelihoods and Governance), see diagram, and is based on two specific areas of intervention:

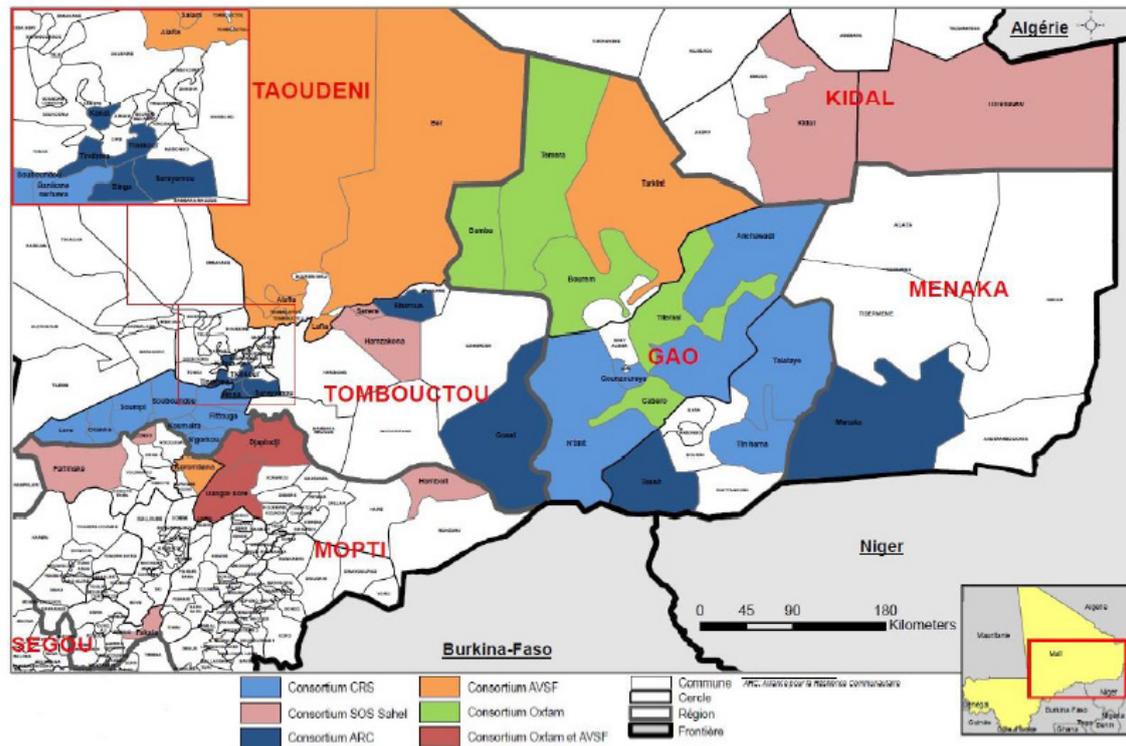
A/ to contribute to the strengthening of community and households' resilience; and

B/ to strengthen the project management skills of the local authorities at all levels, including coordination of activities, monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

The overall objective was to facilitate the transition of recurrent humanitarian responses to development actions addressing structural causes of vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity affecting a wide range of the population. Moreover, this framework allowed a link between the different instruments of aid for the next three years, including the annual DG ECHO Action Programme (HIP 2016 and subsequent programmes), the Thematic Programme 'Global Public Goods and Challenges' (GPGC), the Stability and Peace Contributing Instrument (ICSP) and the Emergency Trust Fund.

The project was implemented in 47 *communes* of six administrative regions in the north of the country: Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti, Taoudénit and Timbuktu.

The budget of the KEY project was EUR 41 million over four years, funded by the 11th EDF (PRORESA / DEVCO), the Trust Fund for the Sahel (EUTF) and HIP DG ECHO (EUR one million in 2017). DG ECHO contributed directly to the financing of seasonal social transfers in 2016 for EUR 4.3 million to facilitate the development of the programme which actually started in January 2017. In addition, funding was given for the improvement of access to healthcare, management (PCIMA3) and prevention of undernutrition (BSFP4), in the same areas of intervention and for the same target populations. The cost of this supplementary DG ECHO funded component was estimated at EUR 13 million per year and will have to be maintained between 2018 and 2020 to ensure the overall coherence of the approach. Linkage to the Unified Social Registry of Social Protection is provided for all households receiving social transfers under the KEY project.



