



# Gender, Markets and Women's Empowerment in the Sahel Region: A Comparative Analysis of Mali, Niger, and Chad

VAM Gender and Markets Study #4

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The *Zero Hunger Challenge* emphasizes the importance of strengthening economic empowerment in support of the Sustainable Development Goal 2 to *double small-scale producer incomes and productivity*. The increasing focus on resilient markets can bring important contributions to sustainable food systems and build resilience. Participation in market systems is not only a means for people to secure their livelihood, but it also enables them to exercise agency, maintain dignity, build social capital and increase self-worth. Food security analysis must take into account questions of gender-based violence and discrimination in order to deliver well-tailored assistance to those most in need.

WFP's Nutrition Policy (2017-2021) reconfirms that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to achieve good nutrition and sustainable and resilient livelihoods, which are based on human rights and justice. This is why gender-sensitive analysis in nutrition programmes is a crucial contribution to achieving the SDGs. The VAM *Gender & Markets Initiative* of the WFP Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa seeks to strengthen WFP and partners' commitment, accountability and capacities for gender-sensitive food security and nutrition analysis in order to design market-based interventions that empower women and vulnerable populations. The series of regional *VAM Gender and Markets Studies* is an effort to build the evidence base and establish a link to SDG 5 which seeks to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*.

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## List of Acronyms

ALIMA	: Alliance for International Medical Action
AMASSA	: Malian Association for Food Security and Sovereignty
AMCP	: Malian Alliance against Malaria
CEMAC	: Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CFA	: Cash Assistance for Assets
CSCOM	: Community Health Centre
CT	: Cash transfer
DEF	: Fundamental Studies Diploma
FFA	: Food Assistance for Assets
FO	: Farmers' Organizations
GEM	: Gender Empowerment Measure
HEA	: Household Economy Approach
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
LASDEL	: Laboratory for Studies and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development
MAM	: Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MDG	: Millennium Development Goals
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
ONAPE	: National Office for Employment Promotion
P4P	: Purchase for Progress
PLA	: Participatory Learning and Action
PPA	: Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRA	: Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRASAC	: Regional Axis for Applied Research in the Development of Central African Agricultural Systems
PRRO	: Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations
SAM	: Severe Acute Malnutrition
SAP	: Structural Adjustment Program
SECADEF	: Catholic Aid and Development
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNPL	: National Union of Local Producers
VAM	: Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit
WEAI	: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	: World Food Programme
XAF	: Franc CFA (Central Africa)
XOF	: Franc CFA (West Africa)

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# Executive summary

## 1. MALI

Research in two villages around Dioïla, a city in the agricultural belt about 165 kilometres from Bamako, found that the success of WFP programs is conditioned by gender dynamics at the village and household level. As is typical in Malian households, the household head (*dutigi*) controls labour input for the household's collective fields, and has the deciding voice in the use or sale of the unit's collective production. Migration in the region has become an increasingly important livelihood strategy, particularly for young men drawn to work in the gold mines nearby.

The region selected for this research has relatively productive soils and is accessible by many state and non-governmental organizations, allowing for a diversity of livelihood strategies. Agriculture, and particularly the production of staple grains, dominates household livelihood strategies for the region. Men and women, in largely separate economies, seek to diversify their livelihood strategies to mitigate risk, participate in the cash economy, and assure household food security throughout the year. For men, this is done primarily through migration and animal husbandry, either in fattening for resale or in husbandry. Shea butter production is a significant supplemental activity for women in both villages.

Male out-migration creates demographic imbalances in key age-groups, which results in increasing demand for women's agricultural labour. Younger males that would normally be subordinate to a household head and collectively work its fields find greater autonomy in migration. Social position is probably a greater determinant of a woman's power within the household than is her economic contribution. The labour input demanded of a woman by her *dutigi* is strongly related to the presence of other active women in the household and their distribution. The economic pressures women face also depend significantly on their age and social position. In both villages, some women own animals, but are limited in the ability to sell them independently. Because a woman should not sell an animal without her husband's express permission, potential buyers will refuse to purchase, or will give her a much less favourable price than her husband could get. This is a key factor limiting women's participation in the market.

As is typical of Bamana villages, land is not bought or sold, but remains in families. For the most part, even the poorest families who are obliged to work for others have their own fields to cultivate for subsistence. Sharecropping is rare, since households prefer to work fewer fields and produce less than before the gold rush, rather than maintain productivity using hired labour. Most households have an abundance of land and do not maximize their cultivated area. Land is formally allocated by the *dugutigi*, and each larger household head then apportions out the available land between collective and individual fields. The distinction between these two types of field grants women a certain degree of economic autonomy. Although women are assured plots for their own cultivation, it is at the discretion of the *dutigi* to decide which ones they will be allotted in each cycle, which adds a level of uncertainty to their long-term planning.

## WFP PROGRAMS IN MALI

P4P has intentionally prioritized crops associated with women's production; with less access to credit and a lower capacity to absorb risk, women are particularly vulnerable to pressures to sell their production at unfavourable prices immediately after harvest. The P4P program has also targeted women's groups for additional material support, providing farming implements and plow animals to women's FOs (farmers' organizations) that lack the necessary equipment for the labour-intensive periods of the agricultural cycle.

For smallholder farmers not participating in P4P, there is tremendous economic pressure to sell off grain at the moment of harvest, despite the disadvantageous price that middlemen traders offer. Agricultural loans for inputs and fertilizers are due, and the household is often under duress as the previous year's reserves have been depleted during the lean months immediately preceding, which may also have obliged the household to borrow food or money for repayment at harvest. Worse, non-participants are subject to the vacillations of the market for both inputs and yields, and face uncertainty that they can find a buyer at harvest for a favourable price. As a result, they cannot easily plan out how to maximize profit by planning cultivable area in advance.

The high level of migration in this area has direct implications for P4P. On the one hand, it assures that for practically every household, there is more land available than is currently exploited. This is the context in which the guaranteed market of P4P has the greatest potential to provide transformative change. On the other hand, increasing household dependence on support from members outside the village makes them less able to adapt in cases when remittances are abruptly cut off. Furthermore, migration has destabilized many social institutions in the village, and may also be reducing the social cohesion of production groups.

P4P resolves the two most critical problems for producers: it provides some support for the needed inputs and guarantees sale above market price. Unfortunately, social and structural factors make women producers far less able to take advantage of P4P's benefits than men. Because women have less access to fertilizer (available through cotton production, an exclusively male crop), they purchase it on credit, and are therefore more likely to need to sell off a portion of their harvest during the intervening month before selling the remaining portion to WFP. Moreover, while members of men's groups described how a guaranteed market allowed them to advance from a tiny margin for income generation to significantly increased production, for women in both villages the effect was muted. This is because at the critical moments of clearing, planting, and harvest, men have first access to the oxen and ox carts, and women are obliged to wait until all men have finished before they can make use of them, losing part of their intended harvest as a result.

**Caregiver program:** Through our interviews with the caregivers, it becomes clear just how hard it is for women to be displaced from their households for even brief periods of time, particularly when the duration of their hospital stay is difficult to determine. The opportunity costs of leaving behind other children, household obligations, and field duties (particularly in peak seasons) are tremendous- and those gaps are inevitably filled by other women and girls, sometimes with permanent effects (such as pulling girls out of school). Women also face considerable social costs during their extended displacement as caregivers in centralized care. Because the caregiver program alleviates some of the economic concerns of households making decisions about hospitalizing malnourished children, it has the potential not only to reduce dropout but to bring children in for care earlier, and with less severe malnutrition.

## 2. NIGER

Research was conducted in three communities near Loga that were joint beneficiaries of a single WFP Cash For Assets program, a water retention project that lies between the three villages and employed work groups from each village. They also primarily depend upon the same market. Villages in this region share an overwhelming dependence on migration as a livelihood strategy. As soil quality has declined and harvest yields have become less certain, agriculture and agropastoralism are no longer sufficient to feed households in the region year-round. These migration patterns are gendered: men mainly travel internationally to sell second-hand clothing in coastal countries to the south; women serve as domestic labour in Niger's urban centres. The Cash for Assets program initiated by WFP, in conjunction with the other forms of support WFP and its implementing partner provide, has been transformative for these communities primarily by reducing or eliminating the need for women's migration. Before the arrival of WFP support to the research sites, livelihood diversification in the face of inadequate agricultural yields was predominantly achieved through the migration of at least some household members for some part of the year; since WFP, this strategy continues to dominate, but has been largely scaled back and is now largely limited to adult males.

The three villages visited in this study are Zarma, the ethnic group that forms the majority of the population of Niamey, Dosso, and their surroundings. Zarma communities primarily subsist from rainfed agriculture, dominated by millet as the staple crop grown in the short rainy season between June and October. All but a few households farm, with a gendered division of labour: men cultivate the staples of the rural diet, millet, sorghum and corn; while women grow a variety of complements including cowpeas, peanuts, beans, okra, tiger nut, and sesame. Nearly all production is devoted to subsistence. As soil quality has declined over the years, the population has increasingly been driven to diversify its livelihood strategies for both men and women, primarily through migration. Long-term male migration poses a serious threat to the village's continued existence and leads to gendered forms of insecurity for migrants' wives and mothers. An increasing number of households find themselves obliged to take in their married daughters, who revert to their fathers' responsibility because their migrant husbands have either abandoned them or send insufficient remittances for their wives' and children's survival. Extended migration also erodes the social contract between son and parents, particularly mothers who may be in a highly vulnerable position without sons physically present in the village.

For the majority of women, migration represents increased physical and social vulnerability. With few rights or recourses in cases of abuse, overwork or underpayment, female domestic workers are routinely insulted, physically assaulted, and demeaned in their work. Women in migration risk social sanction for spending time away from their families or husbands, exposed to stigmatization and accusations of sexual conduct and STDs. Women are typically obliged to bring their children with them in migration; while their mothers work, the children typically remain out of school, receive sub-par foster care if any, and frequently turn to theft and delinquency. Children taken out of school are often lost to the system, never re-enrolling. Like their mothers, girls brought along in migration are particularly vulnerable to various forms of abuse.

All three villages are characterized by a limited role of the state, and limited access to political power. Infrastructure for education, health, and sanitation remain rudimentary, and poor roads keep the area cut off from markets and cheap prices despite its relative proximity to a major commercial hub. There is



a surprising lack of formal or informal credit structures in these communities; women, in particular, are averse to participation in the few credit systems that are available out of fears of penalties for non-repayment. There are also few formal savings mechanisms available to the population. Both men and women prefer to store their savings in the form of livestock, out of distrust of formal systems and a general desire to limit the divisibility of savings for the long term, since cash diffuses quickly into the stream of social obligations and mutual support in village life.

#### WFP PROGRAMS IN NIGER

This study was primarily concerned with the Cash for Assets (CFA) program in rural development, but the researchers were struck by the mutually reinforcing impacts of WFP's various programs. In addition to the current CFA project, WFP's implementing partner organization, Kaydia, oversees the school canteen, school mill, school garden and school herd programs, coordinates health education campaigns with the health centres, and provides technical support in agriculture and conservation. Kaydia also oversaw cash transfers for the most vulnerable households during the most difficult months of the year.

The three villages visited in this study are all currently participating in the same FFA project, receiving targeted cash support to remove the accumulated silt in the basin that lies between them. Salaries go almost exclusively toward household food consumption, allowing the most vulnerable to survive until harvest, and curbing the rate of seasonal out-migration. In the longer term, it is hoped that the excavated basin will provide a year-round source of water, and thus an opportunity for income generation through gardening in the dry season. Moreover, the project addresses the communities' concerns over erosion and soil degradation, since drainages into a deeper reservoir reduce the risk of village flooding in the rainy season.

The choice of workers to be sent to represent a targeted household is made by the households themselves, based on individual availability and capacity. In the context of large-scale seasonal male migration, and because women's other duties are often devalued as invisible forms of labour by male household heads, most of the CFA labour falls to women. The Cash for Assets program allows women to avoid seasonal migration not only because it provides income, but because it is partnered with school canteens. Women's migration presents a fundamental challenge to the villages' continued existence, as it fragments the nuclear family and often necessitates the displacement of children out of school and into unstable living conditions when they accompany their mother. During the lean months after grain reserves of poor households have been exhausted, the canteens provide the necessary incentive to keep girls in school, so that their parents know they will receive at least one nutritious meal per day. Given the food insecurity of these villages, it is likely that the school programs and the CFA project would have had a fraction of their actual impact had they not been implemented together. Reducing women's migration has not only helped to stabilize marriages, but has also had a dramatic impact on children's school enrolment rates.

Targeting for CFA, although improved in response to community feedback over time, has been imperfect, leaving out some highly vulnerable households. As a corrective, all three communities redistributed assistance (both work hours and earnings from CFA and a portion of the cash transfers) from the targeted recipients to others in the community who had not been selected. This was done as a matter of course in order to avoid conflicts and jealousies among neighbours, and was not considered an act of charity by

either donors or recipients. However, the degree to which resources were redistributed depended widely, ranging from significant support to token gestures. In addition, because need was assessed at a household level, some particularly vulnerable individuals within relatively well-off households were excluded.

There were two other main problems with the CFA program. One was an abrupt reduction in work hours at the site halfway through the work period. Many households had made the decision not to send household members in migration based on the assurance of five full months of support, and had difficulty adjusting to this sudden deviation from planned revenue. The other was the provision of assistance in the form of cash rather than food. The vast majority of households spend their earnings entirely on consumption needs, and there is a pervasive perception of market collusion artificially raising the price of staple commodities. Respondents therefore universally expressed a preference for food rather than cash payment.

### 3. CHAD

Research was conducted in three small villages that had been beneficiaries of WFP Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programs in the recent past. Two of the villages had worked jointly on a water retention project; the third had built a small bridge over a culvert in order for people and animals to be able to cross in the rainy season. Prior to these projects, targeted members of all three villages had also been the recipients of WFP food distributions. The three villages principally rely on the same market. The villages are situated near Mongo, an urban center, but are relatively isolated geographically by intervening mountain ranges. Despite the relative accessibility of resources, poor soil quality and insufficient or erratic rains severely limit productivity in the region, and many households suffer from severe food insecurity.

Despite their proximity to Mongo and relative access to NGO and microfinance programs, the three communities visited face severe limitations in basic infrastructure in health, education, and sanitation. Although formal credit structures exist, they are generally avoided, particularly by women. Informal systems of credit and mutual support are underdeveloped. Subsistence agriculture is the main livelihood strategy, with millet and sorghum as the main staples of men's production, and women primarily producing peanuts, sesame, and okra. Surviving from harvest to harvest establishes the general pattern of subsistence throughout the year for all households: work in the fields from May until the harvests in September and October; and a diversity of supplemental strategies to fill in the shortfalls from harvest production during the rest of the year. Agriculture is a precarious endeavor. The ability to acquire animals as a buffer against food insecurity marks a threshold of economic stratification in these communities. Strong disparity exists between the poorest and those better off, both in the degree of their food insecurity at the time of our visit, and in the fundamental differences between their available strategies. Nearly all wealthier households raised goats and sheep as a shock-mitigating strategy, and are better positioned to take advantage of cash crop production. Poorer households depend more heavily on migration and firewood collection as subsidiary strategies.

Women have considerable control over the products of their agricultural labour, and can decide with autonomy whether and when to sell crops typically associated with women's agriculture. Men do not have the right to take women's produce without their consent, nor can they seize any animals women have been able to purchase with the profits from their commerce. This apparent autonomy, however, seldom results in empowerment in practice: the burden of daily obligation felt by most women means

that they have little opportunity to exercise the privileges they might be accorded in theory. Grain stores and most household animals are under the exclusive control of male household members. Women must normally consult their husbands before joining any credit association, work group, or other social structure, or making any significant economic decision. While petty commerce has increased, real market access for women is highly limited, and even women who are able to sell some part of their harvest must often do so by proxy through male members of the household while they themselves stay in the village.

#### WFP PROGRAMS IN CHAD

WFP provides support in the region through three main axes of intervention: nutrition, education, and rural community development. Integrated activities (food security projects, nutritional support, school canteens) are designed to strengthen community resilience in interaction. Implementing partners in the region include local organizations as well as international NGOs. For the three villages in this study, program oversight for both targeted food distribution and Food Assistance for Assets is conducted by Moustagbal, a local organization with its main office in Mongo. Moustagbal and WFP collaborate on multiple programs in the canton of Baro, including health center gardens, fuel-efficient stove construction and nutritional education.

In 2013 and 2014, WFP and Moustagbal provided food distributions to the most vulnerable elderly women and to households with malnourished children, distributed monthly for the last three months before the harvest. In nearly all cases, women did indeed have control and autonomy over the food received, and households with underweight children reported that they (and their nursing mothers) were indeed prioritized within household use. In a separate distribution, women who participated in a literacy program in Mala received food assistance as well. Since distribution occurred during the period of greatest food scarcity, food was consumed and not sold in every instance; in the few instances where secondary redistribution to other households occurred, the amount of food shared was not significant. For the same reason, there was universal preference for food rather than cash distribution during the lean months.

In 2013, WFP and Moustagbal introduced two Food Assistance for Assets programs for the case study sites: a water retention site to provide year-round water access, and a small bridge over a culvert near the entrance to a third village for access in the rainy season. The FFA program has, by all accounts, been transformative for these communities. Both work projects were self-targeting; any village household could elect to participate, to whatever degree they were able. In Mormo and Mala, which have distinct economic strata, relatively wealthier households took advantage of the program to supplement reserves, while poorer households depended on the work to survive the lean season. For these households, the food provided for digging the *haffir* (from Chadian Arabic: حفيرة; traditional reservoir) allowed them to avoid more precarious strategies, particularly the vicious cycle of acquiring food on credit to repay after harvest. Unsurprisingly, many of the most vulnerable households were less able to take advantage of the program without endangering the viability of other livelihood strategies. The research found very few examples of redistribution of food among households in any of the villages.



Photo: WFP/Rein Skullerud

# INTRODUCTION

The present Sahelian study of Mali, Niger and Chad was carried out as a partnership between WFP and the University of South Florida. The structure of this study differs from the other studies carried out during Phase I of the Gender and Markets initiative as it is comparative and focuses on three countries in the Sahel region: Niger, Mali and Chad. A comparative regional approach should provide the reader with a better situational understanding of each country and of the environment in which the target country is located. The comparative analysis contained in the general sections of the report would also be useful to the reader who might only seek information from one of the three countries studied.

The study sought to respond to the raised issues of the Gender and Market initiative:

1. What are the roles of women and men in food chains and markets?
2. What are the specific challenges of women and men in food chains and markets?
3. How to measure and monitor the empowerment of women in food markets?
4. What are some possible programmatic solutions to meet the challenges?

The reader will be provided with answers or reflections throughout the study.

## Methodology

Data collection instruments were designed to capture a maximum level of qualitative data in a short time frame with the aim of responding to pertinent questions about gender and market access in Mali, Niger, and Chad. The study methodology was based on the Households Livelihood Security approach (HHLS), which seeks to understand the micro-dynamics of household livelihoods at the local level through a combination of quantitative and

qualitative methods, with an emphasis on community participation in identifying and analyzing household dynamics. The methodology was designed to maximize the range of voices captured from local populations by using open-ended focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews that allow people to raise issues through natural conversation within a pre-determined range of relevant study topics.

The approach in each country was to interview the country office staff, recruit assistants for interpretation and data collection, and collaborate with both country office and regional office in Dakar to select the commune and villages for field visits. Sites were purposively selected with regard to feasibility and team security, the range and duration of WFP activities present, and the livelihood and ethnic diversity of the region. The researchers also sought to diversify the implementing NGOs in village sampling.

At each designated site, the team met with the director and program coordinators of the local NGO and obtained data on current regional activities. Based on this information, 2-3 villages were selected for visits of 2 to 3 days each. During field visits at each site, the methodology included a community interview with the village chief and elders, 18-28 semi-structured household surveys, and 2-3 key informant interviews. In addition, depending on the WFP programs in the village, 2-3 focus groups were conducted, and NGO personnel administering the programs were interviewed. Through coordination with local NGO offices, where possible local technical agents and/or coordinators accompanied the teams to the villages, provided introductions to the local community, and stayed for the duration of the study to facilitate research activities.

In each village, the team met with the local village chief upon arrival to announce the purpose of the visit and to obtain permission for the study. The chief and his local counselors were then requested to attend a community meeting with the study team.

During the community meeting, study objectives were presented and the independent nature of the team was emphasized to assure the participants that the researchers were not part of WFP, the local NGO, or the national government.

Community interviews averaged two hours and captured general information on the village, including its: history; current population; ethnic and linguistic variation; distance from urban centers and local markets; basic infrastructures (schools, health centers, roads, bridges and water sources); dominant livelihood systems and sources of household revenue; principal constraints in the village; local understanding and perceptions of WFP activities in the village; and suggestions for improvement. Gender relationships and issues of market access were also broached.

Following the community interview, the research team worked with key informants to identify and schedule households for later interviews, as well as focus groups for beneficiaries of specific WFP interventions.

Focus groups were separated by sex, with further stratification depending on the context of the intervention(s) to be studied. For example, age of beneficiaries; duration of participation in the program; cases of abandonment or non-adherence to a given program; first or second wives, etc. were all potentially relevant factors in differences in perception and use of WFP programs.

Over the course of the next two days, between 18 and 28 household interviews were conducted at each site to obtain a more detailed socioeconomic profile of individuals and the role of WFP interventions within the larger household and village livelihood systems. Households were stratified into three categories of wealth/vulnerability (corresponding with poor, average and wealthy households by village standards). Local criteria for vulnerability in each village were obtained from key informant interviews. The interview questions incorporate topics from WEAI and the survey methodologies

proposed by Enfinger and the RBD VAM Gender and Markets technical note. Researchers were trained to use the survey as an open instrument, allowing them to ask follow-up questions concerning gender relationships, gender dynamics within the household, and gendered patterns of access and participation in markets and WFP activities.

Key informant interviews with NGO agents in each village permitted the team to gather information about the zone and to acquire an understanding of the strategies used to implement and monitor WFP activities, the support provided by the local NGO, problems related to work, NGO conceptualizations of gender, type of market activities undertaken by women, perceived impacts, and suggestions for improvement.

The above village methodology allowed us to triangulate from multiple sources, from NGO agent to village level to group to household, in order to understand the complexity of social and economic factors that affect participation and decision-making. It provided a further level of data in allowing comparison between what was said in focus groups and in individual interviews.

In addition to the formal data collection, the research team toured each village with a local guide and observed village and household dynamics. Key observations included aspects such as household organization and spacing, proximity of farmland, presence of local commerce, local vegetation and environmental conditions, quality of water sources and physical wealth indicators such as the presence of motorcycles, television antennas, etc.

Where possible, villages were selected which participate in common markets. Depending on the timing of market days, the team conducted further interviews in the market either at the end of data collection or between village visits. Further interviews were conducted with both men and women in markets to understand gendered patterns of commerce, access to resources and market information, and types of entrepreneurial activity.



# 1. MALI CASE STUDY

## 1.1 Village and household organization

Bambara villages are organized by hamlets and neighbourhood wards. Wards are the residential location of kinship groups which claim descent from the same patrilineal ancestor. Village structures can be described as a patrilineal gerontocracy, in which men, and particularly older men, hold central positions in the allocation of resources and village-level decisions. In most villages, a male village leader (*dugutigi*) works with a council of elders to solve disputes and act as the intermediary between the village and larger structures (i.e. state bureaucracies and NGOs).

Each compound (*du*) within a ward constitutes the primary residential, production, and consumption unit around which village life is organized. They are often multigenerational, in which junior agnates live and work under the authority of the group's eldest male agnate, the *dutigi*. The household head controls labour input for the household's collective fields, and has the deciding voice in the use or sale of the unit's collective production. Junior agnates are responsible for their domestic units, but their field labour and generated income are allocated and controlled by the *dutigi*. In return, the household head's role is to guarantee the safety and health of the household members, assure education and eventually find spouses for its single children, and finance some part of their wedding expenses. He represents their interests within the village council, plans their labour and economy in order to assure food for all as far into the *soudure* as possible, and organizes the maintenance and renovation of the compound structures.

The relationship between household head and the male agnates that lead the household's sub-units

(*gwa*) is in transition; where the *dutigi* cannot assure a sustainable existence within the *du*, the bond between the individual nuclear families and the larger unit is weakened, a process that has been accelerated by outmigration of young men into the mining sector. Household heads must effectively compete for the labour of women (as possible wives marrying in) and junior men (considering outmigration or other options). Because pooling resources reduces individual risk, the cost-benefit analysis of individual sub-units makes staying or leaving a close call, so that even small incentives toward staying within the extended household may have large impacts toward preserving household integrity. This is an important consideration for any program in the region.

In theory, the heads (*gwatigiw*) of sub-units within the household have very little control over the decisions that impact them and their families. It is at the discretion of the household head to implicate them in decision-making, and there are few issues they can take action on without his approval. In practice, however, they have some degree of autonomy; when a child is sick, for example, they may bring them in for care without consulting the *dutigi*, but because he controls the household economy, he is responsible for any related expenses and must be consulted if the illness appears serious or requires extensive care. In some cases, as sub-units gain financial autonomy and purchasing power, the head of the household's authority is so reduced as to become largely symbolic.

## 1.2 Women in the household

Like the heads of household sub-units, women engage in a tenuous social contract with their husbands' families upon marriage. A husband must



provide a house or room for his wife, and provide support through basic food subsistence. The *dutigi* must make land available to his wife for cultivation, and husbands should provide the necessary implements for her farming. In return, a wife's responsibility is to bear children, provide domestic services, and farm for the husband's family on collective fields. As male labour shifts to cash income generation, women have also become increasingly responsible for subsistence food procurement. Their responsibilities have recently increased to covering some of the school and health expenses for their children, and increasingly to provide for their sanitation and clothing as well. This may be in part because their participation in commerce has increased; as they are themselves more integrated into the cash economy, the *dutigi* is able to shift a greater burden of responsibility onto sub-unit production.

This raises a difficult question: what benefits does greater economic contribution by women to their households really confer on them? Unlike the example of male sub-unit heads above, it is not apparent to what degree the shifts in women's labour have improved their decision-making power in the larger household. Women in the villages discuss how their work has increased in part because of the proliferation of NGOs to support them: new opportunities in off-season gardening, weaving, and projects for raising goats and sheep have all contributed to the food security of the household, but also dramatically increased women's workloads. While women and men both suggested that greater economic contribution allows women to influence decisions at the level of the sub-unit, ultimate authority still rests with the *dutigi* for many decisions. For sub-unit decisions that do not require his input, women's power is still very constrained. Even if she has saved her own money and can cover

the cost of treatment, in many circumstances a woman does not have the right to bring her sick child to a health center without her husband's approval. Nor can she join a village organization or association, visit a healer, or travel without express permission.

Social position is probably a greater determinant of a woman's power within the household than is her economic contribution. The labour input demanded of a woman by her *dutigi* is strongly related to the presence of other active women in the household and their distribution. Young daughters-in-law are likely to be particularly burdened, as are women brought in through levirate marriage and others without husbands physically present. First wives are more likely to have older children to help with domestic labour than are second wives, and a woman with many sons is likely to have more voice in household decisions than a childless one. In practice, women have multiple strategies to exert influence, and have much greater say in certain domestic domains. For example, women's opinions have considerable weight concerning whether their children should continue their education after the DEF (fundamental studies diploma).

The economic pressures women face also depend significantly on their age and social position. In Malian villages, girls must secure the resources (utensils and cooking implements) they will need for their new homes upon marriage<sup>1</sup>. For many households that have limited ability to pool resources, their families are unable to provide the necessary materials immediately after marriage, and the new bride is at the mercy of her in-laws, who may let her use their materials at their discretion. The resulting practice is marriage "*par tranche*" (by installment), in which the young woman is left in a highly vulnerable position, sometimes for years, until she can travel to her parental home, collect the

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<sup>1</sup> The average age of first marriage for girls in Mali is just over 17 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2013, Annex Table 7); only Niger and Chad have earlier ages.

resources, and return to her husband. In the interim, life can be so difficult for new brides without resources that they flee their in-laws' home to work as domestic servants in the cities until they can earn enough money to fend for themselves in their new homes, hiding from their in-laws all the while. The main impetus for young unmarried women in the case study villages to delay marriage and migrate to cities was to save up enough before their weddings to avoid such dire circumstances.

Dowry materials are some of the few materials that women own unambiguously. They are usually given in the form of cloth, cooking utensils and/or jewelry. Most other household resources are clearly identified as belonging to men: agricultural implements, plows, carts, and motorcycles are theirs exclusively. In N'Golobougou, where women generally have greater freedom and access to resources than in Tonga, a woman may sell her property (e.g. gifts from her family, utensils, and harvests from her own fields) without consulting her husband or *dutigi*. That being said, women's ownership of goods in both villages is a somewhat nebulous concept. Women's possessions, which generally derive either from their wedding inheritance or as purchases from their personal commercial profits, are not exactly their own; looseness in the definition of ownership allows for situational interpretations. (This is further complicated in polygamous households, where conflicts frequently arise between co-wives over the nominal ownership of objects that are used collectively.) Nevertheless, although heads of enlarged or nuclear households claim titular oversight of women's goods, women really do appear to have control over the use, purchase and sale of their goods in most contexts. This is also true for land allotments; once heads of household have apportioned land for women's use, they seldom retain authority over the use of that land.

Animals are an exception to this theoretical but generally unenforced control. In both villages, some

women own animals, but are limited in the ability to sell them independently. Part of the ambiguity arises from the fact that even if a woman purchases an animal with her own savings, it is normally the husband who vaccinates and feeds the animal with provender from the larger household's stock. Thus, in one household in N'Golobougou, a woman's goat was interpreted to belong to the household, but the offspring were entirely hers. There are also considerable social pressures on women to allow their husbands to control the sale of their animals. Because a woman should not sell an animal without her husband's express permission, potential buyers will refuse to purchase, or will give her a much worse price than her husband could get. **This is a key factor limiting women's participation in the market.**

In traditional Bambara society, children are the property of their father, and in case of divorce the husband decides the fate of his children. Generally, the consequences of divorce are severe for women, particularly if they are the ones who seek to leave, and women may even lose the goods they've inherited or acquired during the course of the marriage. Because of these practices, divorce rates are very low, and the few attested cases are generally women from outside the village, since the couple's families will intervene and attempt to negotiate a workable solution when marriages with local women are under threat.

Inheritance also provides little security for women. In many interviews, inheritance in these villages was said to "not exist". There is no formal inheritance system in case of death, because property is generally not passed on: it belongs to the household, not to individuals. This extends to wives as well; widows are regularly obliged to marry another brother of the family through the levirate system, and the goods of the household pass to her sons upon her husband's death. Women have little choice but to accept their new husband, since the larger household assures food security and stability for their children. Refusing the levirate can create

serious ruptures between families and even villages (if the refusing bride comes from elsewhere, the village will recoup its loss by bringing back one of its own widows from the neighboring community), and is therefore virtually unattested. The absence of a formal system of inheritance can create potential problems, particularly when brothers must divide their late father's property, and some villagers have developed a system to apportion goods upon death. In this case, women receive only a quarter of what is given to men.

### 1.3 Livelihood strategies

Agriculture, and particularly the production of staple grains, dominates household livelihood strategies for the region. Men and women, in largely separate economies, seek to diversify their livelihood strategies to mitigate risk, participate in the cash economy, and assure household food security throughout the year. For men, this is done primarily through migration (discussed below). In N'Golobougou, the most significant secondary livelihood strategies after migration are animal husbandry, off-season gardening, petty commerce, and artisanal crafts (primarily rope-making). In Tonga, animal husbandry is a much larger part of the village economy, either in the form of *elevage* or *embouche*; for many, this is the principal source of household revenue. Shea butter production is a significant supplemental activity for women in both villages.

Economic activities are highly segregated by gender throughout Mali, although even in separate economies women are often expected to help men of the household during the periods of peak labour demand (clearing, planting and harvesting). The lives of women are dominated by domestic responsibilities, although younger women also spend a considerable amount of time working in their fields and those of their household. In the gendered division of labour, women process and cook food, and do all household maintenance

(sweeping, hauling water, washing, etc.). Throughout the year, meals are prepared in turn by married women in each household, from food combined from men and women's production processes. Unmarried girls typically do not work in the fields, but support the married women of the household in domestic tasks and child care. Men in each *du* typically work collectively in the main field (*foroba*) to produce staples (mainly millet and sorghum); married women typically work individually in fields assigned to them by the *dutigi* to produce "sauce crops" (*nafenw*) such as okra and peanuts. Women generally harvest their own individual fields and store the harvest in their homes; men usually form a village-wide work team to harvest each *du*'s cereal field in rotation.

Each crop demands different types of labour in different seasons. Clearing fields and harvesting crops on collective fields are the most labour-intensive, and depend most heavily on women's labour and extra-household support. Because women have so many responsibilities in the domestic sphere and so little access to supplemental help in the critical moments for labour-intensive crops, their typical production, such as peanuts and okra, can generally be managed without external assistance.

The calendar year is divided into periods of heightened and less intensive activity, and periods primarily supporting collective production for the larger household versus periods for sub-unit production. The rainy season from June/July until harvest (November) is the most intensive for men and women. During this period men's principal secondary activity is animal husbandry, while women collect *nééré* and *karité* fruit for shea butter production. After harvest, commitments to household-level activities decline for men, and to a lesser degree for women since they continue to prepare meals and do housework. During *harmattan* (December and January), households have the most available time to focus on income-generating

activities; this is also the period for house construction and ceremonies. Income-generating strategies are usually locally based and commercial enterprises. The dry season is devoted to activities that supplement the main agricultural production and support food security for household sub-units: raising animals for resale, off-season gardening, petty commerce, and artisanal production. In the transitional season (April-May) before the rains, women focus on shea butter production while men prepare their fields for planting.

In this region, communities seek to supplement production in the rainy season for consumption needs with off-season gardening for sale, but the viability of this strategy is highly contingent upon the availability of water and the accessibility of markets. Where possible, produce sales make up for annual grain deficits through reallocation of household resources; selecting off-season crops with different maturation times can distribute income across the year. Earnings from market gardens tend to be paid into the larger household pool to pay for food.

Because animal husbandry provides regular cash income and assets with market value that give households greater economic flexibility, it is often viewed as the optimal strategy to assure food security. Men and women participate at different scales; cattle ownership is generally limited to men (with some exceptions); women generally prefer to keep their savings in the form of poultry, goats and sheep.

#### 1.4 Migration as a livelihood strategy

Over the last three decades, migration of able-bodied males, especially to urban areas, has become an increasingly significant livelihood strategy throughout Mali, and in many cases adds an essential contribution to household economies. Where agricultural yields are decreasing or markets are uncertain, migration simultaneously reduces the number of mouths to feed and provides cash inputs

to buffer against variability in production and profit. However, not all migrants return or provide reliable income streams to their households. As discussed below, the contributions that migration provides to food security must be balanced against the social effects it engenders.

Every household interviewed in both N'Golobougou and Tonga had at least one member in seasonal or year-round migration. In Tonga, most migrants return in the rainy season to help in the fields; this is less common in N'Golobougou. Young men, in particular, are leaving the villages on a massive scale, traveling south to gold mining towns such as Djikuna, Kikoro, and Nyablemi. To a much lesser degree, young women are involved in patterns of urban migration, working as housemaids and nannies, predominantly in Bamako, in order to have the savings necessary for marriage. Migration at this scale produces a number of effects on the social dynamics of village life, threatening the stability of pre-existing social structures and relationships. Tellingly, although men and women both recognize the existential threat that migration poses to community life, they frame their concerns about the problem quite differently.

For those in authority (i.e. household heads (*dutigiw*), village chiefs, and religious leaders), high levels of migration challenge the conservative trends that bind women and children to their families, sub-units (*gwa*) of the household to the larger household, and larger households to the political and religious structures that exercise authority at the levels of village and neighbourhood. Male out-migration creates demographic imbalances in key age-groups, which results in increasing demand for women's agricultural labour. Younger males that would normally be subordinate to a household head and collectively work its fields find greater autonomy in migration. Men who travel sometimes abandon their wives entirely, who after a liminal period of increasing stress are often obliged to return to their parental homes. This places an added burden on the

head of household, and strains the bond established between families through the marriage. Women in migration, although they are often at physical and social risk and face the possibility of stigmatization, may also find access to new social and economic networks that reduce their dependence on their relatives and village relationships.

In some contexts, the fact that so many men are physically absent was cited as increasing the decision-making power and status of women in their households and their larger communities, but the real effects are debatable. Women also expressed deep concern over migration, but were focused on the effects it has on their children. With able-bodied men in migration, the lack of available field labour creates pressure to pull children out of school. These villages lack education beyond primary school, so children are obliged to travel and find accommodations outside of the village if they are to continue their education. In addition, without their husbands physically present, young married women are often in a vulnerable position in their in-laws' households, particularly if their absent husband does not provide adequately for them and they become dependent on the larger household. Women express their concern over this issue in terms of childhood illness, particularly malaria during the rainy season, and their inability to find adequate care with their available resources.

## 1.5 Land tenure

As is typical of Bambara villages, land is not bought or sold, but remains in families. For the most part, even the poorest families who are obliged to work for others have their own fields to cultivate for subsistence. Land is formally allocated by the *dugutigi*, and each larger household head then apportions out the available land between collective fields (*forobow*) and individual fields (*jonforow*). The distinction between these two types of field grants women a certain degree of economic autonomy. Individual fields include *musoforow*, women's fields, which are either fields or home gardens. Although

women are assured plots for their own cultivation, it is at the discretion of the *dutigi* to decide which ones they'll be allotted each cycle, which adds a level of uncertainty to their long-term planning.

Given the lack of manpower with so many young men in migration, there is surprisingly little individual sharecropping or working in others' fields for payment in cash or kind. There are labour groups that are paid in kind for working in the fields during the periods (clearing, planting, harvesting) that require large labour inputs that typically exceed what individual households can provide. Labour is such a scarce commodity that there are a handful of families that work others' fields in exchange for labour support for their own fields in return, either in the form of access to oxen, or a teenager to help with their harvest. For the most part, however, households work fewer fields and produce less than before the gold rush, rather than maintain productivity using hired labour. Most households have an abundance of land and do not maximize their cultivated area.

## 1.6 Programs in context

### Purchase for Progress (P4P)

The WFP's P4P program provides smallholder farmers with an assured market, access to fertilizer and other inputs, and training in agricultural and storage techniques. Ideally, once producers are trained in producing higher-quality products and storage, they can be linked to large-scale buyers both locally and internationally to sustain benefits after WFP. Locally procured grains can in turn be distributed through food assistance in the region, and in school feeding programs.

The current regional structure of P4P was established in 2010, when the local grain producers' union, UNPL, was selected to oversee producers' cooperatives for local procurement. In Dioïla, there are currently 37 farmers' organizations (FOs) divided up among 27 communes. In the P4P system, the

union places its grain order before planting begins, guaranteeing a price at a set rate above the average market price; in setting prices, care is taken not to disturb local markets. Production contracts are decentralized, with each FO assuring its harvest volume individually. Participating FOs then receive technical support and inputs throughout the growing cycle to assure that they make their quota and meet quality standards. AMASSA Afrique Vert, a local partner organization, monitors the FOs and develops their capacity. Their harvest is brought to Dioila for storage, and the cooperatives receive their payment in cash a month after harvest to be divided among their members. Producers operate under the security of an assured sale while gaining technical and planning skills, and WFP is able to satisfy regional demands for food distribution through local procurement.

Although it is possible in theory to have a mixed-gender group of producers, very few have been formed, and currently all women in previously mixed groups have splintered off into separate FOs. This is in part because groups are generally based on pre-existing single-gender group structures, and in part because women are subordinated to men in mixed groups and lose decision-making power. It is also a pragmatic separation, since crop production is gendered. P4P currently supports markets in the area for black-eyed peas (*niébé*), typically grown by women; as well as the traditionally male crops of millet, pearl millet and sorghum. P4P has intentionally prioritized crops associated with women's production; with less access to credit and a lower capacity to absorb risk, women are particularly vulnerable to pressures to sell their production at unfavorable prices immediately after harvest. The P4P program has also targeted women's groups for additional material support, providing farming implements and plow animals to women's FOs that lack the necessary equipment for the labour-intensive periods of the agricultural cycle. As discussed above, typical women's crops are a reflection of their social position and other demands on their available labour.

For smallholder farmers not participating in P4P, there is tremendous economic pressure to sell off grain at the moment of harvest, despite the disadvantageous price that middlemen traders offer. Agricultural loans for inputs and fertilizers are due, and the household is often under duress as the previous year's reserves have been depleted during the lean months immediately preceding, which may also have obliged the household to borrow food or money for repayment at harvest. Worse, non-participants are subject to the vacillations of the market for both inputs and yields, and face uncertainty that they can find a buyer at harvest for a favorable price. As a result, they cannot easily plan out how to maximize profit by planning cultivable area in advance.

The high level of migration in this area have direct implications for P4P. On the one hand, it assures that for practically every household, there is more land available than its members currently cultivate. This is the context in which the guaranteed market of P4P has the greatest potential to provide transformative change. (This research did not find examples of household members choosing not to migrate, or to seasonally migrate and return in the rainy season, specifically because of the economic advantages conferred by P4P, however). On the other hand, increasing household dependence on support from members outside the village makes them less able to adapt in cases when remittances are abruptly cut off. Furthermore, migration has destabilized many social institutions in the village, and may also be reducing the social cohesion of production groups. In N'Golobougou, for example, all but one of the original members of the men's OP interviewed had left in the gold rush. He himself had spent time in the mines, but as the head of the household he felt obligated to return since all other men in the household were also involved in seasonal migration, and his elderly mother needed someone to look after her.

P4P resolves the two most critical problems for

producers: it provides some support for the needed inputs, and guarantees sale above market price. Unfortunately, social and structural factors make women producers far less able to take advantage of P4P's benefits than men. In N'Golobougou, cotton growers get fertilizer through the CMDT, but cotton is an exclusively male crop. Because women have less access to fertilizer, they purchase it on credit, and are therefore more likely to need to sell off a portion of their harvest before selling the remaining portion to WFP. All of the members of the women's FO interviewed in N'Golobougou have adopted this intermediate strategy, since they do not have the means to support their families while waiting for payment from the union.

More significantly, while members of men's groups described how a guaranteed market allowed them to advance from a tiny margin for income generation to significantly increased production, for women in both villages the effect was muted. This is because at the critical moments of clearing, planting, and harvest, men have first access to the oxen and oxcarts, and women are obliged to wait until all men have finished before they can make use of them, losing part of their intended harvest as a result. Without intervention from the *dugutigi*, this situation is unlikely to change; men are unwilling to change the current pecking order. Even if the women could acquire their own plow animals, men generally felt very strongly that women cannot own cattle, and would feel free to sell their wives' livestock without consulting them if it was deemed necessary for the household. As a result, women are still faced with fundamental uncertainty about their investment of labour, time, and money into additional plots, even when the market is guaranteed.

Women's structural disadvantages in benefiting from P4P's assistance played out differently in the two villages researched. In practice, one of the strengths of the program is that it is flexible enough to allow members to fill in each other's shortfalls; in

Tonga, the men's group completed the quota for several members of the women's group. These sorts of exchanges are part of the advantage of associating growers in mitigating risk. In both villages, FO members of both genders will sometimes add in a part of a relative's harvest in order to reach quota. In N'Golobougou, however, there is perhaps too much flexibility; some women, frustrated by their inability to achieve their intended quota and desperate not to be dropped from the program, reported buying grain in the market in order to resell to WFP at a profit. This is feasible because there are several groups in the agricultural system that are eager to transform their grain into cash. In particular, men from outside the community bring in tractors to help with threshing and harvest and are paid in harvest grain, which they seek to convert into cash before returning home at the end of the season.

In Tonga, the women's group is still new, but already it appears vulnerable to control by male structures. WFP provided the women's group with an ox and cart, but it has ended up in the possession of the village chief, who intends to rent it out for profit. The women lost the space they were allotted for independent storage when the village needed it to house its mills; now they are sharing the same space as the male FO, which causes them some concern about their autonomy.

As a general concern, both the women's group and the men's group interviewed in Tonga appear to be at risk of being dominated by a few charismatic men with strong connections to political power. The negotiation over the transfer of the ox to the village chief, for example, was handled in a way that did not seem to implicate all group members in the decision. Although the program provides substantial and much-appreciated training on diverse subjects, for much of it a few representatives of the men's group are consistently the direct recipients (in regional workshops), who then pass on that information to the other members of both groups. Although the

groups are still very strong and all members are strongly benefiting from the program, the example serves as a reminder of the importance of guarding against abuse of democratic process within (and between) FOs.

P4P is a very impressive program in its ability to respond to the needs and interests of producers. Men, after paying off debts and satisfying essential food needs for the household, primarily convert their profits into animals. Women overall do seem to have control over the use of their profits, although these uses are generally limited within the sphere of satisfying women's household obligations: contributions for marriages, baptisms, school fees, and expenses for household health and sanitation. Most smallholder farmers currently devote almost all their energies into assuring household consumption needs are met, and can devote little beyond the minimum for P4P grain production; the supporting organizations have good mechanisms in place to help farmers learn to find this balance, so that P4P does not endanger their own subsistence. By UNPL and AMASSA Afrique Vert's own admission, the program needs to develop further training and build stronger capacity toward long-term sustainability, but these steps, such as establishing storage sites in the villages, are planned for the future. Most importantly, both the partner organizations and individual producers are looking to find other buyers in the private sector for similar sales. The fact that the FOs are already established and functioning helps their members convince creditors to provide loans, and makes them more visible to the government and NGOs, thereby increasing their chances of finding future opportunities.

## **2. The caregiver program**

ALIMA (Alliance for International Medical Action) has established an intensive nutritional rehabilitation unit in the regional hospital in Dioïla that serves as a training facility for healthcare workers. Children's care for SAM at the unit is

supported by UNICEF (WFP's nutritional program covers children with MAM). Through a partnership with AMCP (Malian Alliance Against Malaria) and ALIMA, WFP has initiated a food voucher program for the caregivers who accompany the children as well, in the hope of improving treatment adherence. Support extends to all caregivers for children under five. Vouchers for three meals a day are provided, with weekly planning meetings to assure that their diet is varied, balanced, and locally appropriate. If the case is referred through the Malian healthcare system (through the CSCOMs (community health clinics)), the costs of transportation are covered. Remarkably, support is so comprehensive that should the child's caregiver herself fall ill, or even give birth, the costs will also be covered.