How it was Done

The **geographical targeting** of the intervention zones and the selection of beneficiaries has been carried out jointly or in a coordinated manner to ensure the delivery of a package of interventions that is coherent and optimal for the target population. Common monitoring indicators have been set in order to allow evaluation of the relative effectiveness of each project as well as the added value in terms of impact of a multi-sectorial and LRRD (continuity between the emergency phases, rehabilitation and development) approach.

ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

The INGOs made use of the World Food Programme (WFP) Emergency Food Security Assessment survey in July 2013 which showed food insecurity was as high as 93% in some areas. They also linked up with national Domestic Resource Mobilisation (DRM) systems. The communes for intervention were selected on the basis of data from the National Survey on Food and Nutrition Security (Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle ENSAN), the national early warning unit (Système d'Alerte Précoce SAP), the projections of need from Cadre Harmonisé and a list from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs (UN OCHA) of priority zones for intervention. This ensured government buy-in for the programme. The INGOs implemented a joint market assessment, which confirmed that cash was an appropriate modality since markets were still functioning. Local level analysis of the risks of cash distribution, in the context of insecurity, resulted in the exclusion of Kidal region from the programme, despite the high level of need.

DESIGN

While the WB used selection criteria mainly based on wealth ranking, i.e. the Household Economic Approach (HEA) criteria in the south of Mali, the NGO methodologies exhibited some differences including the absence of a checks-and-balances mechanisms, with too much power vested with leaders to decide on targeting, which resulted in different criteria for vulnerability, and thus different beneficiaries.

Research has been undertaken to address this situation in Gao from 2016 onwards, where both programmes are now being delivered, through analysis of responses collected in questionnaires to ascertain the extent to

1 *Hunger Safety Nets Programme in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas of Northern Kenya*

2 *In the HSNP areas, potential beneficiaries are registered within the system and issued a card in anticipation of a crisis. This enables a horizontal expansion during times of crisis. Such registration process has not been followed (and may not be possible either) in the urban food subsidy programme thereby restricting horizontal expansion.*

which the two programmes can be combined. INGOs opted for unconditional, unrestricted cash transfers based on a needs-based approach and local context analysis. In one location, one INGO (DRC) opted for voucher distribution through the CCFS instead of cash, due to concerns about the security environment and power dynamics of traders responsible for delivering the cash.

The transfer value and frequency of the CCFS in 2014 considered those set through the *Jigisemejiri* social transfers programme (quarterly transfers of CFA 30 000) as well as the value of the planned in-kind food distributions for the north. Given the high prevalence of malnutrition in the country, it was decided to include a nutrition component (blanket feeding supplied by WFP, plus sensitisation). In line with this, the design of *Jigisemejiri* also included a nutrition component. Evaluation in 2015 found an improvement of the general food security situation of the beneficiaries during the programme implementation and this was not limited to food only, but also improvements were seen in debt, possession of productive assets, etc.

Following the efforts made by the NGOs in the Social Networks Common Framework (CCFS) in 2014 and the Social Transfers Common Framework (CCTS) in 2016 **to contribute to the institutionalisation of a social safety net system in Mali**, the KEY project aimed to contribute to the alignment of these initiatives with national policies and mechanisms to facilitate the resumption by the Government whenever possible.

The EU Delegation in Mali had previous experience with PASA (*Programme d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire*) Mali (five rounds) working with NGOs. One of the lessons learnt was that funding of scattered projects does not give the best results, although some form of alignment had been piloted using common indicators on nutrition. After CCFS/CCTS, it was necessary to continue the work started by DG ECHO and take into account the lessons learned through a longer-term approach. As DG ECHO and the EU Delegation would work in the same areas and both contribute to improve resilience to food insecurity and malnutrition, it was important to work together and design a common framework of intervention to ensure NGOs integrated previous experiences and complied with the resilience/AGIR approach. EUR 15 million had already been mobilised under the *Programme de Renforcement de la Sécurité Alimentaire* (PRORESA) for NGOs and DG ECHO and the Delegation prepared a request for funding under the EUTF that was presented at the first EUTF board in January 2016 and resulted in EUR 20 million being added as a Resilience programme. Both funding sources were combined to better cover better all the pillars under the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) and leading to one joint call for interest in the KEY project.