Children make their way from village to the rehabilitation unit by three pathways: the child is brought directly by her family; the village volunteers detect cases of malnutrition; or the child is identified through consultation at the CSCOM and referred to the unit. There is a seasonal pattern of referral; in the dry season, most of the cases come in through CSCOM consultations, but the village volunteers play a much more active role in identifying cases during the rainy season. Malaria is a major factor in child malnutrition during this season, so much so that many parents have trouble distinguishing one from the other.

Village volunteers, with limited training, are often themselves unable to identify malaria or malnutrition with much accuracy. Many are uneducated, although they may have some literacy thanks to an adult education program. They depend for the most part on armbands to approximate BMI, then send the cases on directly to the nutritional unit in Dioïla, but receive little direct feedback on the quality of their diagnoses. Yet the volunteers, integrated as they are into the social relationships of their communities, play a critical role in case detection, and are the key point of contact between the health system and the general population. When



referred cases fail to arrive at the unit within two weeks, the volunteer is best positioned to convince a reluctant family. After treatment, the volunteer is best positioned to assure follow-up care. The CSCOMs recognize that their volunteers are receiving inadequate training, feedback, support, and motivation despite their importance, but their budgets prevent them from doing more.

In its limited communication to volunteers, the overburdened health care system seems to be undercutting some of the effectiveness of the caregiver program. In the villages, the researchers found that several village volunteers, and even CSCOM personnel, did not understand the criteria for caregiver support in Dioila. With few exceptions, women currently providing care at the unit had not heard of the program before referral, unless they or a close relative had previously accompanied a child for care. Caregiver support responds very well to the needs of women with malnourished children, and the hospital is seeing a corresponding decline in cases of abandonment or non-compliance. Without adequate communication about the program to the population (and even lower levels of the health system), however, the real potential of the program for improving rates of early detection is limited.

Through our interviews with the caregivers, it becomes clear just how hard it is for women to be displaced from their households for even brief periods of time, particularly when the duration of their hospital stay is difficult to determine. The opportunity costs of leaving behind other children, household obligations, and field duties (particularly in peak seasons) are tremendous- and those gaps are inevitably filled by other women and girls, sometimes with permanent effects (such as pulling girls out of school).

The problem of delayed treatment is in part due to women's lack of control over family planning and spacing births, which leads to malnourishment through early weaning, and requires the mother to

either bring both children with her for care or to arrange for the care of a small child in her absence. Frequently, when a mother is nursing another child at home, it is the paternal grandmother who accompanies the malnourished child as caregiver. Grandmothers are devoted to their grandchildren, and mothers did not express qualms over leaving children in their care either at the clinic or at home, but the relationship between mother and mother-in-law is structurally fraught. Mothers themselves seldom seek to delay biomedical treatment; in resistant households, it is the grandmother, *dutigi*, or father of the child that minimizes the child's illness and must be convinced by the village volunteer of its severity.

Mothers themselves often have little say in treatment-seeking behavior for their children. In nearly all cases, women must gain their husband's approval before seeking medical care for themselves or for their children. Normally, once the household recognizes that the case requires biomedical care, the father will treat traditionally at home while he arranges for the expenses, a period that engenders critical delays. Even "free" centralized treatment, as provided by the caregiver program, can be very expensive to a household. The opportunity costs of leaving behind other children, household obligations, petty commerce, and farming activities (particularly in critical agricultural seasons) are considerable.

Nor are these the only costs a woman faces when displaced from her home. The mobility of women is highly constricted, and as their time away from the village grows, they are increasingly susceptible to accusations of impropriety. For many women, their hospital stay is the longest time they have been away from their villages and families in their lives, and they experience considerable stress and social isolation, often with very limited contact from their families. Their extreme anxiety over the survival of their child is compounded by anxieties over their husbands' fidelity in their absence, over the loss of

revenue they suffer if engaged in petty commerce, and over the welfare of the children they have left behind, perhaps in the care of a co-wife. The time needed for recovery is hard to predict and may be followed by decentralized care in the CSCOM, making women uncertain of the time and resources that will be expended away from home. Placed under so many individual strains, the relationship between caregivers in the hospital, obliged to share limited resources and space and in constant contact, is often tense and delicately maintained. As one woman put it, "In this place, if someone steps on your foot, you're the one who apologizes".

When a woman leaves her household, others must compensate for the lost labour and childcare. In the context of illness, men are primarily responsible for providing material support, whereas women are responsible for care-giving, substitute care and substitute labour. Inevitably, then, those gaps are filled by other women and girls, sometimes with

lasting effects. A girl taken out of school to watch over her siblings, or removed from an apprenticeship to work in the fields, even if for a short time, may lose that opportunity permanently. There may even be effects beyond the household, as the effects of displaced female labour ripple outward. These impacts are seldom captured in evaluations, but are an important component of understanding the gendered effects of household strategies and the real costs of centralized care.

The caregiver support program is deeply appreciated by its beneficiaries, and has the potential not only to reduce dropout but to bring children in for care earlier, and with less severe malnutrition. Attending to the experience of women displaced from their villages reveals that the decision to seek biomedical care remains a difficult one for the household even with such comprehensive assistance.



Photo: WFP/Jane Howard

## 2. NIGER CASE STUDY

### 2.1 Life before WFP programs

The overview of community life that follows in the next section is meant to provide the contextual background necessary to understand the effects and gendered impacts of WFP activities. In the case of these communities, however, a caveat is necessary at the outset. It is not feasible to describe social context, livelihood strategies, and village dynamics separably from program impacts, because so many aspects of daily life have been so radically transformed by WFP programs. This came across in interview after interview, focus group after focus group, which all typically began with effusive gratitude toward WFP, so much so that the team began to joke that “Thank God for WFP” was a standard village greeting. But the degree to which WFP has changed life in these villages comes across even more clearly in the minutiae of everyday village life. At one point, the researchers were interviewing a school director over the sound of a classroom full of students, watching as a vendor from Moussadey rode his bicycle out to hawk his wares to the women at the work site. The team was struck by the fact that none of these seemingly unremarkable events could have taken place in the years immediately prior to WFP support: salaries from the Cash for Assets program now allow the women to avoid migration; school feeding programs mean children can stay in the village even when food resources have run out at home; and the regular infusion of cash into the communities during the work period has stimulated various forms of petty commerce, making the trip into these villages worthwhile for nearby vendors.

### 2.2 Livelihood strategies

The three villages visited in this study are Zarma, the ethnic group that forms the majority of the population of Niamey, Dosso, and their

surroundings. Zarma communities primarily subsist from rainfed agriculture, dominated by millet as the staple crop grown in the short rainy season between June and October. All but a few households farm, with a gendered division of labour: men cultivate the staples of the rural diet, millet, sorghum and corn; while women grow a variety of complements including cowpeas, peanuts, beans, okra, tiger nut, and sesame. Nearly all production is devoted to subsistence. As soil quality has declined over the years, the population has increasingly been driven to diversify its livelihood strategies for both men and women, primarily through migration.

In interviews and informal discussions, the population emphasized repeatedly that the limiting factors for food security and economic development, and the push factors toward migration, are reducible to the same three limitations: physical isolation, poor soils, and absence of funds. One could reasonably add to these the limited availability of state services, which have failed to provide reliable credit or market access, consistent technical support for agriculture, or guaranteed earning possibilities for these communities. As a general trend, rural Nigeriens have been progressively driven toward occupational flexibility and spatial mobility for the past three decades, as state support and commercial opportunity have withdrawn. With the decline of uranium exports in the 1980s, government revenues supporting rural infrastructure development and extension agents collapsed, a problem since exacerbated by a series of structural adjustment programs, military coups, and regional political instability. The drive to diversify livelihood strategies is therefore as much the product of political realities as it is of diminishing size and reliability of agricultural yields.

As agrarian livelihoods prove increasingly insufficient, households turn to alternative

strategies: migration, ownership of livestock, field labour for others, and engaging in business activity. These activities are not exclusive, can be engaged in sequence or in parallel, and multiple strategies are commonly found within a single household. Before the arrival of WFP support, these were predominantly achieved through the migration of at least some household members for some part of the year; since WFP, this strategy continues to dominate, but has been largely scaled back and is now largely limited to adult males. Livestock ownership is widespread for both men and women, albeit on a relatively small scale. As is generally true throughout the Sahel, men and women seek to move their savings into the form of animals as a preferred strategy, and rearing animals to be fattened and resold is generally preferred over other commercial activities. Many households expressed a desire to raise cattle or sheep, but lacked the funds to expand their husbandry. Men and women also supplement household income with petty commerce, but a lack of funds for investment or expansion limits all but the wealthiest. One of the main constraints on entrepreneurship in both animal husbandry and in commercial activity is the surprising lack of formal or informal credit structures in these communities; women, in particular, are averse to participation in the few credit systems that are available out of fears of penalties for non-repayment. Before WFP support, households often resorted to sharecropping, *métayage*, or other arrangements for payment in cash or in grain for working others' fields; these arrangements were often highly disadvantageous to the farm labourers, who had little negotiating power in the months before harvest after their stocks from the previous harvest have been exhausted. In Dikki, men commonly worked for the casted population in the hamlets for part of the year<sup>2</sup>. WFP support has largely eliminated

sharecropping practices, but some men that are unable to adopt the preferred strategy of work in migration still supplement their income through work in others' fields.

The communities had previously made use of the pond formed in a depression between the villages as a source of water for dry-season cultivation, but siltation gradually filled it in until it became unusable. This same area was identified by the communities for the WFP work project: digging out the low-lying depression and forming a year-round water source for off-season gardening. Since the CFA program was introduced, it has become the main source of revenue for most households.

### 2.3 Male migration as livelihood strategy

Migration, either for years at a time or seasonally during the months between harvest and field clearing for the next season, is by far the most important strategy for men to ensure that their households can survive until harvest despite meagre crop yields. Some men are day labourers in Niamey, and a handful make their fortune as *marabouts* abroad before returning, but the vast majority travel internationally, selling second-hand clothing, children's clothing and shoes in the urban centres of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. The Zarma have long-established networks<sup>3</sup> in this niche industry all along the coast, and even into Burkina Faso and Mali, drawing from the social connections and slight market advantages secured by their predecessors. In migration, men typically live communally with other Zarma migrants, borrowing start-up funds and trading in urban markets or on foot from village to village.

Unfortunately, the second-hand clothing industry is

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<sup>2</sup> Although casted populations in Zarma society (in these villages, butchers and blacksmiths) face forms of social and physical separation, they have fewer problems with land tenure, and are thus on the whole more food secure than the general population.

<sup>3</sup> These have been well documented, most notably by the film-maker Jean Rouch, who was filming Zarma men in Ghana's secondhand clothing retail industry as far back as the 1950s and 60s.

seldom highly profitable, and Nigeriens are often limited in the degree to which they can develop commercial enterprises abroad, either because of social exclusion of foreigners in many urban enterprises, or because their periodic return to the village for harvest undercuts their business momentum. For the poorest households, it was sometimes unclear whether the economic advantage of migration lay in remittances, or rather simply in reducing the number of mouths to feed in the village. Although the research did not find strong divisions in the types of male migrant labour available to households, the dependability of remittances was greater for wealthier households.

Although male migrants do not face the same forms of social risk as women, all migrants undertake considerable physical risk, not merely in the precarious housing arrangements they must establish abroad, but in the act of transit itself, generally undertaken in overburdened and poorly maintained vehicles on dangerous roads. This became alarmingly evident through the household interviews, in which severe injuries or deaths of household members from road accidents were commonly reported.

Given the financial and physical risks involved in return, a small but significant number of male migrants choose to establish themselves abroad permanently, or spend decades in exodus before returning. These long-term migrants either send for their wives and children to join them abroad, or permanently abandon them. Those who return after spending most of their adult lives abroad, generally in Côte d'Ivoire, are called the *zarmazeno*, and they bring back families of hybrid identity, simultaneously cosmopolitan and bound up in the social relationships and obligations of the village. Long-term male migration poses a serious threat to the village's continued existence, and leads to gendered forms of insecurity for migrants' wives and mothers. Households regularly impose marriage on their sons before they migrate as a way of obligating them to

maintain ties. In spite of this strategy, an increasing number of households find themselves obliged to take in their married daughters, who revert to their fathers' responsibility because their migrant husbands have either abandoned them or send insufficient remittances for their wives' and children's survival.

Extended migration also erodes the social contract between son and parents, particularly mothers who may be in a highly vulnerable position without sons physically present in the village. Men who had engaged in seasonal migration were at pains to emphasize that they satisfied their filial obligations to their mothers; conversely, elderly mothers were quick to assert that their sons had not forgotten them even if their nominal remittance contributions had little impact on the household economy. Migrants associate failure to fulfil filial duties with shame, and sons in migration will send money to their mothers rather than the older brother who by rights is the head of household. The symbolic importance of remittances is worth underscoring; in Dikki, for example, men in migration prioritize purchasing an oxcart for their households, in part because it constitutes a highly visible announcement that they are fulfilling their obligations from afar.

## 2.4 Women's migration as livelihood strategy

Before WFP assistance, women's migration was nearly as prevalent in the villages as that of men, but operated in a largely separate stream. Unlike their husbands, women seldom had the means to travel internationally for seasonal labour, preferring to serve as domestic workers in Niger's urban centres in Niamey, Gaya and Dosso. Because households in the researched villages were relatively uniform in their low socioeconomic status, no clear pattern of bifurcation in women's migration strategies was evident, although Kaydia agents described this as a general phenomenon in the region. In this pattern, poor households are obliged through desperation to send women into more precarious and less

profitable forms of migrant employment, whereas wealthier households, with the means to afford transportation costs and the social capital to secure better work in Côte d'Ivoire, can deploy migration of female members more strategically. In the villages researched, cases of the latter were exceptional unless women were accompanying their husbands for very long term work abroad. These cases nevertheless served as a useful reminder that for some women, migration can be an empowering experience, providing powerful entrepreneurial experience, social capital and extended social networks, and greater food security than village life can provide. Even for those involved in domestic labour in Nigerien cities, some women have found greater autonomy and relative security in employment outside of the village. Some young, unmarried women who have been able to find better prices for their labour during the rainy season (when the availability of domestic labour in Niamey becomes scarce) have actually chosen migrant work over salaried work on the WFP work site. Men frequently expressed the concern that their wives would challenge their authority and be more self-assertive after spending time in seasonal migration, exposed to new ideas and greater license.

For the majority of women, however, migration represents increased physical and social vulnerability. With few rights or recourses in cases of abuse, overwork or underpayment, female domestic workers are routinely insulted, physically assaulted, and demeaned in their work. Women in migration risk social sanction for spending time away from their families or husbands, exposed to stigmatization and accusations of sexual conduct and STDs. Given women's physical and economic vulnerability while in migration, sexual activity does sometimes take place; when such cases result in pregnancy women seldom return to the village, preferring self-exile to the dishonour and social exclusion they would receive. The migration of married women radically upsets the equilibrium of the household, disorganizing the allocations of labour and responsibility, and potentially weakening her social

bonds to her husband's family. Women are typically obligated to bring their children with them in migration; while their mothers work, the children typically remain out of school, receive sub-par foster care if any, and frequently turn to theft and delinquency. Children taken out of school are often lost to the system, never re-enrolling. Like their mothers, girls brought along in migration are particularly vulnerable to various forms of abuse.

## 2.5 Market access and constraints to women's participation

All three villages are characterized by a limited role of the state, and limited access to political power. Infrastructure for education, health, and sanitation remain rudimentary, and poor roads keep the area cut off from markets and cheap prices despite its relative proximity to a major commercial hub. Before the CFA program, the villages' schools were moribund not only because of dramatically lower enrolment, but also due to lack of funding and an inability to secure competent teachers. Where local health services exist (in Fara Gorou), they suffer from chronic shortages of supplies, and emergency care requires travel to neighbouring villages. The state's agricultural and veterinary technical agents make periodic visits but are stationed in Loga. None of the villages have latrines of any kind, and all depend on a single well or pump for their entire population. The most critical form of state neglect, informants agree, is the poorly maintained and unpaved roads. In normal years, they isolate the communities from larger neighbouring markets; in the drought and famine years that have occurred cyclically in the region since at least the 1950s, poor roads exacerbate food insecurity to a dangerous degree.

Both men and women most frequently identified poor roads and degraded soil fertility as the main constraints to their economic development and food security. Land tenure follows Zarma customary law: plots are neither bought nor sold, and stay in control of lineage heads over time. As a result, most households have land, but most of the land available

to the poorest households is increasingly infertile. Women in the household may be apportioned plots from their husband's fields for cultivation of their own crops, but they cannot claim ownership. Although land cannot be sold, it can under certain conditions be lent, so that property can be used as a guarantee against a loan; in case of non-reimbursement, the lender has the right to work the land until repayment is made.

Apart from this system, there are few credit structures available to farmers in these communities, formally or informally. During the most difficult periods of the year, particularly in the period before harvest when grain reserves have been exhausted, households take loans in cash or in kind wherever available. Larger loans are generally made from market traders and large-scale regional producers, but these impose brutally steep interest rates when made in cash (as much as 250F per 1000F loaned), and even more exploitative rates when in kind (sometimes more than double the measure borrowed, to be reimbursed after harvest). Desperation and lack of access to other options lead villagers to accept such usurious terms, but where possible they will instead solicit support from neighbours with more successful harvests. These informal loans are generally reimbursed without interest, but are not available on a large enough scale to satisfy shortfalls for many of the poorest households, since there is little economic stratification in these communities and surpluses are small even for the relatively wealthy.

Given the tremendous need for reliable and equitable forms of credit, it is not clear why, despite their poverty, the communities have not been able to develop their own semi-formal systems of mutual assistance effectively, as are commonly found throughout the Sahel. This is particularly puzzling given our general impression of social cohesion in these communities, as evidenced by their effective redistributions of WFP support. Yet the functioning *tontines* and work groups are rudimentary, and while

the cereal bank in Dikki is planned to start in the next year and keep its prices artificially low to assure that the population has access in the most difficult months, the team encountered considerable popular scepticism that this will actually transpire. One possible reason for limited credit structures may be the moral judgment placed on indebtedness; several households described the act of seeking credit as humiliating, particularly when requests are rejected.

There are also few formal savings mechanisms available to the population. Both men and women prefer to store their savings in the form of livestock, out of distrust of formal systems and a general desire to limit the divisibility of savings for the long term, since cash diffuses quickly into the stream of social obligations and mutual support in village life. Livestock purchase may be shared between brothers or other kin, and acts as a fall back strategy for some poorer households that lack the financial and social capital to send members into the more lucrative forms of migration (i.e. to Côte d'Ivoire). Women often raise sheep for fattening and slaughter at elevated prices just before Islamic religious festivals such as Tabaski.

Women are particularly excluded from formal credit. They are structurally least able to absorb risk, least able to provide guarantees, and least certain that they will be able to reimburse a loan on time. Female-headed households interviewed in all three villages were completely unable to find credit when needed, and had to rely on family resources (primarily their brothers) for support in difficult times. Women in levirate marriages, or in ambiguous states of marriage, are often as vulnerable as those heading households. The latter case, in which women have neither the freedom of independence nor the security of marriage, most commonly occurs when migrant husbands fail to return or provide support. In Dikki, the village chief has refused to provide the documents that would formalize certain divorces, so that some women and their children continue to live in their husbands' households as



autonomous but highly vulnerable units. These kinds of arrangements are a reminder of the tenuous position women face more generally in a patriarchal society.

In general, women nevertheless enjoy relative freedom in their entrepreneurial decisions and are able to fully own animals as their own assets, a flexibility that derives in part from the fact they form a significant demographic majority given the number of men in migration. WFP's programs, in combination, have largely curbed women's seasonal migration but not men's, widening the gender gap. By the same token, however, women have greater workloads both in the fields, where their production has expanded into all the traditionally male crops besides millet, and on the WFP worksite, where they form a strong majority of the workforce. While the ability to earn income may increase women's negotiating power and influence within the household (even if the money goes directly to the male head of household), this does not translate simply into empowerment gains. Rather, women report that the most important empowerment criteria are linked to age and social position within the household, with senior wives of polygynous households most able to exercise financial autonomy. Young women, newly married into their in-laws' home, are unlikely to have the social power necessary to assert control over their workload and the allocation of their own labour, nor to advance their priorities in household decisions.

## 2.6 Programs in context

The WFP programs introduced to these three villages respond to critical needs and are deeply appreciated by their beneficiaries. This overview draws from the contextual background established in the previous section to examine some of the reasons why WFP interventions have had such a strong impact. Specifically, it considers the ways in which WFP programs complement and reinforce each other, and how implementation of WFP programs allowed for sufficient flexibility for communities to reallocate

resources as needed.

WFP supports communities through three main axes of intervention: nutrition, education, and rural community development. These categories naturally overlap by design. For example: school nutrition provides a necessary incentive to prevent dropout; children's education programs include conservation techniques they can share with their parents; rural development includes in its goals not just increased agricultural production and diversity, but also greater access to education. The integrated strategy aspires toward community resilience in both the long- and short-term, increasing local production while ensuring nutrition and food security during the difficult months of the agricultural cycle. This research was primarily concerned with the Cash for Assets (CFA) program in rural development but found the mutually reinforcing impacts of WFP's various programs particularly striking. This section briefly reviews the history of other WFP programs before devoting primary focus to the CFA project currently underway.

Kaydia, WFP's partner organization, is currently under annual contract for all three components of intervention through an integrated approach. Created in 1991, their main focus is on food security issues and environmental restoration projects. They began their WFP partnership in the area with nutrition in 2008, and added CFA programs in 2011. Niger faces cyclic food crises, and in 2012, after weak rains led to poor harvests in 2011 throughout much of the country and grain prices rose in the markets, WFP and other agencies began a range of emergency assistance activities across Niger. Depending on location, emergency assistance consisted of food distribution, vouchers, or cash transfers. The commune of Loga was selected for cash transfer to vulnerable populations, administered by Kaydia. WFP's local partner has thus established durable relationships with the communities over time, and considerable expertise in program implementation. In addition to the current CFA project, Kaydia oversees the school canteen, school mill, school

garden and school herd programs, coordinates health education campaigns with the health centres, and provides technical support in agriculture and conservation.

WFP's school canteens are linked to nutritional programs, providing balanced meals fortified with micronutrients and vitamins. Where possible, canteens are provisioned through local purchasing above market price to support local producers, reduce costs, and assure that meals are locally appropriate; the communities were aware of organizations that had purchased stocks of grain and black-eyed peas in the villages for WFP canteens in the past. Because some area schools are supported by canteens from other NGOs, it is possible to directly compare the relative advantages of WFP's local procurement system. Unlike the state canteen system that functions in parallel, food shortages for WFP canteens are infrequent and quickly resolved. However, local millet and rice can be expensive and time consuming to husk, and there is a perception in some villages that local foods are less valuable than foreign rice for children's nutrition. Canteens are sustained through women's community participation; women dominate the oversight committees and rotate the task of cooking the meals for the students.

Schools are also sustained by local milling initiatives, in which WFP provides mills and profits are split between its management committee and the mill operator. Of the three villages, mills have only developed well in Kombili Béri. In Fara Gorou, the only mill in town belongs to the chief of the village, so introducing direct competition is a delicate matter. The school herd programs have been more unequivocally successful, particularly in encouraging promising girls to stay in school despite tremendous

economic and social pressures to drop out. Animals are given to the parents of schoolchildren; the school keeps first-born offspring, and bestows the second-born to households either randomly (as in Kombili Béri) or to the families of the best female students (as in Fara Gorou), right at the moment when they are most susceptible to abandonment pressures (CM1 and CM2) for domestic and field labour, and in preparation for early marriage. Subsequent offspring go to future promising students, and the herd sustains itself over time, requiring only feeding and nutrition inputs. This is also the responsibility of the parents' committee, who work with a veterinary agent Kaydia also provides materials and technical support for school gardens, reforestation and tree planting projects, and student environmental education.

After the regional food insecurity of 2012, the most vulnerable households in the three villages were identified in 2013 to receive either food or cash transfers for the next three years (2014-2016). At the end of the three-year period, their continued vulnerability will be re-assessed; WFP's hope is that the transfers will have moved a significant number of households out of extreme vulnerability. Beneficiary households receive four disbursements per month in the four most difficult months of the year: June, July, August and September. Initially, the size of disbursements was linked to household size; this was later re-adjusted to a fixed rate<sup>4</sup> of 32,500 F CFA XOF (about 55 USD) per month. As has been attested for cash transfers throughout Niger (Olivier de Sardan 2013; Oumarou 2013; Younoussi 2013), where women are identified as beneficiaries, they tend to transfer the funds directly to the male of the household responsible for its financial responsibility.

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<sup>4</sup> This makes good sense, both because linking assistance to household size created incentives to exaggerate, and because a general correlation holds in rural Niger between food security and household size. A large household that is unable to provide adequately for its members is likely to fragment.

## Cash for Assets program

As rural Niger has experienced a progressive withdrawal of state support since the 1990s, farmers and the development policy that supports them have increasingly turned to localized models and decentralized governance: local soil and water conservation, local agricultural extension projects, and local community-building. WFP's Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programs align with this approach, seeking community-driven solutions toward resiliency through the construction or strengthening of local assets. The three villages visited in this study are all currently participating in the same FFA project, receiving targeted cash support to remove the accumulated silt in the basin that lies between them. The project addresses their most pressing needs in both the short and long term. Salaries go almost exclusively toward household food consumption, allowing the most vulnerable to survive until harvest, and curbing the rate of seasonal out-migration. In the longer term, it is hoped that the excavated basin will provide a year-round source of water, and thus an opportunity for income generation through gardening in the dry season. Moreover, the project addresses the communities' concerns over erosion and soil degradation, since drainages into a deeper reservoir reduce the risk of village flooding in the rainy season.

Excavation of the basin is done by groups of either 20 or 19 villagers; these groups are encouraged by design to include members of different villages in the hope that the shared work will inspire stronger social ties and mutual assistance between communities in the future. Each person is expected to reach a quota of .5 cubic meters of soil per work day, or 10 cubic meters per work group per day; a well-coordinated team can accomplish this in a morning and still have time to meet other household labour demands in the day. There is normally a gendered division of labour established, with men pickaxing the earth and women transporting it. The choice of workers to be sent to represent a targeted household is made by the households themselves, based on individual

availability and capacity. In the context of large-scale seasonal male migration, and because women's other duties are often devalued as invisible forms of labour by male household heads, most of the CFA labour falls to women. As with the cash transfer system, participating households receive a monthly salary of 32,500 F CFA XOF (55 USD) per month.

## Program impacts

The Cash for Assets program allows women to avoid seasonal migration not only because it provides income, but because it is partnered with school canteens. Women's migration presents a fundamental challenge to the villages' continued existence, as it fragments the nuclear family and often necessitates the displacement of children out of school and into unstable living conditions when they accompany their mother. During the *soudure*, after grain reserves of poor households have been exhausted, the canteens provide the necessary incentive to keep girls in school, so that their parents know they will receive at least one nutritious meal per day. Given the food insecurity of these villages, it is likely that the school programs and the CFA project would have had a fraction of their actual impact had they not been implemented together. Also, as villagers themselves are quick to point out, they cannot escape long-term insecurity without addressing soil degradation and conservation; thus, rebuilding a sense of community requires the technical training they have been receiving in composting, anti-erosion, and yield increases. As one woman explained in a household interview in Dikki, the integration of all of these components at once allows village youth, who might otherwise be drawn into migration, to envisage a viable future if they remain.

The problem of retaining youth underscores the fragility of village social structures under unsustainable conditions. As WFP reintroduces economic and social stability, it reduces the threats to conservative values posed by rifts in traditional gender roles and age relationships. Men in focus

groups consistently described WFP's interventions as reducing the strain on their marriages, since women who migrate become less beholden to their in-laws, and may acquire experiences through travel that lead them to question gender norms at home. When a man cannot assure food for his family, the social contract breaks down for filial obligations as well as marriages. Household heads describe how before WFP, cultivation would be limited in part because their children refused to work the family plots, preferring to work as day labourers for wages in others' fields. Although the experience of women's seasonal migration was generally detrimental to women and children, it is important to acknowledge that the relative financial stability made possible by WFP interventions has also reinforced a social system that, on the whole, reduces their social and physical mobility and limits the social networks and resources they can draw upon independently of their larger households.

The reduction in women's migration was universally hailed as the most significant impact of the program not only because it helped to stabilize marriages, but because of its impact on children's education. This transformation has been dramatic. In Fara Gorou, for example, enrolment has nearly tripled since the canteens brought in households that had previously been highly resistant to educating their children. The school had been on the verge of closing down, unable to recruit adequate teachers or collect the needed funds from school fees. Similarly, in the year before WFP interventions, the school in Komdili Béri saw a dozen families leave in migration with their children, permanently withdrawing them from school. While all three village schools still suffer from state neglect, enrolment of both boys and girls is high, and there is no evidence that schoolchildren are drawn away from their education either by participating in the digging on site or serving as replacement labour for the workers.

There are many indications that salaried labour on the site is providing significant economic benefits as

well. Although nearly all wages are spent on consumption needs, women also say that they can now cover both emergency and preventative care expenses for their families and maintain hygiene. Both men and women seek to replenish grain reserves as a first priority; not only does this provide needed food during the leanest months, but it allows them to avoid the vicious cycle of high-interest debt depleting harvest yields, and thus creating food insecurity in the following year. Informal loans during the *soudure*, and the strains on social relationships that they create, have also declined. Although disposable income after food purchases is small, it is sufficient to attract ambulant vendors from larger towns in the vicinity, making medicine and other commodities more easily available. By their self-reports, frequency and quality of meals have generally improved for adults and children. A woman in Fara Gorou appreciated the impact succinctly: "Before the WFP, we had no *arôme* [artificial flavouring]; now we have the possibility to think of meat".

There is a long-standing debate in West Africa over the relationship between women's economic contributions and their decision-making power within their households. By the gender norms of Zarma society, men continue to control the finances of their households even where women contribute the majority of salaried labour in the basin. Focusing on decision-making power as simply present or absent, however, misses the subtle complexity of negotiation and influence that occurs in households. Moreover, it risks overlooking the importance of impacts on women's self-identity. On this subject, the WFP personnel, Kaydia staff, and beneficiaries interviewed share the same impression: even if women hand over their salaries directly to their male superiors within the household hierarchy, the fact that women were identified fundamentally modifies their relationship and the way they are viewed within the household. Women feel, as a whole, that men are more receptive to their input, although the same formal restrictions apply as before on women's autonomy. Although it has been reported in other

parts of the country, this research found no evidence that women's increasing participation in the wage economy was engendering jealousy, threatening masculinity, or triggering conflicts.

Participants in the program spoke repeatedly about how important it was to be heard, to be considered worthy of consideration. While particularly true for women, this sentiment extended to all members of these neglected communities. Beneficiaries of the work project expressed real pride in their accomplishments, and a real sense of civic participation through their ability to engage with the cash economy. As one woman exclaimed, "We have become like civil servants, with regular pay – we are like full citizens now!" The communities are encouraged by tangible results; even unfinished, the basin currently retains water six months after the rains. Furthermore, because the work program was designed to foster mutual assistance between the three villages, WFP work has galvanized inter-village social and economic relationships that may lead to greater visibility to institutions in the future. There is hope that continued collaboration across villages will establish work groups, credit organizations, or other structures that are better able to secure resources from the state or NGOs.

### Challenges to the program

Initial targeting for identifying beneficiaries was widely criticized by community members for seeming to be a random selection, both excluding the deserving and including households that were not highly vulnerable. Since the selection process was reformed in 2015 to verify through door-to-door censuses and to more strictly and transparently validate selection, satisfaction with targeting is much greater. Selection for inclusion for both rainy-season cash transfers and salaried work in the basin

followed the HEA (Household Economy Approach) targeting methodology, identifying household assets, dependency ratios, the month in which household agricultural reserves are exhausted, and other vulnerability indicators in order to classify households within four categories. By its nature, targeting households is a tricky proposition in communities with limited social stratification, particularly in cases such as these in which admission ceilings are set at percentages of the population rather than by absolute criteria. Because HEA methodology is well standardized across NGOs, villagers with greater mobility and access to information were well aware of the criteria for inclusion. Although the research found no evidence of active deception, the best-informed villagers were able to present their need most intelligibly through selective emphasis, whereas several of the poorest were not physically stable enough to even be included in the census.

In all three villages, the community redistributed assistance (both work hours and earnings from FFA and a portion of the cash transfers) from the targeted recipients to others in the community who had not been selected. Because household heads were given authority over selecting the individual to work each day at the site, they were able to send members from other households in their stead, and pay them in cash for their daily or even hourly wages<sup>5</sup>. This was done as a matter of course in order to avoid conflicts and jealousies among neighbours, and was not considered an act of charity by either donors or recipients. However, the degree to which resources were redistributed depended widely on the village and its general social cohesion, and redistributions often occurred along lines of kinship and affinity. While the research found very few villagers who received no support through redistribution, many of the poorest lacked the social

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<sup>5</sup> The ability to divide labour increments within the day allowed those among the poor with less physical stamina to participate, particularly older women.

capital to secure much more than token gestures. Overall, the general sense was that although redistributions offered a necessary corrective to gaps and injustices left over from WFP targeting that could cause conflict, frustrations among non-recipients remained. In addition, because need was assessed at a household level, some particularly vulnerable individuals within relatively well-off households were excluded.

Although Kaydia and WFP were able to respond to community interests in significant ways in the design of the work project and in their revisions to targeting procedures, there were some problematic gaps in tailoring WFP programs to the realities the villages face. The most concerning of these involved a decrease in wages at the site. Excavation began in December 2015 on a 25-day work cycle each month, with payment every 13th day. In February, it was abruptly announced that these hours were to be reduced to 13 days of work each month, presumably due to high funding constraints for the PRRO. For the villages, this sudden decrease in hours had serious consequences. Halving their salary meant that they would consume their purchased food before the next payment, and forego their plans for saving or investment. More distressingly, many households had made the decision not to send household

members in migration based on the assurance of five full months of support; several of the households interviewed had men who were returning to migrant labour just as the agricultural labour season was about to begin, scrambling to assure that the household would have enough to get through the lean months of the *soudure* even at the potential expense of a reduced harvest.

Finally, because the vast majority of households are obliged to spend their earnings entirely on consumption or redistribution, recipients of FFA assistance universally preferred to receive food rather than cash. Indirect beneficiaries through redistribution expressed the same preference, as it is more culturally appropriate to give gifts in the form of food. Moreover, there is a pervasive perception that traders in Détegui take advantage of the relative isolation of these communities to artificially raise the price of staple commodities. Market collusion of this kind has been associated with cash transfers repeatedly in Niger over the past decade [Younoussi 2013; Oumarou 2013; Olivier de Sardan 2013], and members of both the implementing partner organization and the WFP sub-office are well aware of the issue, yet cash payment at the worksite continues.



## 3. CHAD CASE STUDY

### 3.1 Infrastructure

The city of Mongo is a regional hub for trade, microfinance institutions, government and NGO support. WFP partners in the region include Moustagbal, the implementing agency for these communities' cash transfer and work programs; and ACRA, an Italian organization that has been historically active in supporting women and children in the communities. ACRA has provided cereal banks in Mala and Mouraye to allow for storage and community access in the lean months after scarcity has driven up the price for staple grains. The banks are sustained by interest in kind; a villager who borrows a 100 kg sack of millet will return an additional measure of about 20 kg upon reimbursement. These agricultural loans establish a much-needed alternative to the largely predatory lending structures otherwise available. There are several credit structures available in Baro and Kofilo, and a host of acronyms (FENADEF, PRASAC-CEMAC, SECADEF, ONAPE, etc) for savings and credit structures in the villages, but very few are practically available to rural women (or even most men), as they generally require guarantees against loans or records to demonstrate a minimum of sales volume for commercial activities. In all three villages, people described their profound fears of public humiliation from visits by the police to threaten debtors or seize their assets. Given the likelihood of a disappointing harvest, villagers are generally unwilling to incur the social and economic risks of non-reimbursement involved in formal loans, and the few women who are engaged in petty commerce do not have the requisite trade volume for significant lines of credit. One local organization, Alpha, has provided low-interest loans to women in the past. Alpha was also involved in a literacy program that was eventually able to incorporate WFP food distribution to its

members.

Despite the insufficiency of formal credit structures that are practically accessible to poor Chadians, these villages have developed surprisingly few informal systems of support. Neither men nor women have self-organized to develop strong savings or credit groups. Group members most frequently cite their limited capacity to commit to income-generating activities and a general lack of sufficient and reliable funds as the main factors of constraint. In household interviews in Mala and Mormo, it became clear that a lack of social cohesion and a general sense of distrust have also prevented *tontines* from developing appreciably in the region. Work organizations for collective labour exist for both men and women, but are more formalized for men, sometimes in the form of youth groups. Mouraye, despite its greater distance from Baro, appears to have a more highly developed cadre of women in petty commerce, as well as a generally higher degree of optimism, organization and civic engagement. Mouraye also has more dynamic women's groups, although their activities still focus primarily on collective field labour rather than entrepreneurship. In all villages, although asset redistributions do occur in the lean months, both informally through kinship networks and more formally through the mosque in the form of *zakat*, neither of these forms of support are sufficient to provide consequential relief to the poorest. Food security is such a perennial issue for these households that they overwhelmingly prefer loans in kind rather than in cash regardless of the season.

There was general consensus in all villages that basic living conditions have improved over the past decade with the greater presence of NGO support. Nevertheless, despite their proximity to Mongo and



relative access to NGO and microfinance programs, the three communities visited faced severe limitations in basic infrastructure. The state-installed pump for Mala has been unusable for years, since the population lacks the resources to repair the broken pipe; as a result, a constant parade of women and girls carrying buckets and poles must therefore trek back and forth from morning to night, hauling water to Mala from the pump by the brick kilns outside of Mormo. Although the market in Baro, less than 15 kilometers from Mala and Mormo, is dynamic and provides a diverse range of commodities, many women have limited access, lacking the freedom and resources for regular displacement even at such short distances. People in Mouraye, although they are farther removed from Baro, evince greater enterprise in commerce. They have established a small Saturday market of essential commodities, and women have established stands in the village centre for daily petty trade. Entrepreneurial activities for women have expanded since the *dalot* construction, both in enticing traffic from more far-flung communities and in providing direct road access to the Mongo market through mountain passes.

None of the three villages have even basic health or sanitation services; villagers in Mala and Mormo must travel to nearby Sisi for care, but many have so little means that even the minimal costs for transportation and care at the clinic are prohibitive. For the poorest, when asked about strategies in case of child illness, they had no options at all; several had

in fact watched helplessly as their children died from unknown or hunger-related causes. Mouraye faced greater problems in accessing health services until last year, when a health centre opened in nearby Kofilo; prior to this, the closest health centre had been inaccessible in the rainy season. Without the *dalot*, Mouraye had been particularly isolated from health services in the rainy season; women report considerable improvements in health in general, and in children's health in particular, since its installation. But even with such improvements to health access, these communities suffer severely from malaria and respiratory infections, especially at the advent of the rainy season, and from stomach cramps and diarrhoea during the lean months before harvest. Even worse, the region is afflicted by a strange epidemic that most people refer to as "haemorrhoids", a frequently fatal condition (there were deaths even during our short stay) that so terrifies the population that it has caused many people to flee<sup>6 7</sup>.

Educational resources, although a consistent priority for women in these communities, vary widely from village to village. Mormo has a large and very well-built school from the World Bank; in contrast, Mouraye, who claims the Mormo school was intended for their village but was misappropriated, has effectively had no primary education for years, and very poor education long before that. The community has improvised makeshift hangars that must be repaired and rebuilt each year, but they have remained unoccupied for the past two years

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<sup>6</sup> Moustagbal is aware of the regional epidemic, and its director notes that mortality is exacerbated by ill-advised home treatments of the hemorrhoids rather than biomedical care.

<sup>7</sup> At first, the research team hypothesized that the epidemic was linked to extreme diarrhea from malnutrition and dependence on wild plants, but interviews increasingly suggested that "hemorrhoids" are a symptom of poisoning from overuse of banned or dangerous herbicides for the tomato harvest. The communities are using glyphosate well above recommended levels and without the recommended precautions, which could in itself be contributing to chronic diarrhea. There are several factors which point to herbicides rather than malnutrition alone. Firstly, the epidemic appears to have emerged around the same time that tomato gardening came to the area in earnest. Secondly, victims are found in both poorer and more food secure households. And finally, there seems to be some seasonality of the epidemic with a peak in November; tomatoes are harvested in November and December and are handled throughout the month to dry them for storage and sale. The researchers would very much like to get members of the community tested to confirm this hypothesis, as an appropriate intervention could alleviate a tremendous amount of suffering for the region.

because of a general strike and the community's inability to pay teacher salaries. For the previous decade, classes had been taught by one of the Mouraye farmers in the absence of better options, who performed as best he could, despite himself having dropped out of the 5th grade. Unsurprisingly, no one in the village has a high school degree.

This is the context in which people in these communities attempt to position themselves and their children toward economic opportunities, and particularly toward visibility to the NGOs based out of Mongo that can potentially fill the infrastructural vacuums left by state neglect. Individual interviews reveal a population painfully aware that their educational levels limit their access to resources and pathways out of the most marginal conditions of migrant day labour. Women expressed this concern more vociferously than men, primarily out of concern for their children's future, but also for themselves. Hence the popularity of the women's program Alpha introduced in French-language literacy, despite the facts that French is at best women's third language, and that women's conversational abilities in French are at best rudimentary. The women who participated in the program had been obliged by pragmatic concerns to abandon French, along with their education. Interest in the program is also explained by the tremendous capital that French literacy might potentially provide to women in a region where NGOs place high premium on a commodity in very short supply.

### 3.2 Women's possessions and rights within the household

As a general rule, land use in this region is based on how much land a household can cultivate rather than on individual ownership. In this system, rich and poor households alike have access to land, but poorer households often lack the necessary labour, soil quality, inputs, and/or capacity to survive until harvest without diverting household labour resources away from their fields (through sharecropping or migrant labour). Available labour

(and high dependency ratios) was most often the limiting factor for agricultural production in household interviews, and key informants in all villages indicated that household size generally correlates with greater food security. Because land stays within households, it cannot be borrowed or sold, and although women have access to plots they cannot be said to own land per se. Women do have considerable control over the products of their agricultural labour, and can decide with autonomy whether and when to sell crops such as peanuts, sesame, okra, and black-eyed peas that are typically associated with women's agriculture. Men do not have the right to take women's produce without their consent, nor can they seize any animals that women have been able to purchase with the profits from their commerce. Grain stores and most household animals, however, are under the exclusive control of male household members. Women must normally consult their husbands before joining any credit association, work group, or other social structure, or making any significant economic decision. In household interviews, there is a general pattern of collective decision-making in which both men and women inform and consult each other about decisions with economic ramifications, but the sense of obligation is asymmetric; for men, it is a general norm, but certainly not a requirement whose transgression might invite social sanction.

On the question of whether women enjoy greater freedom of movement and decision-making than they did a generation ago given the scale of male outmigration for most of each year, both men's and women's opinions were mixed. In practice, most authority is simply deferred to other male members of the household or husband's extended family, with whom a wife may not have the same powers of negotiation, and the time needed to acquire their consent may engender critical delays for urgent decisions. While petty commerce has increased, real market access for women is highly limited, and even women who are able to sell some part of their harvest must often do so by proxy through male members of the household while they themselves

stay in the village. In Mouraye, even women active in commerce do not travel to Baro more than once a month. Furthermore, although there are some strong individual examples in the villages of women for whom rules relax during the period of male migration, the burden of daily obligation felt by most women means that they have little opportunity to exercise the privileges they might be accorded in theory; even when male absence eases some forms of social control, it comes with a concomitant increase in women's household responsibilities. If a woman's production does not meet her family's consumption needs, either directly or through sale to acquire cereal supplies, then her right to control that commercial domain is rendered nugatory. If she spends the dry season seeking firewood in the mountains, an arduous and physically dangerous undertaking, it leaves her little time to invest her energies in more lucrative forms of commerce. Nevertheless, women are working harder. In part because of NGO support of new entrepreneurial activities, and in part due to the pressure to diversify among multiple but precarious survival strategies, women are expanding into crafts, mat and basket weaving, and other new economic domains while retaining their previous duties.

### 3.3 Livelihood strategies

Subsistence agriculture is the main livelihood strategy, with millet and sorghum as the main staples of men's production, and women primarily producing peanuts, sesame, and okra. Our visit came just before the rains, as the villages were preparing for the clearing and planting season. Already at this date, the very beginning of the *soudure*, most of the poorer households interviewed had exhausted their food reserves and were engaged in survival strategies, eating wild plants and reducing the number of meals per day. Surviving from harvest to harvest establishes the general pattern of subsistence throughout the year for all households: work in the fields from May until the harvests in September (okra, peanuts) and October (sorghum, millet and sesame); and a diversity of supplemental

strategies, including migration, to fill in the shortfalls from harvest production during the rest of the year. A farmer in the Abou Telfane region faces tremendous uncertainty even when he can secure the necessary inputs for cultivation. Rains are uncertain, and insufficient for adequate harvests about one year in three, either in total quantity or in their pattern of rainfall during critical moments of the crop cycle. Pest damage severely threatens crops both in the fields and in storage. Birds, locusts and crickets regularly consume a large part of grain harvests in the fields; more rarely, but with devastating results, are raids from warthogs and other wild animals from the surrounding mountains. Hyenas and troops of baboons descend occasionally into fields and villages, and may take small animals from the herds. Villages are unable to effectively combat parasitic attacks of witchweed (*Striga sp.*), which may wipe out crops outright, and force farmers to abandon contaminated fields entirely for years at a time. To prevent witchweed invasion, many farmers cannot cultivate all of their plots and are obliged to leave some fallow, since the parasite tends to attack fields that have been depleted through continuous cultivation.