NGOs that had been funded by DG ECHO under CCFS/CCTS had started to look at the possibility of working better together through a consortium: the Alliance for Community Resilience (ARC). They had already funded some shared human resources before forming the

	Pillar 1 Social protection	Pillar 2 Fight against under nutrition	Pillar 3 Livelihood Strengthening	Pillar 4 governance of resilience
Trust funds	X	X	X	X
PRORESA		X	X	X
State Building Contract 2				X
GPGC	X		X	X
ICSP (RELAC)	X			
ECHO (HIP 2016)	X	X		

consortium to align better and gain greater visibility for discussions with partners/government. In addition, the Delegation was looking at the possibility for future grants to work with bigger consortia and prepared the call for interest in a way to encourage consortia and big projects by putting the minimum grant at EUR 4 million. Five consortia were selected, including ARC, and all closely collaborate with each other.

OPERATIONS

The EUD remains strongly committed to the establishment of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) in Mali. With this context, it strongly supported

the start of the reform of the National Food Security (DNSA) programme by enhancing dialogue and coordination between partners and the government. Following the efforts made by the NGOs of the CCFS in 2014 and the CCTS in 2016 to contribute to the institutionalisation of a social safety net system in Mali, the KEY program continued the alignment of initiatives with national policies and mechanisms.

According to the methodology adapted from Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and presented in the Reference Document, the approach implemented by the EU and its partners is an example of implicit alignment with the national mechanism of social safety

nets being developed in Mali. It helps to contribute to ongoing debates on the themes of target beneficiary households, seasonality and complementarity between sustainable mechanisms of social safety nets and actions to prevent undernutrition.

The activities focus on the four strategic pillars of AGIR:

- 1/ Restore, strengthen and secure livelihoods and improve protection of vulnerable communities and households which aims to enhance livelihood social protection and to establish a foundation of basic assistance (non-contributory social safety nets) and improve access to basic services with a particular emphasis on health.
- 2/ Strengthen the nutrition of vulnerable households, which seeks to enhance a good understanding of the determinants of the different types of undernutrition and the proven effectiveness of the proposed solutions.
- 3/ To sustainably strengthen agricultural and food productivity, the incomes of the most vulnerable people and their access to food applied to a participatory approach during which the target communities will define the most important activities, relevant and adapted to the context in which they live.
- 4/ Strengthen governance in food and nutrition security, which supports governance arrangements in place or in the process of implementation related to food security, nutrition and social protection.

In this context, the complementarities between the various interventions on-going and / or programmed in early 2016 can be summarised in the table below:

CAPACITY TRANSFERS

The capacities for coordination, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of authorities and technical services will be strengthened at all levels. Special attention will be given at strengthening and coordinating early warning and surveillance systems (especially SAP, health and nutrition information system, etc.) and all steps to improve the decision-making capacities of the authorities.

With this aim, NGOs and donors planned training, field visits, and participation in CWG and in the DWG. In addition, the following workshops have been organised: two workshops on the security issue; one capitalisation workshop on social safety nets in Bamako and two capitalisation workshops on CCFS experiences in the regions of Gao and Timbuktu.

Registration:

At the beginning of the CCFS, a population census and

wealth ranking of nearly all (130 000) households in the selected communes took place. The aim was to produce a reliable data set as the foundation of the future planned national social registry underpinning social transfers programmes supported by the World Bank. Unlike *Jigisemejiri*, not all the NGOs used the census data for targeting to avoid long delays. Moreover, the CCFS list was compiled using HEA with community validation. The NGOs were the first to introduce a complete census, separate to the WB exercise, that only registered the eligible beneficiaries (rather going in the direction of a “beneficiary registry”). This was a crucial difference between both approaches.

Evidence and advocacy from the CCFS partners have led to discussions about the differences in targeting methods between humanitarian and development action in Mali. When the WB programme expanded into Gao region in 2017 it began experimenting with a slightly different targeting method: ‘PMT-plus’. The starting point for selection was the list of households enrolled in the CCFS in 2014 and the PMT was then applied to those households.

Enrolment:

Because of the different registration approaches de-duplication mechanisms were required.

Payment:

Due to the rural environment and lack of financial services in the north, cash transfer delivery for the CCFS could not make use of the same delivery systems as in the World Bank programme. NGOs opted for flexible delivery models rather than a single approach across agencies and used payment service providers (microfinance institutions (MFIs), mobile phone operators and local traders) that worked best in each geographical area. Transfers were mainly delivered through traders, an adaptive way of transferring money in this insecure context with low density of population and markets. In contrast, MFIs struggled to reach remote areas, to adapt their procedures to the context (e.g. where households lacked ID cards), ensure sufficient availability of funds, or pay beneficiaries on time.