Given the precariousness of agriculture, the poor depend on a wide variety of subsidiary activities for supplementary income, discussed below. For many, even these activities are not enough to feed the household until the next harvest; farmers are obliged to buy food on credit in the lean months, generally at unfavourable rates, to be reimbursed after harvest. This pattern forms a vicious circle, as repayment of debts draws down the available food for the next year, and necessitates further debts in turn. This is one of the key reasons that households seek to purchase animals with any savings they can amass, since animals can be sold in case of agricultural shortfall in order to avoid the debt cycle. The ability to acquire animals as a buffer against food insecurity marks a threshold of economic stratification in these communities. In fact, perhaps the most striking feature of the villages was the disparity between the poorest and those better off,

both in the degree of their food insecurity at the time of our visit, and in the fundamental differences between their available strategies. The contrast was all the more jarring because in Mala and Mormo they were often neighbours, with no evident segregation by caste or neighbourhood. Yet despite levels of food insecurity already evident among the poor, the research found surprisingly little evidence of assistance passing from more food-secure households to their neighbours, even in the form of loans in kind.

Among middle and higher income households, livestock constitute the most highly preferred source of wealth and savings. However, non-pastoralist households could seldom acquire more than a few cattle, since one must also have the resources to send them long distances when local grazing land becomes scarce. Nearly all wealthier households raised goats and sheep as a shock-mitigating strategy. In Mormo, wealthier households also supplemented income through the sale of bricks, fired in makeshift kilns near the pump. All three villages grow tomatoes as a late harvest crop for sale in Baro or Mongo, a cash crop that may be grown in women's vegetable gardens near their compounds, or by the larger household on plots in their fields. Tomatoes are sold fresh or dried to be sold later in the year when the market is less glutted. This strategy is practiced by most households, but is most profitable for wealthier households who have more storage capacity, access to more lucrative markets, and can hold off longer until prices are most favourable before selling. Tomatoes also require some levels of irrigation which have been difficult to reliably secure without pumps or other technology that is beyond village means; this is a key reason why Mormo and Mala are eager to have the *haffir* completed. Profits from tomato sales are spent almost exclusively on consumption to assure that the household can survive until the next grain harvest.

Poorer households that are less able to resort to animal husbandry and cash crop production rely on less certain strategies to supplement food

production. Many men, mostly younger ones, migrate out into urban centres (principally N'Djamena, but also Mongo, Oum Hadjer, Abeche, and Abou Deia), either settling there semi-permanently and sending remittances, or finding wage labour from January until the next agricultural season begins. Migrants to N'Djamena generally join the ranks of day labourers coming in from all over the country for seasonal urban unskilled or semi-skilled labour, digging wells, making bricks or loading and unloading goods for transport. The higher cost of urban living and limited opportunities for high-wage labour truncate the profitability of migrant labour, so that money from seasonal migration can seldom be significantly applied to anything but household consumption demands. To a lesser degree, women from very poor households also migrate out from Mouraye in a separate exodus, working in Mongo for wage labour in August for 2-3 week stints at 1000 F/day. This is a particularly risky strategy since they may return to find that their fields have been devastated before harvest, and it is only undertaken when there are no other ways to keep the household fed. Men and women from poorer households make a similar gamble in sharecropping arrangements, sacrificing optimal work in their own fields in order to meet emergency needs, and often receiving a half-measure (*koro*) of grain for a full day's field labour.

Women also rely heavily in all three villages on firewood collection for supplementary income from harvest to planting seasons, and collect honey, *chébé* (*Croton zambesicus*, used as a traditional pomade) and other plants from the mountains for sale in Mongo. This too is largely a strategy of the poor, since firewood and plant collection is exhausting and scarcely remunerative work, and the mountains are considered to be dangerous. Once grain reserves for the household have been depleted, women also spend time collecting wild plants for family sustenance. At the time of our visit, many poor households in all three villages already depended on "famine foods" such as leaves from the *savonnier* (*Balanites aegyptica*) for a significant percentage of their daily caloric intake.

## MICROENTERPRISE AS A LAST RESORT

### Zeinabou Macouba, Mala

3 years ago, when Zeinabou was 37 and pregnant with her youngest child, her husband chose to marry another woman. Recognizing that he could not support both families, he decided to abandon Zeinabou and their four other children: two teenage girls, an 8-year-old boy, and a 7-year-old girl. Both of their families pressed the husband to remain in the marriage, or at least to fulfill his obligations to continue to support his wife and children. In a society increasingly fragmented by travel and displacement, however, these kinds of pressures no longer have the social force they once held. Zeinabou was thus abruptly left in desperate circumstances, and had to return to Mala, where she now lives with her children and elderly mother, a widow in her 70s. Her brother lives in the neighboring compound with his first wife and their infant daughter. Zeinabou has recently remarried, but her current husband is seldom around; his fields are in Kofilo, and he is often traveling to visit acquaintances in the neighboring villages. She recognizes that this new marriage will offer little in the way of increased support or food security for her or for her children. She worries about how they will eat when she travels to sell firewood; she just returned a few days ago from a trip to find them eating dried *savonnier* leaves. She cries as she remembers it.

Like nearly every household in her village, Zeinabou's depends on agriculture, but like nearly every household in the region, her harvest is not enough to sustain them throughout the year. Last year was particularly bad; they lost their tomato harvest to locusts, and were not able to cultivate all of their plots as a precaution against witchweed. By February, they had already exhausted their grain reserves of sorghum and sesame. In the past, Zeinabou had been able to employ the same strategies for the lean months that wealthier households in Mala currently employ. She used to have a few goats, which provided milk for her children and could be sold in an emergency, but they all died in a famine several years ago. If she could get the necessary funds together, she would buy up sesame and peanuts to store and sell during the leanest months at a higher price; this was a common strategy in Mala in previous years, but after a series of setbacks it has become increasingly rare. When the FFA program was providing employment at the *haffir* and WFP food distributions were supporting her elderly mother, she was able to stay in the village with her children, but in most years she supplements the harvest principally through the collection and sale of firewood and stalks of wild plants from the mountains, which requires extensive travel. Each year since her daughter was born, she makes regular trips away from her children after the harvest. On each trip, she spends two to three weeks at a time around Golonti collecting firewood to sell for cash in Mongo, which she immediately uses to purchase sorghum for consumption.

When her husband abruptly left her, however, she was too pregnant to undertake the strenuous physical demands of firewood collection. She turned to petty commerce out of desperation, knowing that it was likely to fail and that the population did not have disposable income, but not knowing what else to do. She took out loans totalling about 40,000 XAF (about 70 USD) from neighbours and from a trader in Baro that she knew through relationships with her extended family, and used the money to buy dried fish, okra, and salt in Baro to make soup to sell in the village. Unfortunately, her male customers often did not pay her, buying food on credit and then failing to pay her back; as a woman, she was not in a position to force the issue, and she saw that she was going to lose money on the venture. Filled with anxiety, she spent some of her meager proceeds on food for her children, and brought the rest to the trader in Baro, imploring him to extend the repayment period until after this year's harvest. Zeinabou hopes he will accept cash instead of payment in grain; when your children are starving, she says, it is just too difficult to give their food away. She cites her own example as proof that women here cannot rely on formal credit structures, who would have imposed interest on her loan, and would never have been as forgiving over her failure to reimburse.

Zeinabou's case is not exceptional; the research team interviewed many households facing similar levels of food insecurity, and with similarly limited options. Divorce is not uncommon, and many of the most vulnerable households in the villages were headed by either widows or divorcées, who find themselves bereft of social support without the husband's presence. Strikingly, her attitude toward petty commerce is also typical; even in our interviews with women who have succeeded in business, women in this area generally entered into commercial ventures only as a measure of last resort, and often as a result of necessity after divorce.

### 3.4 Pastoralist strategies

One of the major gaps left by these case studies is an analysis of gender and pastoralism, which constitutes a major livelihood strategy in the Sahel and one that is often underserved by development projects. This omission is in part the consequence of logistic constraints, since time in each country was limited and pastoralists are far less accessible than others. In Chad, the researchers made every effort to interview pastoralists, traveling many miles off-road to speak with herders in remote areas in the foothills beyond Mouraye. Even then, the structural inaccessibility of pastoralist women proved even greater than their physical isolation; the team was unable to interview women directly and was obliged to depend on information about gender roles and food security from a half dozen pastoralist men, some partially sedentarized in Mouraye's outlying hamlets. Although the information the team was able to glean from interviews was limited, it nevertheless offers some insights into the particular vulnerabilities of pastoralist women that may be instructive for the region more generally. Because the issues facing pastoralist women and households are so different from their agriculturist compatriots, this discussion is provided in an appendix to this report.

### 3.5 Programs in context

WFP provides support in the region through three main axes of intervention: nutrition, education, and rural community development. Integrated activities (food security projects, nutritional support, school canteens) are designed to strengthen community resilience in interaction. Implementing partners in the region include local organizations as well as international NGOs. For the three villages in this study, program oversight for both targeted food distribution and Food Assistance for Assets is conducted by Moustagbal, a local organization with its main office in Mongo. Moustagbal and WFP collaborate on multiple programs in the canton of Baro, including health centre gardens, fuel-efficient stove construction and nutritional education.

Both Moustagbal and the WFP are very highly regarded by the case study villages, who appreciate their transparency and community-driven, participatory approach. The success of food distributions depends in large part on the partner organization and its ability to communicate and secure the population's trust. In all villages, popular acceptance of the selection criteria and distribution schedule without jealousy or conflict attests the strength of the partner's relationship to the beneficiary villages. Villagers also described the flexibility and responsiveness of the FFA and targeted distribution programs to their needs, adjusting the kinds of food provided and frequency of distribution according to feedback from the population.

#### General targeted distribution

The region has received periodic targeted food distributions from multiple organizations in response to famines. In 2013 and 2014, WFP and Moustagbal provided food distributions to the most vulnerable elderly women and to households with malnourished children, distributed monthly for the

last three months before the harvest. In addition to this distribution, women who participated in a literacy program in Mala also received food distribution through Moustagbal and WFP in 2014. Targeted distribution for the elderly was established through HEA criteria, and validated by WFP and by committees of villagers selected by the communities. Malnourished children were identified through medical assessment, by baby weighing and arm bracelet measurements. Each beneficiary household received the same amount, without adjustments based on household size. Women in the household were listed as the identified targets for assistance, although distribution went to the household heads. In nearly all cases, women did indeed have control and autonomy over the food received, and households with underweight children reported that they (and their nursing mothers) were indeed prioritized within household use. In a separate distribution, women who participated in a literacy program in Mala received food assistance as well. Their choice to participate in the program was unrelated to the food assistance received, since the opportunity to include literacy students in food distribution only arose after they had joined.

The researchers found general satisfaction with the targeting process. For both households with underweight children and those with elderly women, there was general agreement that all selected households were deserving, although several interviewees felt that equally vulnerable elderly women had not been included. Households that had been selected and those that had not been selected were equally likely to find the selection fair and impartial, and all felt that the criteria for inclusion were transparent. Since distribution occurred during the period of greatest food scarcity, food was consumed and not sold in every instance; in the few instances where secondary redistribution to other households occurred, the amount of food shared was not significant. For the same reason, there was universal preference for food rather than cash distribution during the *soudure*. All mothers interviewed also said that the form of assistance

influences its allocation within the household: food was more likely to fall under their control than cash.

By all accounts, this program effectively targeted the most vulnerable households, and was also effective in reaching women within the households. The focus on malnourished children also allowed assistance to reach a normally inaccessible population: food insecure mothers and children within relatively wealthy households. This was particularly true for the Arab pastoralist households in Mouraye. The women interviewed from the Alpha literacy program felt that the fact that they were individually designated as the recipient did have an impact on the likelihood that they would be given control of the food resources upon distribution; some even felt that it had raised their status within the household beyond the period of assistance. For the most part, however, this form of assistance has limited impacts in the long term; recipient households that were in desperate need during the lean season of the distribution are likely to be just as vulnerable today.

### Food Assistance for Assets

In 2013, WFP and Moustagbal introduced two Food Assistance for Assets programs for the case study sites: a water retention site to provide year-round water access and the possibility of income generation through off-season gardening for Mala and Mormo; and a small bridge over a culvert (*dalot*) near the entrance to Mouraye for access in the rainy season. The FFA program has, by all accounts, been transformative for these communities, a testament to the strong work WFP and its partner have done in soliciting community feedback and maintaining an open, collaborative relationship with the villages. In Mala and Mormo, several households credited the food provided for *haffir* construction with saving their lives, or at least with allowing them to continue living in the village. For communities facing so many challenges, the success of the *haffir* in reducing their food insecurity may be existential; many worried openly that the villages would be forced to disband

and disperse if FFA did not return. In Mouraye, *dalot* construction has allowed a village with strong initiative and organization crucial access to a host of resources that had been seasonally unavailable.

The work itself was difficult, particularly for the *haffir* construction. Digging with pickaxes into concrete-like soils, households were awarded grain measures according to the number of 30m<sup>2</sup> plots they could clear. Households were free to allocate their available labour which was primarily female; women would sometimes bring their children to help dig on the site or be placed under a tree or hangar with an older child supervising them. Household interviews suggest that although in some instances women had little say in the selection within their households for work on the *haffir*, in most cases allocation of labour was made collectively. Women dominated in large part because many men were in seasonal migration or year-round displacement; they were also highly motivated to participate, as women were to be the primary beneficiaries of the off-season gardening the *haffir* would make possible. Women acknowledged the physical difficulty of the work but pointed out that the alternative is even more grueling; most would have been collecting firewood in the mountains if they were not working at the *haffir*.

Both work projects were self-targeting; any village household could elect to participate, to whatever degree they were able. In Mormo and Mala, which have distinct economic strata, relatively wealthier households took advantage of the program to supplement reserves, while poorer households depended on the work to survive the lean season. For these households, the food provided for digging the *haffir* allowed them to avoid more precarious strategies, particularly the vicious cycle of acquiring food on credit to repay after harvest. Unsurprisingly, many of the most vulnerable households were less able to take advantage of the program without

endangering the viability of other livelihood strategies. For example, one poor household interviewed in Mala had been determined to maximize its work on the *haffir* after a disappointing harvest had left them particularly vulnerable. After clearing 28 plots, the husband collapsed from exhaustion; the household production suffered as a result since he was unable to work in his fields during critical periods of the agricultural season. In the second year the household decided not to participate; farming seemed to them to be a safer strategy. In Mouraye, work was less intensive and largely consisted of transporting the necessary materials to the *dalot* site. Although economic divisions were not as manifest in Mouraye, there were nonetheless forms of structural exclusion from participation. Pastoralists, for example, criticized the program's design for focusing only on farmers; they would have liked to participate, but needed to watch over their animals in case of theft or hyena attack.

This research found very few examples of redistribution of food among households in any of the villages. Although the villages had management committees that supposedly assured redistribution to the poorest households, even if they were unable to participate, it is unclear whether this actually transpired. For many households, this was presumably because their own consumption needs were so urgent, but the limited redistribution by wealthier households was consistent with a general reserve in providing loans and gifts in the difficult seasons of the year. Some households mentioned that they preferred food over cash payments for this reason, as it was more likely to be fully consumed by the household rather than diffused into larger social networks. Although previous studies on gender in Chad (WFP 2014) have suggested a general male preference for cash and female preference for food, in this instance, research found a universal preference for food distribution<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Women did suggest that in general, they had more control over the use of food than cash in their households, which is consistent



Given the difficulty in access to markets, particularly for women, and the general levels of food insecurity, this was to be expected.

Both FFA programs have the potential for lasting impacts over the long term, but are currently unsustainable. Mouraye's *dalot* has improved several infrastructural constraints in one stroke: year-round access to health care; stronger social and commercial relationships with neighbouring villages; free movement of herds; and perhaps most importantly, year-round market access to Mongo through the mountain passes. But the community is concerned that the *dalot* will wash away from

erosion over the next few rainy seasons unless they can fill in the cracks and spaces forming between the *dalot* and its sides. They have requested assistance from WFP and its partners, without response, trying to convince them to provide technical support and/or give them food for the work. The *haffir*, as well, has not yet reached its potential; although originally planned for a depth of 5 meters, work has been stopped without explanation at 3.5 meters. Even at its present depth, the *haffir* retains water well into the dry season, but it is not enough to develop the market gardening activities that originally motivated the communities involved.

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with previous findings (WFP 2014).



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISCUSSION

This section summarizes the main recommendations developed from the fieldwork for the Sahelian case studies (Mali, Niger and Chad). Country-specific issues are discussed at greater length in their respective case study sections. Our primary concerns with this report, however, have been to 1) produce generalizable and operational principles for WFP programs through gender analysis; and 2) provide clear examples of how gender considerations may improve project outcomes.

To this end, this section is organized as follows:

- **Part One: Recommendations**

We have limited ourselves in this section to four main points that emerge across the Sahelian data that we feel are of greatest practical value. Many of these points speak specifically to gender and empowerment issues; all are informed by a gender-focused approach.

- **Part Two: Discussion.**

**Gender and anthropological insights for two perennial issues in development: Targeting and Overburden**

The research data provide significant context for two areas of perennial concern for WFP, particularly with regard to gender: the social dynamics of targeting; and concern with overburdening program beneficiaries. Although they may not lead as clearly to specific actions as the points raised in Section 1, we felt that the ethical nuances surrounding these two subjects speak directly to the continued ambivalence surrounding ideas of gender empowerment in development that was identified in the literature review.

- **Part Three: Reflections on WEAI**

A few reflections on the utility and adaptability

of the index based upon field experience and considerations from the literature review.

### 4.1 Recommendations

**Insights provided by gender analysis add value and effectiveness to programs at every level: in design, implementation, and evaluation.**

These case studies are small-scale, qualitative, and non-representative. As such, they are meant to provide insight into general phenomena through induction, rather than providing specific or country-level program recommendations. The specific cases therefore serve to illustrate the kinds of considerations and approaches necessary to better predict or evaluate program impacts in the general case. Further research would be necessary to determine whether the particular issues identified in the handful of communities included in these studies are indicative of more widespread phenomena.

Given these constraints, the data do provide clear evidence of the importance of incorporating gender analysis at all levels of WFP programming. It is often repeated in policy research that cross-cutting issues such as gender cannot be mere afterthoughts to development, but must be integrated into all phases, from conceptualization to implementation and through outcome and impact evaluation. In practice, however, WFP personnel and their partners may not see the value in integrated gender analysis throughout the life of a program, particularly when they are burdened with other responsibilities. The three examples from the research provided below are therefore meant to serve as a proof of concept for the value of gender analysis, attention to micro dynamics and the lived experience of men and women, either in demonstrating the value of WFP programs or in providing considerations that would increase their effectiveness or sustainability.

**Example 1: gender in design and monitoring.** *Differential access to resources by gender leads to predictable challenges to program effectiveness.*

One of the strongest programs reviewed in the field research was Mali's P4P program, a local grain purchase program that is deeply appreciated by its beneficiary producers. However, there are significant differences for men and women in the ability to reap maximal benefit from the program. Unlike the local purchase programs elsewhere in the Sahel (Niger and Chad), where school feeding activities are provisioned through local purchase based on availability at time of harvest, the greatest advantage of Mali's P4P program is that it guarantees the market in advance of the season, at a price slightly above market price. As has been discussed elsewhere in this report, mitigating market uncertainty addresses one of the greatest constraints on economic development in the Sahel, where uncertainty powerfully limits entrepreneurial risk and innovation.

A guaranteed market and price allow farmers to maximize production of their available lands; in the region visited this had a significant effect, since before the program households often left land uncultivated because of market uncertainty. But because women in the area do not have the right to own or control use of ox carts and plow animals, they are obliged to wait until the last possible moment to prepare their fields at the beginning of the agricultural season, so their ability to maximize the percentage of available land cultivated is limited. As a result, women in some communities find it necessary to purchase grain from others to meet quotas for P4P. This is easy to do, since there are several groups in the agricultural system that are eager to transform their grain into cash. In particular, men from outside the community bring in tractors to help with harvest and are paid in harvest grain, which they seek to convert into cash before returning home at the end of the season.

Purchasing grain from the national markets for resale at a profit in P4P is not in line with WFP standards; if it were done on a large scale (it is not, in part because women have limited access to credit) it would threaten the markets and the sustainability of the project. The larger issue for the purposes of this discussion, however, is that attention to differential access to resources by gender at the outset might have alleviated the extreme pressures placed on women that obligated them to take such measures, as they are desperate not to lose access to the program by failing to meet expected quotas.

**Example 2: gender in program implementation.** *Mutual reinforcements addressing women's needs make programs much more powerful in combination.*

WFP evaluations are often program-specific; where WFP staff do consider interactions between their programs, they are often focused on possible negative impacts across programs in which one inadvertently undercuts the objectives of another (for example, a cash for assets (CFA) program that overburdens women, and therefore places their nutrition and/or that of their children at risk). In Niger, the researchers were struck by the opposite effect; a powerful complementarity in programs, mutually reinforcing each other in such a way that they really need to be considered as an organic whole.

There is a gendered component to this complementarity. The most profound impact of the CFA program was in reducing women's seasonal out-migration; men are also migrating less, but many continue to do so for at least part of the year. Because women often brought their children with them when migrating, a key factor in reducing their migration has been the school canteens and other school programs, which assure food and nutrition for children even when there is nothing left at home to feed them.

These communities are highly food insecure, and

even WFP interventions cannot eliminate the need for migration and remittance economies to supplement production. However, the effect of mutually reinforcing programs addresses the most critical social concerns for village men and women alike. There are significant differences in the social effects of men's and women's migration. Women and girls are placed in highly vulnerable positions as migrants, and often face social censure and social risk as a result (due to pregnancy while in migration, accusations of infidelity, or weakening of the social bonds to the husband's family). As the communities assert, reducing or eliminating women's migration therefore relieves the most existential threats to the village: to the authority of village administration, to the integrity of the household, and to the marital bond.

**Example 3: gender in outcome and impact evaluation.** *Considering program impacts at the household level and beyond reveals the importance of women-focused programming.*

Impact evaluation is often largely limited to the beneficiary, failing to recognize the ripple effects at the household level and beyond. Gender analysis, with its focus on micro dynamics, provides useful insight into the larger influence of programs, allowing a clearer assessment of the importance of WFP interventions. This is particularly true in considering impacts on the burden of women's activities, since they are often denigrated as invisible or less essential forms of household labour, both by communities and by evaluation instruments themselves.

The most compelling example of this that emerged from our fieldwork concerns the caregiver support programs WFP provides to women accompanying malnourished children for medical care. In Mali, the caregiver who accompanies a malnourished child receives full food support and other services while in the hospital. Interviews with women caregivers (generally mothers, but often mothers-in-law in

cases where the mother is nursing another child at home) shows just how hard it is for women to be displaced from their households for even brief periods of time, particularly when the duration of their hospital stay is difficult to determine. The opportunity costs of leaving behind other children, household obligations, and field duties (particularly in peak seasons) are tremendous- and those gaps are inevitably filled by other women and girls, sometimes with permanent effects (such as pulling girls out of school).

### **WFP should honour its commitments and undertake projects that it can see through to completion**

In Niger and Chad, the research found several perceived or actual instances of WFP programs not meeting their stated commitments to community members. The most concerning of these occurred in communities working on a collective cash for assets (CFA) program in Niger, in a region suffering from such poor soil quality that most households cannot remain in the village year-round. Unfortunately, halfway through the work season in 2016, the program hours were cut in half, without explanation to the workers. Everyone in the community was at pains to express their gratitude toward WFP for bringing the work program and other support activities, and thus were extremely reluctant to criticize the organization or its implementing partner. Nevertheless, it was clear from discussions of the rationale for household economic decisions that the reduction in hours had devastating consequences for these villages. Targeted households had planned on five full months of support, and had based their decision on whether to send household members in economic migration, and how many to send, on the assurance of income during that entire period. Many men stated they would not have stayed in the village had they known that wages for the work site would be reduced. Even more troubling, several of the households interviewed had men who were returning to migrant labour just as the agricultural labour season was

about to begin, scrambling to assure that the household would have enough to get through the lean months of the *soudure* even at the potential expense of a reduced harvest.

Life in the Sahel is rife with uncertainty. In fact, this is arguably the most salient underlying principle of Sahelian economics. At nearly every level, from the timing of the rains, to the availability of commodities in the markets or medication at the dispensaries, to the distinct possibility of losing migrant labourers to road accidents or children to malaria, households make decisions with incomplete information and few guarantees. As evidenced by the popularity of Mali's P4P program, for those on the threshold of food vulnerability, the value of assistance from WFP and its partners often lies as much in its certainty as it does in the actual assistance received. This becomes especially clear through interviews with households about the perceived advantages of WFP; for many, WFP programs are most transformative in the fact that they allow planning for the long term in ways that would otherwise be considered impractically risky, especially for women and others who face greater structural vulnerabilities.

It is clear from conversations with WFP personnel at all levels, as well as their partner organizations, that decisions to eliminate or attenuate programs are not taken lightly, and may result from complex funding constraints, logistical issues, and political pressures. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to overstate how dangerous it is for WFP to go back on its word, not merely in the immediate aftermath as households adjust to unforeseen shortfalls, but in larger unintended impacts that may reduce the reputation and effectiveness of both WFP and its partners across programs, with potentially long-term effects. Before introducing a modification to an established program, WFP should therefore consider how risk-averse communities will perceive future programs introduced by WFP or its partners, and how real or perceived unreliability factors into community calculations of risk in accepting future support.

Evaluations of programs should ideally be set up to capture these kinds of larger impacts as well as program-specific target outcomes. In this regard, it is important to recognize the importance of popular perceptions as well as actual violations of trust. In one of the villages in Chad, for example, several households expressed the belief that a WFP food distribution from several years earlier was unfairly reduced or allocated. Although the perceived disparities in distribution almost certainly derive from a misunderstanding and not from actions of the partner, the potential effect on confidence in future programs nevertheless needs to be taken seriously.

Along with providing promised services, WFP's interventions would be far more effective with better follow-through and long-term support. The two collective work projects visited in Chad, a water retention project and a *dalot* (culvert crossing bridge), were well conceived and implemented by a highly competent partner organization (Moustagbal) devoted to engaging community participation at all levels. As a result, both projects have tremendous potential to increase food security and provide assets in the long term for their respective impacted communities. The *dalot*, in particular, has been realizing this potential since its installation a few years ago; villages once cut off from crucial resources for months of the year have seen gains in health and food security with continual access to markets, health services, and cattle migration routes. However, the water retention project, originally planned for a depth of 5 meters, has been stopped at 3.5 meters; although this has maintained water well into the dry season, it is not enough to develop the market gardening activities that originally motivated the communities involved. Meanwhile, the *dalot* is showing dangerous signs of erosion; the village that built it and serves as its principal beneficiary has been requesting support to pack earth around it to stabilize it, and are worried that all the benefits they have seen since its introduction will wash away along with it within a few more rainy seasons.

**Slight refinements to the criteria for determining the type of assistance (cash vs. food) and the structure of targeting may greatly increase the local effectiveness of assistance programs**

As the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and food security, one of the key practical issues faced by the WFP is identifying the appropriate level of granularity for its areas of intervention. With limited resources, the national office for each country must determine the form and amount of assistance for each area, based on identifications of vulnerability and insecurity at a regional level. It is acknowledged that there are practical issues that limit the degree of specificity by which programs can be tailored to meet local needs. However, in all three countries the research found programs that, while there may be good justification for their design at the regional level, were not serving individual communities as intended because of local variation.

In all of the communities visited in Niger, for example, direct and indirect beneficiaries of the CFA labour program universally expressed a preference for receiving assistance in the form of food rather than cash. In these highly vulnerable communities, households are using their pay checks exclusively or nearly exclusively to feed their families, and traders in the area, recognizing the limited access these populations have to other markets, are artificially raising the prices for grain. Non-beneficiaries also wish that food were given instead of cash, as it is more culturally appropriate to give gifts in the form of food, and they face the same problems with market prices as the direct beneficiaries when they receive secondary support in the form of cash. Yet distribution continues in the form of cash today, despite the fact that these extortionary effects of market collusion have been identified throughout Niger as a pervasive problem with cash transfers for the past decade, and members of both the implementing partner organization and the WFP sub-office are well aware of the issue and the literature.

The other aspect of assistance in which specificity is of perennial concern to the WFP is the decision whether to make assistance distribution generalized, self-targeting (i.e. for work programs), or to impose ceilings and inclusion criteria. In the communities visited in Niger, recipients of both cash for assets and cash transfers were selected by vulnerability criteria. Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether this selection process fairly captures those most in need, and only those in need, establishing target criteria and caps for the number of beneficiaries in villages like these is potentially problematic, because the entire community, with very few exceptions, is highly vulnerable and food insecure. In itself, distributing assistance to communities with very slight or negligible differences between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries is conducive to situations of jealousy and other threats to social cohesion and local authority. Fortunately, in this case, the communities themselves mitigated potential conflicts and inequities through extensive redistribution of received assets, both in the form of labour-hours at the work site and cash received in salary by beneficiaries.

In two of the communities visited in Chad, the above situation was essentially reversed. Members of these communities, who participated by voluntary self-selection on a water retention project, could clearly be divided into economic strata; a significant number of relatively wealthy inhabitants had access to an entirely different range of strategies for mitigating risk, generating income, diversifying livelihoods, and accessing credit than did the majority of the villagers. Moreover, unlike the Nigerien example, the degree of support from those relatively wealthy inhabitants to their less wealthy neighbours was extremely limited, even in the lean months before harvest, when exchange and mutual support is common in the Sahel. In this case, because the FFW activities were self-targeting, very vulnerable households, with limited labour and time resources expendable beyond subsistence farming activities, were less able to take advantage of the program without

endangering the viability of other livelihood strategies, whereas relatively wealthy households were more easily able to supplement their reserves. One can imagine how a self-targeting program in a case such as this might have limited impact for the most vulnerable, and even serve to exacerbate socioeconomic stratification within a community.

The country case studies from Niger and Chad therefore stand in counterpoint to illustrate the need for local assessments in determining target populations. Although the calculations for program design are necessarily complex and limited by practical considerations, in all of the examples discussed above, the ability to factor in the effect of a very small number of variables might have greatly improved the quality and effectiveness of services. In the decision of providing cash vs. food assistance to communities in Niger, for example, those variables would be the degree of market isolation and the likelihood that assistance will be expended to meet household consumption demand rather than productively (i.e. through income-generating activity). Given the isolation and food insecurity of the populations in question, the manipulation of food prices in the market was both predictable and historically well attested by previous cash transfers. For the question of target design, including a consideration of the degree of economic stratification in the recipient community could significantly bolster the effectiveness of programs; secondary considerations would include the degree and structure of mutual assistance within the community, and the strength of local authority.

**Program success depends on partner organizations' strong response to community needs and their feedback to WFP**

In the brief period spent in each of the communities for this research, our methodology allowed us to capture some small part of their underlying dynamics and potential concerns. WFP relies on a much deeper engagement with its beneficiary communities, and much of this role falls to the

partner organizations who implement and monitor WFP interventions. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of WFP's partners: in establishing trust and rapport with beneficiary communities; in brokering relationships; in understanding social dynamic factors that may threaten program sustainability; and in adapting programs to local politics and needs.

One of the most important responsibilities embedded within all of these roles is the act of "cultural translation", in which the development framework of WFP (here, particularly, with regard to empowerment of the poor, and of women) is communicated through partners to beneficiaries in an accessible and locally meaningful form. Translation is not a simple or ideologically neutral activity (although it is often construed as such), and care must therefore be taken to assure that partner understandings of program objectives correspond with those of WFP. Moreover, the work of translation should ideally operate in both directions, so that the priorities and understandings of recipient populations allow for bottom-up responsiveness in program design. Given how critical this work is, program evaluations currently under-emphasize the institutional relationships between WFP and its partners, and particularly the capacity of partners to assess and respond to local demand.

The researchers were strongly impressed with the commitment and engagement of WFP's partners in all three countries. It is telling that through our debriefings with partners, and separately with sub-office WFP personnel, we found that both were already well aware of many of the issues raised in this discussion and recommendation section of the report. Furthermore, it was clear that partners had found effective work-arounds to issues that challenged program sustainability, often by informally overlooking community modifications (for example, by choosing not to investigate too closely the source of grains in local purchasing in Mali, nor whether workers on work sites in Niger really



belonged to the selected beneficiary households).

That being said, the fact that partners were often fully aware of these issues suggests that further research is warranted into the institutional relationship between the WFP and its partners. Although there are many examples from the research in which feedback from communities led to bottom-up improvements in provision of services, our conversations with partners also revealed that informal modifications may go unreported out of fear of censure, a dangerous pattern if innovations in one community are to inform design for others. This begs the question: in what instances do partners not feel comfortable communicating program issues; and if they are being communicated, in what instances are they not resulting in change? Partners that are monitoring well but are unable to respond to address fundamental issues, such as the inappropriate distribution of cash rather than food, are likely to be frustrated by their role.

There are obviously limits to the degree to which programs can be left open to local modification. Without oversight, populations may engage in undesirable forms of exclusion, or program resources may be co-opted by those with greater social capital, particularly through conservative power structures that serve to reinforce patriarchal or gerontocratic norms. These issues are of particular concern with regard to gender. But neither does it follow that any modification to a program constitutes an abuse or deformation, or that traditional systems are necessarily inimical to women's interests. Rather, such assumptions are fundamentally antithetical to the principle of local empowerment. Program implementation therefore needs to find the balance between sustainable control and responsiveness to local adaptation.

In finding the point of equilibrium between program control and flexibility, the role of the partner organizations is not always sufficiently considered. Relegating partners to mere enforcers may

negatively impact partner motivation and empathy, as success becomes defined by external criteria and populations are seen as responsible and perhaps even culpable should they fail to meet these criteria. This is a particular concern with gender empowerment discourse in its neoliberal form, as will be discussed in the next section. Given that partner organization personnel in the Sahel are overwhelmingly (at least 80 percent) male, care must be taken to assure that partner understandings of the importance of gender and women's empowerment align with those of the WFP in their role as cultural translators. The researchers would suggest based on our limited interactions with partner organizations in the field that it is not sufficient to emphasize this rhetorically if it is not also underscored in a structural form; if rewards and motivations for partner personnel are linked to criteria divorced from salient gender issues, it is unlikely that gender will be significantly prioritized.

#### **4.2 Discussion. Gender and Anthropological Insights for Two Perennial Issues in Development: Targeting and Overburden**

##### **Targeting and program flexibility**

This section examines targeting and program flexibility for cash/food transfer programs in the case study countries specifically; however, this discussion applies more generally to any development intervention. In truth, interventions do not simply bring a resource or a capacity to beneficiaries; by the logic of who they select and the rationale for selection, they introduce a new set of norms that may be in conflict with, or unintelligible to, the recipient community. The idea that assistance is a neutral endeavour that merely provides assistance to people is itself an ideological construct; in reality, forms of assistance restructure power and redefine which kinds of action are intelligible or visible to the new gatekeepers of resource distribution.

Given all this, the process of targeting may best be understood as a necessary "evil," so to speak. It

should be said at the outset that it does tremendous good, as affirmed by community perception and by food security studies. In fact, in many places visited for this research, it seems to be the determining factor that makes life in the villages year-round even possible. But it also imposes a foreign system onto a local hierarchy that has previously held a very different social logic for distribution. In West Africa, and particularly francophone West Africa, the colonial experience of the rapid introduction of new technologies of self-discipline and self-reliance still resonates; this history was evoked by some of our interviewees in describing the ways that WFP interventions challenge traditional forms of authority.

Cash transfers are themselves a recent introduction to the Sahel, an assistance methodology developed largely from Latin American contexts and then tried mainly in Eastern Europe before they were first introduced to Niger during the food crisis of 2005. They are an instructive case study for understanding the dynamics of local introductions of development logics. Because they have arrived suddenly and massively to communities already under threat of social dissolution, bringing with them a whole institutional architecture, and new sets of procedures (i.e. targeting) with their own new sets of implicit norms, their effects are much greater than a simple introduction of resources.

In the communities researched in Niger and Chad that were recipients of cash/food transfer or cash/food for work, local logics of distribution were based not on abstract criteria like vulnerability indicators, but on personal relationships (kinship, patronage, marriage bonds, etc.). Across the Sahel, the power of local forms of governance is under threat: particularly the bonds of subordinate males to clan and household allegiances, the equilibrium that leads sub-units to agree to collectivize their harvests under the authority of a single male head of household, and the extent of local chieftainship and religious authority. All are deeply threatened by

current trends, including migration, rapid urbanization, and climate change. As the anthropologist Olivier de Sardan points out (2013), such internal fragmentation is exacerbated and brought to the fore by external intervention, particularly where injections of cash or food create “spaces of suspicion.” While this type of suspicion was not observed in the communities visited in this research, partners certainly alluded to it occurring elsewhere.

As noted in the discussion of partnerships above, there is a striking absence of discussion of the role of partners in negotiating between competing and often incompletely compatible logics between agency and local structure. In practice, partner agents are often obliged to do some difficult negotiating with communities to make programs functional and successful. It may be that this process is seldom emphasized because it is institutionally devalued (cultural translation is falsely imagined to be a neutral and robotic activity). But the absence of discussion of how programs adapt to local concerns is problematic, and not just because it hides potential abuse. The larger problem is that insights about the unspoken processes that informally allow programs to flourish do not get shared, and so lessons about what does and does not work, how too much flexibility or too little flexibility hurts the program, cannot be used to inform similar current or future programs.

Olivier de Sardan has noted the same lacuna in the area of evaluation. His perceptive structural analysis points out that everyone involved has an interest in not talking about how messy targeting can be. Instead, reports on projects tend to focus on the responses of individual beneficiaries, leaving out the really instructive information about the negotiations of village chiefs’ roles, popular reactions to and adjustments to targeting, shifts in social structure as a result of programs, etc. These kinds of omission reflect the ideological framework established under recent forms of empowerment discourse, in which

the emphasis placed on the individual acts as a disavowal of the role of larger power structures.

With good work with local systems to adjust for the implementation gap, a much more equitable system can result. In Niger, for example, where the difference between the poorest and the average villager was very small, popular perceptions of the first targeting were that it was done almost at random, and sometimes favouring village chiefs and others that were clearly not among the poorest. Villagers found the revised targeting based on door-to-door census in the following year to be much improved, and agreed that all households selected were indeed very poor and in need. Most of the remaining gaps were filled by informal exchanges of cash or labour-hours between households.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that even in the best of situations, targeting will miss the most vulnerable and the most voiceless, and a significant number of these are likely to be women. In what was really the best-case scenario in Niger, in some cases those with the least voice (those who were in migration, transhumance, or otherwise unable to attend the general assemblies; highly vulnerable sub-units of relatively food-secure households; casted hamlets not included in the census; etc.) were not considered for the program. In Chad, gaps were more severe. Part of the exclusion of the vulnerable is that they lack the social capital to “perform deservingness” (cf. Huschke 2014; Willen 2012). In Niger, since the same criteria are used everywhere, the information passes quickly to neighbouring communities, and those who are sufficiently well connected know that having a donkey cart will disqualify them, that they should make clear they’re simply holding animals for absent relatives, etc.<sup>9</sup>.

Knowing how to present a convincing case when everyone is deserving is a crucial piece of information, and the research team encountered several women on the margins who did not know how to play the game, either in being considered for the general census, in securing direct assistance, or in getting informal support through redistribution.

### The limits of flexibility

This is not a critique of targeting *per se*; the researchers were very impressed by how well targeting did manage to reach so many people in need in the Niger communities, and it is hard to imagine a better system. At any rate, it is not specific to targeting; these issues come up for any development intervention. But it is a reminder that the degree of success the research team observed depends on program flexibility and allowing a certain degree of local co-optation of the protocols for distribution. Where social cohesion is strong, informal redistributions might be the only way to assure democratic allocation of resources where they are needed, particularly when the ceiling is set much lower than the number of households in extreme vulnerability.

In our view, the social complexity and particularity of local context mean that for virtually any development program, effectiveness and sustainability depend on local buy-in and local capacity to modify; this is a critical aspect of empowerment generally. What the researchers observed in their brief time in each country suggests WFP is doing well on this count; partners seem very concerned about local understanding and engaged support for programs, and researchers identified several examples in which bottom-up input

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<sup>9</sup> A joke that the research team heard more than once was that people were taking the doors off their compounds before being assessed so as to qualify for assistance. To be clear, this was only a joke, and no evidence was found of active deception, but it speaks to a general perception that one can exert influence over inclusion decisions through selective emphasis. The researchers were also very concerned that people might be changing their livelihood strategies in order to qualify for assistance, but found no evidence of this at all. The larger point holds, however, and is well attested by LASDEL in the region and elsewhere in the country.

improved programs. In Chad, for example, a very engaged partner modified the contents of food distribution based on local dietary preferences and pragmatic concerns. In Niger, the targeting protocols were improved based on local feedback.

The P4P example in Mali serves as a reminder that there are limits to how relaxed protocols can be. Local purchases to meet quota are almost certainly being done with the encouragement of partner organizations. Partners recognize that P4P needs to be flexible, and are willing to look the other way if some of the grain coming in comes from relatives rather than the FO members themselves- but this is a slippery slope. How flexible WFP and partners should be to allow the poor, and especially women, to benefit from the program is a difficult equilibrium to gauge. These sorts of conundrums get at one of the most difficult problems in humanitarian assistance, a central paradox of empowerment: how can one give voice and real participation to a social structure that disenfranchises some part of its population?

### **Overburden**

Across the Sahel, women's time and women's work are devalued, even as they constitute the great engine of invisible labour that drives the rural economy. Partners and NGOs are often as much a part of these devaluing norms as the communities they serve. Compounding the problem, the act of targeting women for support and awareness-raising campaigns can easily grade into making women accountable, and even at fault, for their own poverty and ill-health, and that of their children. This practice has a long history in the Sahel, particularly in association with the medicalization of women's bodies and their sexuality (family planning, AIDS, other STDs). The fact that women are often accessible to institutional control (through baby weighing and pre-natal care, etc.) can make them the locus of all sorts of campaigns without much regard to women's own priorities and other household obligations.

Given this contextual backdrop, WFP personnel at all levels expressed concerns about overburdening women. Are WFP programs, albeit well intentioned in their focus on women, adding to the already heavy burdens on women's labour and time availability to such a degree that the costs outweigh the program benefits? Given that women are already placed under such burdens, is participation taking away from productive labour otherwise expendable toward agricultural obligations or the household production of health? Is it enough to say that women themselves are choosing to participate, given the lack of other options, and the possible lack of agency within the household, or within the village once the chief has pledged community participation? Should it be assumed that women, or the poor generally, actually know where the limit of their ability lies before they cause themselves or their household economies harm? And to what extent are their decisions well informed? For example, women may be making calculations that participation is worthwhile even when harmful in order to have access to external funds or donors in future.

This concern over overburden is an acknowledgment of the same paradox of empowerment broached in the literature review: if empowerment is framed as active economic engagement, is it still empowering to require even those without disposable time or labour resources to contribute in order to receive assistance? WFP staff would say that this ethical issue is at least partially resolved by the two-pronged structure of WFP programs in these communities, in which the nutritional axis addresses food insecurity issues without condition to the most vulnerable, while WFP's resilience-building axis provides salary or food to community members contributing labour towards constructing assets to reduce insecurity over the long term. But the fact is that the nutritional axes distributions studied in Niger and Chad, while of tremendous short-term benefit to the truly destitute, are a far less cost-effective strategy than resilience-building projects by anyone's estimation. By the next lean season, these households are as poor as ever, and desperate to participate in the cash

or food for work programs whether they are actually able to or not.

This debate calls into question the ethics of requiring work at all. On the one hand, it came across very clearly in the interviews that participants strongly appreciate the opportunity to work for salary. As one woman beamed on the work site in Niger, “We have become like civil servants, with regular pay – we are like full citizens now!” The shift in perceptions of self-worth, participation in the wage economy, resilience and earned merit is accompanied by practical advantages as well. For example, the Niger work programs were designed to foster mutual assistance and social networks between the participating communities; this translates to a stronger consideration within the household for women with new access to social resources. These kinds of impacts, not easily captured in evaluations, suggest benefits beyond direct economic calculations.

On the other hand, however, when one considers the degree of poverty and vulnerability of these households, work programs can sometimes seem like a perverse extension of neoliberal logics requiring the poor to demonstrate their willingness to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Research found ample direct and indirect evidence of the kinds of activities that would worry WFP concerning overburdening: children, pregnant and nursing women, and elderly women, all theoretically excluded but contributing labour in practice. The researchers interviewed households with women and men who had worked so hard on projects that they become physically ill or injured, and because of this or other burdens associated with the work projects, were less able to assure the agricultural harvests that are the backbone of their survival.

That being said, the context of economic reality for these populations is important. As back-breaking as the work digging reservoirs might be, it is universally preferred to the alternatives. In Niger, women are so grateful for the work projects, as exacting as they

are, because without them they are obligated to migrate to serve as domestic labour, which is extremely hazardous to both their physical and social well-being, and often that of their accompanying children. In Chad, where everyone spoke of just how difficult pickaxing the concrete-like soils of the *haffir* had been, women nevertheless spoke of how much easier their lives were when they spent their days working on the project, because now they’re doing much more demanding physical work, and with much worse nutrition to sustain them.

This is not in itself an ethical absolution for potential abuses in work projects, but it is an important consideration. Ideally, one would impose absolute standards of labour rights, but given WFP’s limited resources and the informal nature of redistribution it is not clear how practical imposing such standards would be. And it is also important to recognize that workers on these sites are not just working for their salaries in kind or in cash, but on collective work projects that will produce long-term food security strategies, particularly for women who are likely to be the primary beneficiaries of the truck gardening projects that permanent water resources would make possible.

### 4.3 Reflections on WEAI

WEAI is the most comprehensive measure currently available to capture women’s empowerment and inclusion levels in the agricultural sector. Developed in 2012, it is increasingly used as an outcome measure of intervention efficacy and as a diagnostic tool to identify populations in need of support. Questions from the index were adapted into our own questionnaires to help assess its cross-cultural validity and triangulate against other qualitative and subjective assessments of empowerment. This section considers its validity as a result of reflecting on the fieldwork experience overall. The research instruments for this study (see Appendix B) incorporate many of the questions found in WEAI, but our qualitative approach sought to go deeper

than the instrument usually allows and to triangulate further to capture areas where the instrument may be misleading, need refinement, or require adjustment for particular Sahelian populations.