For the CCFS, delays in registration, in contractual negotiations with the donor and internal coordination between the INGO partners led to delays in disbursement of the cash to beneficiaries. Cash payments took place from June/ July onwards, which is the beginning of the lean season, which meant a loss in transfer value due to increased price of staple foods in local markets.

Systems and institutions:

The intention was that the INGO programme’s database of almost one million people would be provided for use in the future national social registry. The database was handed over to the Ministry of

Solidarity and Social Protection DNPSES (Direction Nationale de la Protection Sociale et de l'Economie Solidaire) in 2015. The handover process was lengthy as safeguards had to be elaborated for protection of personal data. The Ministry did not have the capacity to manage such databases, or protocols to share information on demand. While the data was handed over, the Government of Mali (GoM) was unable to use the data or share it with other agencies.

In 2016-2017 a process was put underway to integrate the database into the social registry being set up by the World Bank programme. This is envisaged as a gateway for all actors working on social assistance to access information about individuals and households and was expected to launch in early 2018. The World Bank programme has resources to build the relevant technical and operational capacities within the GoM to manage this data. Integrated MIS in any context have challenges for use in shock response due to difficulties in generating and maintaining comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate data. In the context of northern Mali this registry will need to provide timely updates to changes in households' material situation and in response to population displacement.

While social protection is the responsibility of the state, the capacity of state actors is extremely stretched, especially in the north, and affects their ability to deliver even routine social protection let alone any scaled up response due to crisis. The government is not in a position to create 'surge capacity'; still less to bolster its presence in conflict zones. The risk of transferring data to a state that is part of the conflict should be considered. Non-government actors will continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock response and social protection for the long term. The alliance of INGOs in the DG ECHO-funded projects was a useful step supporting the eventual transition between humanitarian assistance and social protection, as it was easier for government programmes to draw lessons from, and coordinate with, a harmonised programme than with scattered interventions. Aspects of programme design and implementation that were coordinated across the NGOs included the logical framework, assessment tools, transfer value, registration method and Monitoring & Evaluation.

The NGO alliances on the CCTS and CCFS were not formalised into a "consortium". Each agency retained its autonomy, being contracted separately by DG ECHO. This ensured that each was able to align with the mandates and procedures of their own organisations. Moreover, a common systems and procedures were developed across agencies to manage particular aspects such as HR, data management and advocacy, or common aspects of implementation (e.g. negotiation with traders to increase efficiency). For example, the five NGOs succeeded in jointly negotiating a lower commission paid to traders: 5% rather than the 7% or

8% where NGOs negotiated individually.

Responsibility for safety nets is shared by several ministries in Mali: besides the Ministry of Solidarity, another key actor is the Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire (CSA), in charge of short-term crisis response. Links between both Ministries are weak, and no mechanisms are yet in place to ensure safety nets are scalable in crisis times. An inter-ministerial coordination mechanism is still awaited. In the meanwhile, a joint humanitarian and development donor working group was put in place by DG ECHO/ WG and UNICEF to improve coordination, with involvement of Ministries, the Cash Working Group (CWG), humanitarian clusters, and *Jigisemejiri*.

The ARC Consortium was born following the CCFS and CCTS initiatives. It brought together seven international NGOs and is one of the five consortia of the KEY project. Social transfers and livelihood support are at the centre of their intervention package, in the form of unconditional cash transfers. Targeted recipients are the poorest households, determined using a participatory and community approach.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

INGOs developed and implemented a joint Monitoring & Evaluation framework. This was a demanding task given the volatile security context, but this important initial investment, which harmonised post distribution monitoring and produced a common baseline and end line evaluation, contributed to robust evidence and lessons learned for the government and development donors. Due to the security challenges in accessing some areas, an independent institution could not be recruited. To ensure neutrality of data collection and analysis, NGOs recruited staff for the consortium, with responsibility of oversight, control and data analysis across all agencies.

OUTCOMES

In the **Post Distribution Monitoring Survey (PDM)**, positive effects have been observed at several levels (see Figure 2 below):

An increase of 13 percentage points (91% vs 78%) from households with an acceptable food consumption score (ACS). This change reflects an improvement in food consumption in terms of quality and diversity of the nutrition and nutritional wealth of the food consumed.