Empowerment is one of several aspects of development that everyone recognizes needs to be measured, but which is especially difficult to instrumentalize. In part because its history as a concept crosses several domains (see the literature review), and in part because it is an intrinsic experience, it tends not to be measured in any sort of comparable way, except perhaps at an aggregate level of country or region. WEAI has attempted to overcome these obstacles by focusing on aspects of agency rather than resources or well-being outcomes – as noted in the literature review, this is in line with Sen’s capability approach, and sets the index apart from most previous measures used in evaluation. This orientation is much more powerful in revealing the underlying dynamics of empowerment.

As a final note on the strength of the index, the “A” in WEAI stands for agricultural, but the indicators of production and resources can, with adequate research, be modified to consider other livelihood strategies. This is of particular concern for the Sahel, where so much of the population depends on pastoralism or diversified agro-pastoralist strategies. Pastoralist groups are underserved by development because of a combination of logistical and political forms of exclusion, and given WFP’s limited resources and targeting metrics, are unlikely to be identified as target populations even in situations where pastoralist women are highly vulnerable and critically disempowered. Care should be taken to adequately modify WEAI for livelihood strategies that are not purely agricultural, since the calculation of the current index will understate the autonomy of women not involved in agricultural decisions but who nevertheless hold considerable power over other spheres of household production. Wealthier households will misrepresent empowerment for

similar reasons, since agriculture is often less essential beyond a certain income threshold. By extension, for pastoralist women, or women who farm in households where pastoralism is the dominant strategy, as is the case in large stretches of the Sahel, the index will give a false impression of their relative empowerment if not adjusted away from an exaggerated focus on agriculture.

### **Freedom to act needs to be contextualized**

One of the key issues with WEAI as it is currently formulated is the way it calculates the values for index factors, potentially without adequate validity. Considering economic autonomy within the household as an example, the women in the communities visited in Chad would have a higher value for that DI than those in Mali. In principle, Chadian women can use the earnings from their own entrepreneurial activities as they see fit, whereas Malian women must ask their husbands’ permission. But a deeper look at the gendered responsibilities of women within the household reveals that this capacity remains almost entirely in principle and is seldom realized in practice. The reason for this is two-fold; one, that very few women interviewed in Chad are actually able to engage in profitable entrepreneurial activity; and two, that the economic obligations Chadian women face in their roles within the household entirely consume any disposable income they might be able to accrue, so that their financial freedom is in practice highly constrained. Taking these factors into account, Malian women might better represent a common-sense understanding of empowerment even where WEAI would fail to capture this distinction.

There is a similar problem that lies at the heart of the P4P manipulations the researchers found in Mali. There are several factors that would indicate relative empowerment of the Malian women in the P4P communities, but as it turns out, not having access to agricultural implements and labour at the moment they are critically needed renders some of the other forms of empowerment moot. As with the

Chadian example, then, it is not enough to consider empowerment factors independently, but in interaction, and with consideration of which factors are determining of actual behaviour change, and which are ineffective unless certain conditions are met.

The take-home message, then, can be summarized by two basic principles:

- A. WEAI or other index data should weight empowerment in practice more heavily than empowerment in theory.
- B. Financial decision-making power and autonomy needs to be placed within the context of obligation and social expectation.

### **WEAI is a powerful tool for capturing the micro dynamics of empowerment and gender dynamics**

The comparison of Malian and Chadian women's empowerment above broaches another aspect of empowerment that has powerful implications once generalized. The fact that women need to ask their husband's permission before making most household decisions is significant, but it needs to be understood in practice. There are two key problems here, and both follow from the discussion in the lit review. First, there is a tendency in assessments of empowerment to assume that gender and empowerment should be framed in the context of resource competition between men and women. Secondly, there is a related tendency to treat empowerment indicators as a simple binary: one either has or does not have decision-making power in the household, one either has or does not have permission to act without consulting, etc. Both of these tendencies might derive from thinking of empowerment in the same way that one thinks of economic qualities, rather than as a dynamic process that can be mutually reinforcing.

While these kinds of questions do provide real insights into women's empowerment, they may also

be dangerously misleading or incomplete. Gender norms in much of the Sahel do require that women seek approval from males (fathers, husbands, others) before taking action within households, and this does indeed speak to real limitations on female autonomy. Care must be taken, however, not to exaggerate its effect, nor to presume that this necessarily plays out in an abusive way. These norms are problematic in that they create the potential for women's oppression- and again, that is significant in itself, as so much of women's economic behaviour in the Sahel is based on risk avoidance- but the fact is that in practice, household interviews revealed households working together. Collaboration, rather than competition, was identified by households as the dominant model for understanding household behaviour, even when, as in these case studies, gendered economies are largely separate and operate at different scales.

There is operational risk in considering power primarily as a force constraining others rather than a force enabling action. In development, gender analyses seldom fully include considerations of men's roles and the performance of masculinity, and by this omission tend to simplistically relegate men to the role of antagonist or oppressor. In the context of the case studies, WFP and its partners should be particularly on guard against ready-made assumptions in circulation, which present Sahelian society as intrinsically patriarchal and inimical to women. Development is often framed as a process of cultural correction and consciousness-raising to liberate Sahelian women from patriarchal abuses, which may also be connected to reductionist attitudes toward Islam.

As an example: a large part of the justification for gendered analysis in development has been evidence that women invest household earnings in ways more in line with development objectives than men; one recent study that has been repeatedly referenced in IMF and World Bank documents found that women spend up to 90 percent of earnings on

health and education, as opposed to just 30-40 percent for men. In the Sahel, this line of evidence is often paired with studies (see, for example, Becker 2000 in Mali) showing that the largest proportion of male earnings is spent on luxury goods such as tea. But context matters here, and not just the cultural context that makes tea purchases an essential investment in social capital. The reasons why women or men allocate their earnings in the way that they do may vary tremendously from community to community, even if the behaviour is the same. The point here is not to question the veracity of any of the above findings. Rather, the point is that it would be dangerous to infer that a gendered trend in economic behaviour indicates some degree of homogeneity in the population - in themselves, statistics at the national or even regional level can be dangerously misleading on this subject. Similarly, one of the main findings that has emerged from work already done on gender in the Sahel is that men tend to prefer distribution in cash, and women in kind. But although this pattern held as a general principle in all the communities visited during this research, the rationales for individual preferences were diverse and complex. A woman's preference for food over cash does not necessarily indicate that she is more

likely to have control over its use, or more likely to be able to use the benefit for child nutrition, health, or education.

WEAI is a powerful tool to capture the micro dynamics of empowerment on several levels. It can provide a detailed and multidimensional profile at the individual level and can be disaggregated by domain or by heterogeneities in age and other variables in conjunction with gender to fine-tune the needs of target sub-populations. As suggested by WEAI's developers, to fully assess empowerment, it should be partnered with other qualitative or participatory methods, particularly in capturing program impacts rather than outcomes. The case study research suggests that this is most important for household-level decision-making, in which the complexities of negotiation and influence may not be adequately captured by yes/no questions. Specifically, the dynamics of health-care decisions for malnourished children in Mali, and the ways in which targeting women for distribution or work projects in Niger and Chad produce benefits for them within their households, would be difficult to capture by WEAI alone.



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# ANNEX

## Annex I – Literature Review of Empowerment

Women’s empowerment, as a concept, is appealing in large part because it feels so intuitive. In practice, however, there is considerable variation in understandings of the term itself, the indicators that can be used to measure it, and the kinds of inferences that can be made about someone who is or is not empowered. Is it primarily about the degree to which women control their resources, or is it rather about the capacity to act as one wishes? Should it be measured by its intrinsic or its instrumental value? Is empowerment a quality one either does or does not possess? If so, is it something inherent within women that needs to be fostered or activated, or is it something that may need to be introduced from without? Is it rather a continual process of self-determination? Does a woman’s empowerment mean the same thing as her independence? Can an “empowered” woman act as she wishes even within dependencies - choosing interdependence, for example? Put another way, how should empowerment be understood in relation to specific cultural and religious norms? This question must be answered at the level of individual communities within the context of particular histories, beliefs, and practices.

This section provides a brief overview of the origins and history of empowerment as a development concept, and how women’s empowerment has been conceptualized over the past 40 years. The path from the original formulations of empowerment discourse to the form that’s currently enshrined in development approaches is circuitous and long. Despite its current ubiquity, the term “empowerment” is seldom clearly defined, and “women’s empowerment”, even as it has gradually replaced the previous terms “gender equality” and “women’s status” in development documents, is particularly ambiguous in this regard. From one organization to the next, and even within large organizations like the World Bank, women’s empowerment may mean different things, or evoke different discourses and development philosophies, to different actors (Wong 2003). In the end, this means that the term has become part of a set of development terms that are highly fashionable, but relatively empty buzzwords in application (Bebbington et al. 2007). In the case of empowerment, this is lamentable, because in its original form it is a tremendously powerful concept. Looking at the various theoretical strands that have contributed to the term may therefore allow us to both reinvest it with meaningful utility, and to identify some of the pitfalls in practice associated with various limiting ways of understanding the term.

The evolution of “empowerment” as a term, like so many ideas in development, appropriates a radical concept out of a growing recognition that a paradigm shift is needed, but then re-translates it into a form that is unlikely to appear threatening to governments or financial institutions. Its original formulation draws from multiple inspirations, including such diverse fields as Freudian psychology; liberation theology; Global South feminism, and the Black Power movement (Cornwall and Brock 2005). Most importantly, empowerment derives from the ideas first laid out by Paulo Freire (2005 (1970)), who was principally concerned with finding real tools for the oppressed to become aware of, and thus be able to confront, their oppression. Empowerment is therefore the process by which subjugated peoples may develop critical political consciousness.

Freire’s ideas were powerfully influential in the Americas, and were particularly attractive to activists in the American social protest movements of the 70s. They only began to filter into the mainstream of development professionals in the mid-80s, as the failures of structural adjustment and austerity to provide meaningful change in the lives of the poor became increasingly apparent. At the same time, development workers were

growing increasingly dissatisfied with vertical hierarchy and measures of development as reducible to GDP or economic growth, and with humanitarian techniques that provided resources without building capacity. The 1980s also witnessed increasing criticism of top-down development approaches (see especially Chambers 1983). Empowerment was therefore one of several components that promised to introduce a social dimension to assessments of development, and reinstate attention to local rather than macro-level indicators. Anthropologists were an important part of this early movement to develop “endogenous” models of development, and many turned to Freire’s discourse of bottom-up consciousness-building to emphasize the active role of the poor in devising the possibilities for their future (Tommasoli 2004).

Global South feminism, and particularly the work of Sen and Grown (1987), helped to transition the idea of empowerment into the field of international development in the 1990s. In this field, it was strongly linked to women in development (WID). For subaltern theorists, Freire’s concerns with how to engage people in the processes and decisions that contribute to their well-being became a direct preoccupation with how to transform gender subordination in ways that also break down other forms of oppression (race, class, etc.). They argued that contemporary development models were failing to access meaningful versions of empowerment because their criteria were limited to factors of basic needs and economic independence. This was insufficient; for these theorists, meaningful empowerment necessarily entailed a radical transformation of the economic and sociopolitical structures that established and sustained inequities. Empowerment was therefore a pre-condition necessary for a much larger set of objectives: the kind of bottom-up, grassroots organization that activates local civil society to be able to effectively address deeper structural inequalities, eventually at the national or even international level.

For these theorists, then, focusing on bottom-up solutions in no way absolved the institutions that perpetuated inequalitarian social distribution. Poverty itself, and concomitant issues like food insecurity, they argued, are the products of a historical process of disempowerment that has excluded the colonized, and then the neo-colonized, from socioeconomic forms of power (Friedman 1992). Development should then, according to this reasoning, focus its energies on restoring power to civil society and away from the state and corporate interests that sustain processes of disempowerment (Sen and Grown 1987).

Another significant aspect of these early formulations of gender empowerment was a clear articulation of power as capacity, rather than a pure dominating force. Power, in this sense, is not a zero-sum commodity to be competed over between men and women, but rather a practical capacity (the power to accomplish goals) or capacity to overcome internalized forms of oppression, very much like Freire’s idea of “conscientization.”

### ***Instrumentalizing empowerment***

In their radical formulation, the empowerment principles of Freire and subcontinental theorists were unpalatable to many within development, but the language nevertheless began to filter into discussions of gender in the mid-90s. By the turn of the millennium, references to women’s empowerment had become a necessary gesture in development discourse; hence the 3rd of the 8 MDGs, to “promote gender equality and empower women”. In 2001, the World Bank’s World Development Report on attacking poverty similarly enshrined “empowerment” within the poverty alleviation discourse. Seeing the term “empowerment” so foregrounded by an institution that has historically avoided the discussion of power seems like an admission, at last, that structural inequalities are a root cause of poverty.

However, one must consider this version of empowerment in practical terms. In 2002, the World Bank put out a Source Book meant to help operationalize the concept of empowerment (Narayan 2002) that clearly draws from the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen in the 1980s. As the most influential form of

empowerment theory, Sen's work has served as the foundational principle for the capability-based indices that currently dominate development thinking. For Sen, like Freire and the subcontinental theorists that were primarily responsible for introducing empowerment as an alternative to welfare economics, a development focus on inequality must be based less on income and more on the freedom and opportunity to choose and achieve different outcomes. In *Development as Freedom*, Sen places the priority for human development on the "capacity to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value" (Sen 1999: 285). According to this reasoning, human capability, rather than human capital, should be the cornerstone of development objectives.

Since the 1990s, Sen's ideas about capability have been taken up not only by the World Bank, but as the main organizing principle for nearly all measures of empowerment. UNICEF, for example, measures empowerment in terms of access, awareness of the causes of inequality, capacity to direct one's own interests, and ability to act to overcome obstacles to reducing structural inequality (UNICEF 2015). The UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) similarly focuses on inequalities in economic and political participation and decision-making power. It is not hard to see why Sen's work has been so influential; a Nobel-laureate economist, his arguments speak to both the ethical and economic necessity of supporting the rights of the poor to self-actualization. By the late 90s, the increasingly strident calls for rethinking development given growing dissatisfaction with structural adjustment, debt burden and the poverty gap intensified with the financial crises in Asia and Latin America, so increasing pressure was felt to find new models that promised a change of course. Sen's work served this purpose well; while his conceptualization of empowerment does pose a direct challenge to some of the principles of neoliberal economics, in another sense it is more easily assimilated into development rhetoric than its more radical predecessors.

Sen's work is a critical response to the logic of austerity, which held that improvements in economic indicators such as growth were a necessary prerequisite to be satisfied before addressing wider sets of disparities in health, education, and forms of social exclusion. In focusing on capability rather than resource-based approaches, and through an expanded understanding of well-being and the rights of the poor, Sen argues that empowerment is both an intrinsic good and a development goal (1999). But because Sen's arguments are primarily focused on the agency aspect of the individual, his analyses seldom consider the historical or cultural specificity of capability, or how some kinds of capability are more than the sum of individual capacities. Freedom is a good primarily because it enhances the ability of individuals to help themselves; larger-scale changes, i.e. institutional and national reforms, all ultimately serve to create the grounds for the expression of this individual capacity through accountability, transparency, and impartiality. Although Sen himself has been a strong critic of neoliberal thought (1999), his consistent effort to place economic consequences in the hands of individuals (based on varying degrees of capacity) and indirectly, through governments (that either prevent or facilitate the expression of individual capacity) is susceptible to co-optation, since it is superficially compatible with the neoliberal impulse to place responsibility on the individual, and to justify a concomitant reduction in state powers on the grounds of poor governance (Navarro 2000). Once reduced to individual agency, the idea of empowerment can be de-politicized, divested of its original focus on collective struggle toward liberation, and repurposed to legitimize top-down development policies and programs.

In practice, then, the original ideas of empowerment have been largely stripped of their challenge to power structures on a large scale, and have instead become increasingly synonymous with individual capacity (Sardenberg 2008). In the West African context, this is perhaps most apparent in the distinction between francophone and anglophone terminology. "Empowerment" is most frequently translated into French as "*autonomisation*" (roughly, self-determination or independence); women's empowerment specifically may alternatively, although less frequently, be translated as women's "*émancipation*" (emancipation) or

“insertion” (inclusion). These terms fail to convey much of the original meaning of “empowerment”<sup>10</sup>. Rather, the disparity in terminology reflects a different colonial and post-colonial legacy, and an underlying distinct understanding of the nature of the problem and its possible solutions. French colonies within West Africa have inherited the most severe institutional legacy of gender inequality (Assié-Lumumba 2000). It is telling, for example, that human rights are still translated as “*les droits de l’homme*”. Through interviews with partners and community members about their own internalized understandings of empowerment/autonomisation discourse, the researchers came to the strong impression that these distinctions are more than linguistic and correspond to real differences in the understanding of empowerment as the justification for program design. The discussion below is an exploration of some of the possible repercussions of the difference in terminology, meant to provide a useful foundation for discussion of the key findings from the Sahelian case study at the end of the report.

### ***Empowerment as passive event rather than active process: empowerment for whom?***

A curious feature of the French terms commonly used as stand-ins for empowerment (*autonomisation, emancipation, insertion*) is that they all have connotations with the transition from childhood to adulthood, as if a woman’s path to self-actualization is similarly an individual journey, irreversible, and with a clearly delimited endpoint. The language transforms empowerment from what was originally a bottom-up, emergent process into a pre-determined state to be definitively achieved. Once empowerment is thus narrowly re-defined, the needs and interests of women appear fully knowable in advance, so that top-down approaches can impose the conditions to satisfy their interests without the need for participatory community design. *Autonomisation* and *insertion* happen to women; this version of empowerment is allotted rather than taken. Frequently, the rhetorical emphasis on bottom-up empowerment is not matched by the realities of a given development intervention, which upon closer examination serves primarily to reinforce the status quo and ignore the structural factors that perpetuate domination (Pereira 2008). This is what Calvès (2009) and others refer to when they describe the current evocation of empowerment as “vague and falsely consensual”.

This is ironic, since so much of the original enthusiasm for empowerment thinking came from a growing recognition of the need to give direct voice to women and the poor, and to engage their participation in a meaningful way (Wong 2003). Global South feminism specifically attacked contemporary models for assuming that the “insertion” (inclusion) of women was sufficient in itself, insisting on the need for radical transformation of oppressive structures rather than simply providing the right to participate in them. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005(1970)), Freire was driven by a similar awareness to develop well-elaborated models for activist participatory research, which have since been institutionalized under the PRA/PLA/PPA umbrella of participatory approaches that proliferate in current development models.

In practice, however, participatory approaches have often repeated the same biases towards dominant (male) interests for which feminists have always criticized development. PRAs may not adequately attend to the voices of the marginalized within society, and to women in particular. They are easily commandeered by local authorities and elites, and are inevitably influenced by relations of power and gender (Mosse 1994). Furthermore, the ideology of participation as defined by development organizations may be incompatible with local definitions, and may thus inadvertently foster the subordination of local populations (Green 2000;

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<sup>10</sup> The gap belies a wilful omission rather than a superficial failure of translation, as evidenced by the fact that this change in terminology necessitates a conscious avoidance of the most important contributions to theorizing power in the 20th century; namely, the work, in French, of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault.

Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004). Efforts to empower must therefore seriously consider who is being empowered, and whether it is done at another population's expense.

### *Empowerment as an individual capacity*

As noted above, many current treatments of empowerment fail to consider it in its collective forms. "Autonomisation", the act of rendering autonomous, ignores the possibility of interdependent forms of empowerment, and loses the original connotation of empowerment as a movement towards meaningful grassroots organizing. Furthermore, it runs the risk of homogenizing the disempowered, presuming one pathway toward individual self-sufficiency for all women. In their original formulation of empowerment, Global South feminists were at pains to recognize the diversity of power relations among women, and were particularly concerned with the intersectional nature of power as race, class, and patriarchy establish interacting and reinforcing inequalities. And the idea of individual autonomy, rather than empowerment, suggests that an empowered woman must necessarily be freed from male domination, whereas in practice gender relations may well be complementary and mutually supportive, particularly at the household level.

As suggested in the earlier discussion of how Sen's capability approach has been co-opted in current development practice, the real problem with considering empowerment as an individual capacity is that it simultaneously disavows the role of large-scale structural constraints (i.e., imposed by a global political-economic order) on the opportunities of the poor, and establishes a politics of responsibility that makes the poor accountable for their poverty. Women must actively transition from dependency to self-contained autonomy; failure to do so is ascribed either to their individual shortcomings, to poor local governance, or to culture nebulously defined. Framed in this way, the work of development may easily devolve into patronizing "sensibilisation" of populations aware but unable to transform their circumstances, or into forms of cultural imperialism. This reasoning also risks prioritizing programs that champion a very select number of exceptional women, who may be structurally advantaged to properly "perform" empowerment, rather than programs with broader orientation; this is particularly of concern in West Africa, where a small cadre of women often exercise exceptional levels of empowerment as economically defined (i.e. market women in Ghana, or *nana Benz* in Togo).

An empowerment limited to individual agency is easily reduced to its economic dimension, as the social and psychological dimensions of power drop out of the analysis. This explains, in part, the continued vogue in development for women's microcredit and microfinance programs, despite continued evidence [insert references, including Sharma et al. 2007 and your Mali paper references] that financial inclusion does not necessarily lead to women's social empowerment. Liberalization replaces liberation (Sardenberg), as the sign of women's transformation is reduced to their capacity for market participation (WB report 2001; Parpart).

Reflecting on these two basic distinctions between empowerment as originally conceived and as currently applied, there's a fundamental incoherence that emerges as the central paradox for empowerment today. What had been originally framed as a need to engage with the disenfranchised in such a way as to give them the awareness and tools to actively construct their own empowerment, has been reconfigured into a different kind of active engagement. Under the neoliberal politics of responsibility, active engagement is represented less by "voice", and more by evidence of economic viability and willingness to participate in market activity: in the past decade, programming attention has shifted toward this interpretation of what constitutes participation, so that the global poor must increasingly demonstrate their worthiness as recipients through entrepreneurship, self-help groups, microfinance initiatives, cash/food for work programs, etc.

## Annex II – Country backgrounds and site selections

### 1. MALI – Country Background

The Republic of Mali is a large, landlocked country in the West African Sahel that borders on Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Niger. It comprises 1.2 million square km, of which only 5.5 percent of the total landmass is arable land. The country can be divided into three main agro-ecological zones: the southern (semi-tropical Sudanese), central (semi-arid Sahelian) and northern (arid Saharan).

The Malian population is currently approximately 14.6 million with a median age of 16 years. The population growth rate is 3 percent, ranking 12<sup>th</sup> worldwide. The birthrate of 45.53 births per 1000 and the birth rate of 6.16 children per woman are both second worldwide. The Mande ethnic group comprises over 50 percent of the country (including the related Bambara, Malinke and Soninke groups) followed by Peul (17 percent), Voltaic (12 percent), Tuareg and Moor (10 percent) and Songhai (6 percent). The majority of Malians are Muslim (94.8 percent) and 35 percent of women are in polygamous households (CIA 2016a).

Bamako is the capital of Mali where 1.6 million people reside. Approximately 34 percent of the Malian population now lives in urban centers, a trend which is on the rise by rough 4.77 percent per year. In terms of health status, Mali has one of the world's highest rates of infant mortality with 104 deaths per 1000, ranking second in the world. Total life expectancy is 54.9 years. The rate of physicians per capita is very low at 0.08 per 1000 and the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 0.9 percent. Other major diseases include malaria and dengue fever, water and food-borne illnesses (especially Hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and diarrheal diseases), and respiratory illness, including meningitis (CIA 2016a).