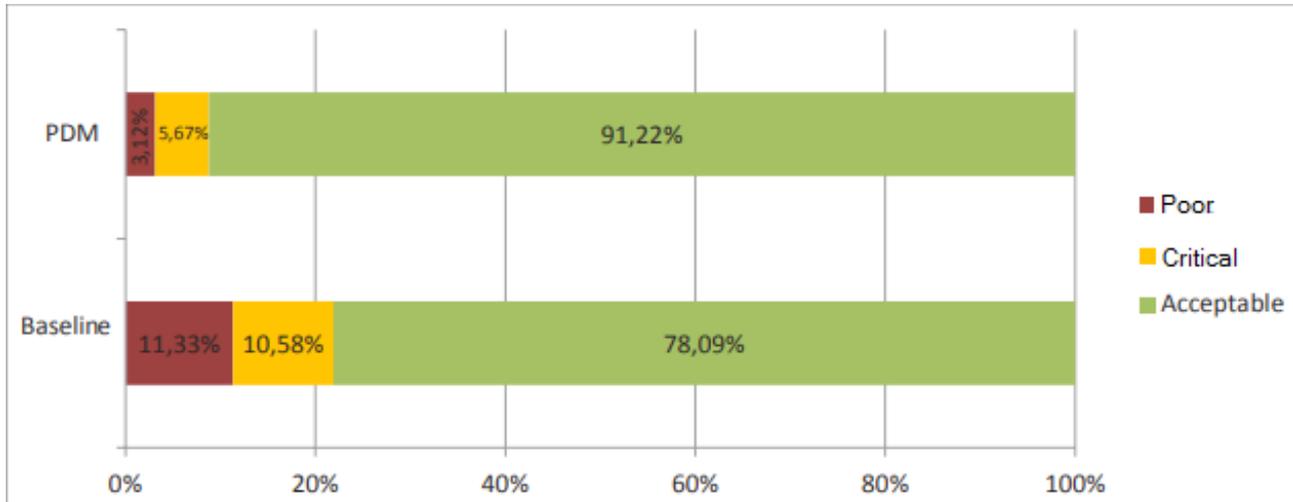


Figure 2 Household breakdown according to the ACS

A drop of 67% (from 20.70 to 7.11) in households who use harmful behaviours to cope with their food deficit or lack of money. A decrease in the share of total household income for food expenditures and health for the benefit of, among others, the purchase of non-food items, investment in productive assets and deleveraging. About 50% of households acquired livelihood assets as a result of the first transfer, improving their productive capacity.

As regards the quantity of food consumed the share of households that could cover the daily minimum energy requirements of 2100 kcal increased by 5 points during the same period.

Overall, the households willingness to deleverage, to invest in productive assets as well as the observed improvement in the quality of food, are factors that testify to the positive impact of the action on the reconstruction of beneficiaries' resilience capacities.

What happened next

Engagement with the GoM throughout the programmes and the evidence generated has built government interest in emergency safety nets and social transfers. The Ministry of Solidarity agreed to co-lead the **Cash Working Group** with WFP and Oxfam, a key advance considering that national state-led coordination mechanisms are not yet in place. In January 2016 the Ministry took on responsibility for social transfers. There is political will for using social protection to address social shocks, as seen in the national social protection policy of 2016 and the national document on resilience priorities.

Jigisemejiri expanded into the northern region of Gao in 2017 with additional funding. A project amendment by the World Bank in mid-2016 adjusted Jigisemejiri's objective to emphasise the building of an 'adaptive national safety net system' and the importance of resilience to shocks. Humanitarian actors

would like to see a progressive transfer of the seasonal chronic caseload to the state-run system so they can focus on acute crises. This requires the state system to be operational in the north, which is likely to take many more years. In the meantime, it is appropriate to continue harmonisation of humanitarian interventions with the emerging social transfer system. **DG ECHO is working to better embed its interventions into longer term systems by collaborating with the EU Delegation.** DG ECHO is on the steering committee of the EU-funded KEY programme, providing two years of complementary support to the beneficiaries of the CCTS and contributing to the establishment of the social registry. Other humanitarian donors such as USAID are interested in this approach and are co-funding the KEY project and partners in certain areas.

A government programme based on the CCTS and Jigisemejiri would need to cover several hundred thousand households, which is not feasible in Mali in the short term. These interventions remain largely funded by international donors. Mechanisms for disaster risk financing are being explored by the government. The World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery are looking at options for funding the scale-up of Jigisemejiri in a disaster under a formal working group.

Source: O'Brien et al. (2017) 'Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Case study — Social Protection and Humanitarian Responses to Food Insecurity and Poverty in Mali', OPM; Kukrety (2016) 'Working with Cash Based Safety Nets in Humanitarian Contexts: Guidance Note for Practitioners', CaLP.



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