In terms of economic activities, the majority of Malians (80 percent) are engaged in agriculture and fishing. Approximately 10 percent of inhabitants are nomadic, which is mainly in the northern region. The GDP of \$18 billion is ranked 138<sup>th</sup> worldwide. Major natural resources in Mali include gold, phosphate, kaolin, salt, limestone, uranium, gypsum, granite and hydropower. Cotton and gold exports account for 80 percent of total exports from Mali. There is a 30 percent unemployment rate and roughly 36 percent of the population lives below the poverty line surviving on less than \$1 USD per day. Mali remains heavily dependent on foreign assistance (CIA 2016a).

In the area of education, the average Malian spends 9 years in school and 33.4 percent of the population is literate. When disaggregated by gender, this figure is higher for men (43.1 percent) than women (24.6 percent). Households in Mali are large, with an average of 5.7 members, and roughly 9 percent of households are headed by women (CIA 2016a).

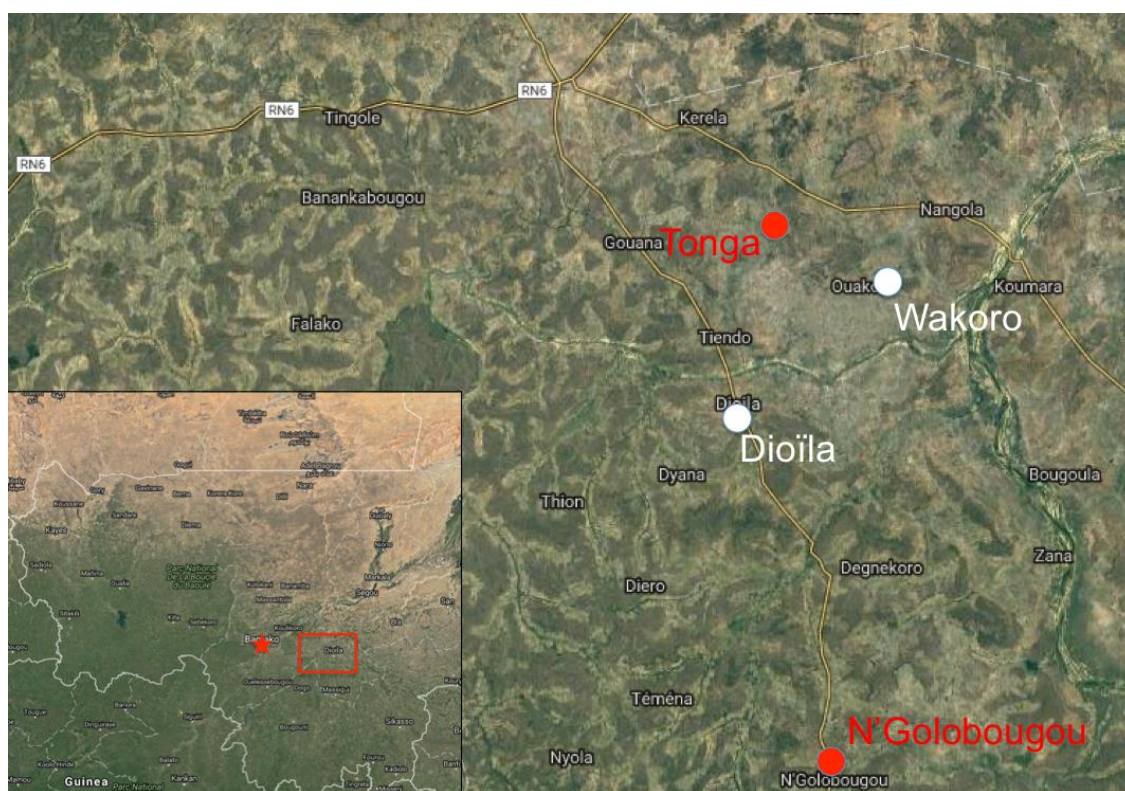
Recent political events in Mali since 2012 have had negative impacts on the country's economy and livelihood security at the household level. These include the 2012 coup d'état and post-coup insecurity that led to rebels pushing Malian military out of the northern region when Islamic militants took control of Timbuktu, Gao and other areas. Hundreds of thousands of Malians fled internally to the south and externally to Mauritania, Burkina Faso and other countries, which had a general destabilizing effect on food security in the wider region. In 2013, a military intervention allowed Mali to retake control of the northern region. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was elected president in August 2013 and has remained in power since.

### 2. MALI – Site selection

In collaboration with WFP staff in Bamako, the researchers selected the region around Dioïla, a town in the southeast corner of the Koulikoro region in central Mali. Dioïla is the seat of its administrative subdivision (*cercle*) and provides the regional hospital and main market for the surrounding area. Because the research



was primarily focused on the P4P program, the region selected is considerably more food secure than most of the country. Agriculture and agropastoralism are the dominant livelihoods, and cotton has been an important part of the local economy.



Two villages that participated in the market and hospital in Dioïla, and had active P4P farmers' organizations (FOs), were then selected. Both are Bambara with some Fulani households. N'Golobougou, a town of about 3,000 inhabitants, lies 40 kilometers from Dioïla following an unpaved road. It benefits from relative accessibility, a proliferation of projects and NGO activities, its own health center, and credit through a mutual savings bank. Tonga, with about 1,700 inhabitants including its hamlets, is 33km from Dioïla. The village is more diffuse and agropastoralist, with many households participating in animal fattening for resale as a major livelihood strategy. Less physically accessible, Tonga lacks a health center and has just one working pump in the main village. Unlike N'Golobougou, however, the population has its own small market for petty commerce, and access to several other sizeable markets besides the one in Dioïla. Compared to N'Golobougou, Tonga places stronger emphasis on gender and age hierarchy. In our community interviews in N'Golobougou, for example, women and casted villagers spoke forcefully and even contradicted the imam and village chief; in Tonga, women and young men were consistently spoken for and spoken over.

### 3. NIGER – Country Background

Niger is a landlocked Sahelian nation surrounded by Algeria, Libya, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Chad that comprises 1.267 million square km (CIA 2016b). One of the world's poorest and hottest countries, Niger has minimal government services and relies heavily on foreign assistance from WFP and other international donors. In 2015 Niger was classified as the world's poorest nation according to the UN Human Development Index. The country's natural resource base includes uranium, coal, iron ore, tin, phosphates, and gold. The Nigerien economy is mainly agrarian and subsistence-based, with agriculture contributing 40 percent of the nation's GDP. The recurrence of droughts has severely impacted the livelihood base of the country over recent

decades. Niger's land base is only 12.5 percent arable and 1 percent forest. In addition to severe drought, environmental issues of concern include deforestation, soil erosion, overgrazing, and threatened wildlife populations.

Among Niger's 18 million inhabitants, major ethnic groups include Hausa (53 percent), Zarma (21 percent), Tuareg (11 percent), and Fulani (6 percent). The majority of the population is Muslim. Niger's population is predominantly young with 68 percent under 24 years old, and 24 percent of children under 14 involved in some type of labour. School enrollment is very low (22 percent) with an adult literacy rate of only 19 percent overall (27.3 percent for males and 11 percent for females).

Health conditions in Niger are challenging and medical services are woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the population. Major diseases include malaria, gastrointestinal and respiratory infections, typhoid fever, and meningitis. Maternal mortality (553 per 100,000) and infant mortality (84.6/1000 births) rates are among the highest in the world and the fertility rate is very high at 6.76 children per woman. Life expectancy is 55.13 years (CIA 2016b).

While currently a politically stable nation under the government led by Mahamadou Issoufou, Niger faces persistent threats from insecurity in Libya, Mali and violent extremism from Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group based in Nigeria. The history of recent political instability in Niger (Tuareg rebellion from 2007-2009, political coups in 1996 and 2010) has limited foreign investment; this trend has been further exacerbated by economic impacts of Boko Haram's encroachment from the south (Nigeria) and east (Chad). Recent events in Libya have also affected the Nigerien economy and prospects for political stability. The fall of Qaddafi closed off a major remittance system for many Nigerien male labourers who migrated to work in Libya in construction and other unskilled wage labour jobs.

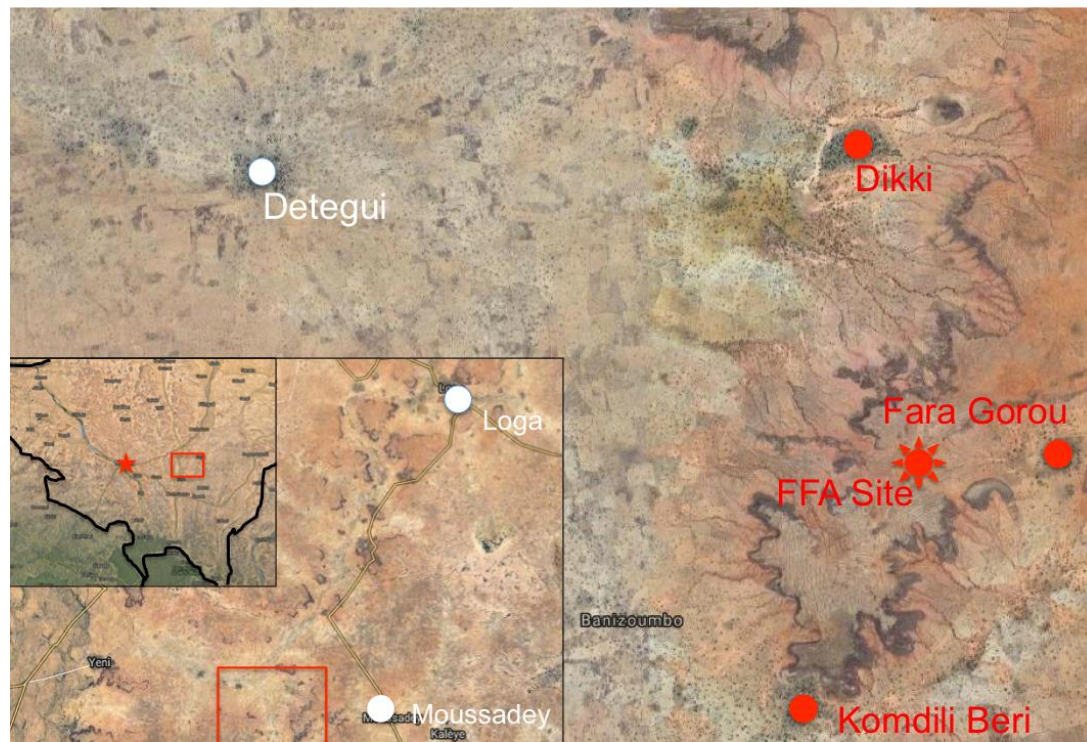
Key to contextualizing key findings in this report, the introduction of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed on the Nigerien government by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has had significant negative impacts on the Nigerien economy. The collapse of uranium exports in the 1980s left a large gap in state funding for development projects. In 1987 the first major SAP was implemented in Niger with terms that included increased taxation, wage freezes and reforms of market prices. Later programs introduced in 1994 further cut public spending (especially in areas of education and health), raised taxes, and imposed a major regional currency devaluation of the CFA XOF (CIA 2016b).

#### **4. NIGER – Site selection**

After discussion with WFP staff in Niamey, the researchers selected three communities that were joint beneficiaries of a single WFP Cash for Work program, a water retention project that lies between the three villages and employed work groups from each village. As with the other case studies in Mali and Chad, the research sought to prioritize villages that were receiving the same types of assistance and that participated in the same market, but had variation in local leadership, livelihood strategies, market access, land tenure practices, economic stratification or other parameters that might have ramifications for WFP program success or for gender relationships. Through discussion with WFP staff, three villages were selected that were collaborating on the same Cash for Assets program, rather than three separate Cash for Assets programs, in order to capture inter-village impacts of the program.

The three villages selected, Fara Gorou, Dikki, and Kombili Béri, are all small communities of approximately 1000 inhabitants each according to their village elders, although these numbers change dramatically throughout the year as members migrate out during the dry season and return for farmwork during the growing season. Located in the rural commune of Sokorbe in Loga department, the villages are about 40 kilometers north of Dosso, one of Niger's largest urban centers along the national highway linking Niamey to

Maradi and Zinder, and a critical hub for import and export from Benin and Nigeria. Despite their relative proximity to a major commercial center, these communities are surprisingly isolated due to limited funds and poor road infrastructure. Interviews on market participation were conducted with women and men in the villages and during the market day in Detegui, the most significant regional market. Local and easily accessible markets in Moussadey (near Fara Gorou) and Komdili Béri provide essentials, but for all three villages Detegui is the preferred market for anything beyond petty commerce, particularly large-scale purchases of livestock and grain.



The three villages also share in common an overwhelming dependence on migration as a livelihood strategy. As soil quality has gradually declined and harvest yields have become less certain over the past two decades, agriculture and agropastoralism are no longer sufficient to feed households in the region year-round. In all three villages, at least one member of every household migrates for at least part of the year. These migration patterns are gendered, with men predominantly traveling internationally to sell secondhand clothing in Benin, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, and women traveling in a separate stream to serve as domestic labour in urban centers within Niger. The Cash for Assets program initiated by WFP, in conjunction with the other forms of support WFP and its implementing partner provide, have been transformative for these communities primarily by reducing or eliminating the need for women's migration.

Extensive patterns of migration create a paradoxical state for these communities that is in fact increasingly typical of life in the rural Sahel: they are simultaneously deeply interconnected to far-reaching social networks, yet facing increasing political neglect within their home communities. In these villages, one might overhear children speaking Djoula or Fon as well as Zarma, and households can draw on extended relationships in multiple countries for news, market information, and remittances. Locally, however, these communities lack the basic political capital needed to negotiate the fencing in of their school courtyards to protect them from animals, basic repairs for their classrooms, or regular maintenance of the village pump.

## 5. CHAD – Country background

Chad is a large country (fifth largest in Africa and the largest landlocked country) that covers 1.2 million square km and shares borders with Libya, Sudan, Central African Republic, Nigeria and Niger. Although Chad is considered part of Central Africa, it is grouped with other Sahelian countries due to its similar climatic features. Three climate zones characterize the country: the Saharan Desert zone in the north with less than 300mm rainfall per year (47 percent of total area), the Sahelian zone (43 percent of area) with savannah vegetation and rainfall between 400-700mm per year, and the Sudanese zone in the south (10 percent of area) with rainfall between 700-1300mm per year.

Like Mali and Niger, Chad is a former French colony, and has been independent from France since 1960. The country has undergone significant constitutional reform in 2005 and the last election in 2016, which resulted in the re-election of Idriss Déby. Since 1996 Chad has been working toward decentralization of the government. In 1998 rebel activity began to destabilize the north and has recurred intermittently since that time. Following multiple attacks and bombings in N'Djamena in 2015, the government declared a state of emergency in the Lake Chad region due to activities of the terrorist group Boko Haram. The devastating economic impacts of Boko Haram's presence cannot be overstated.

The current population of Chad is roughly 11 million inhabitants. Population density is generally very low, with nearly half (47 percent) of the country's inhabitants residing on 10 percent of the land and the majority (76 percent of women and 70 percent of men) living in rural areas. The major ethnic groups are Sara, Arab, and Kanembou and the majority religions are Muslim (52 percent) and Christian (44 percent). French is the official language; other major languages are Arabic, Sara (in the south) among over 120 total languages spoken.

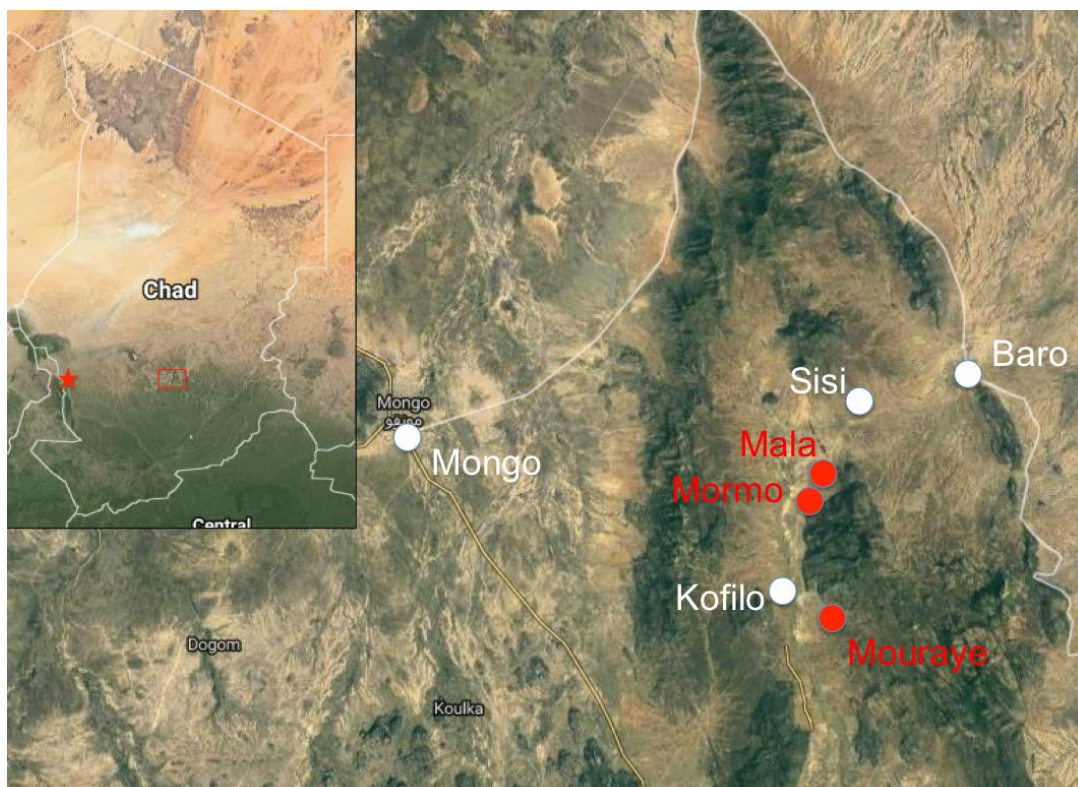
Economic activity is based on subsistence agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing. Chad also possesses petroleum resources that have been exported since 2004. Other resources include uranium, gold, kaolin, fish, limestone, sand, gravel, and salt. A typical Chadian household consists of 5.8 members and 22 percent of households are headed by women. Basic infrastructure remains lacking throughout the country with 92 percent of households having no access to electricity (99 percent in rural areas and 68 percent in urban) and 86 percent of households having no access to latrines. Education levels are also very low with 60 percent of women and 44 percent of men over the age of six having no level of formal education at all. In the region of Lake Chad in particular, 96 percent of women have no level of instruction. Literacy rates are 54 percent for men and 22 percent for women.

The fertility rate is 4.5 and life expectancy is 49.8 years. The infant mortality rate is the sixth highest in the world at 88.6 deaths/1000. The HIV/AIDS rate is 2.5 percent Underweight children under the age of five account for 28.8 percent. Major diseases include food and water-borne illnesses and respiratory illnesses, malaria, dengue fever, and schistosomiasis.

## 6. CHAD – Site selection

After discussions with WFP staff in N'Djamena, the research team selected Guéra for the study, a state (French: *région*) in the center of the country in the Sahelian agropastoral zone. Given the nature of the research design as a short and intensive period of data collection, the research sought to maximize available time in the field, but also to capture aspects of gender in relation to diverse livelihood strategies. Since Chad is currently surrounded on nearly all sides by political instability and conflict, much of the country posed a security risk to the research team that was deemed unnecessary to assume for this study. The researchers also sought some

degree of comparability with programs they had studied in other Sahelian countries, particularly Niger. With this in mind, the team selected three small villages that had been beneficiaries of WFP Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programs in the recent past. Mala and Mormo worked jointly on a water retention project (*haffir*), and Mouraye had built a small bridge over a culvert (*dalot*) in order for people and animals to be able to cross even in the rainy season. Prior to these projects, targeted members of all three villages had also been the recipients of WFP food distributions.



Mala, Mormo, and Mouraye are about 10-15 miles from the city of Mongo, the state capital, as the crow flies, but are separated from it by mountainous terrain. These communities lie on a narrow plain between mountain ranges (see map above), so that despite their proximity to an urban center they remain relatively isolated. As with the other case studies in Mali and Niger, the researchers selected three villages that participated in the same market, but with variation in access and degree. The villages in the valley depend on Baro and its market for most resources, particularly during the rainy season when vegetation blocks mountain passes to other routes. The mountains provide resources that can be collected and sold in market, particularly firewood, and in difficult months many households depend on them for wild plants to supplement their diet. Hunting is limited out of fears of repercussions from the state, since there is a wildlife preserve in the region around Abou Telfan. Unfortunately, life by the mountains also threatens agricultural and pastoralist livelihoods: fields may be overtaken by parasitic plants, and crops and livestock lost to depredation by wild animals. Wild areas are also used extensively as grazing area by Arab pastoralists, and a small community of pastoralists has sedentarized in the hamlets of Mouraye.

Proximity to, yet geographic isolation from, Mongo establishes the central tension for much of life in the valley, where communities and individuals seek access and visibility from a large range of Mongo-based NGOs, which have become increasingly present in the valley since 2008. Despite the relative accessibility of resources, poor soil quality and insufficient or erratic rains severely limit productivity in the region, and many households

suffer from severe food insecurity, devoting over 75 percent of their expenses to food. Mala and Mormo share a common language (Migama) and social composition; their language is only partially comprehensible to the Dambagne people who populate Mouraye. As occurs generally in the country, Chadian Arabic serves as the *lingua franca* between the villages.

Significant differences exist among the three villages with regard to livelihood strategies, social cohesiveness, and access to resources. Mala and Mormo are closer to the market in Baro, and have benefited from greater NGO support than Mouraye. The communities report recent census data for Mala and Mormo at around 2000 inhabitants, and Mouraye at 1250. Village hierarchy in all three villages grants primary authority to the village chief and imam, who each in turn rely on counsel from their deputies (*adjoints*) and village elders. Each village also has a “chief of the land” (*chef de terre*), who is a direct descendant of the founders and ancestors and holds largely symbolic authority as the safeguard of heritage and community identity, although his authority may be invoked in territorial disputes. In cases where conflicts are not easily resolved, the chief may convoke a committee of wise men. Although there are youth committees in each village, decision-making power at the village level very much rests within the male gerontocracy described above. Mouraye appears much more strongly organized and civically engaged than Mala and Mormo, whose chiefs have a limited degree of leadership. Mouraye also stands out in its relationship to and incorporation of Arab pastoralists, and the population notes that strong leadership has helped avoid the conflicts that often occur between farmers and herders in the Sahel.

## NOTES ON CHAD PASTORALISM

After oil, animal husbandry is the main national source of revenue for Chad, representing 53 percent of GDP and providing revenue, either directly or indirectly, to as much as 40 percent of the population. 90 percent of animal husbandry is based on nomadism and transhumance (*Recensement Général de l'Élevage* 2014). In spite of this, pastoralist groups are generally underserved by state and development programs because of a combination of logistical and political forms of exclusion, and are subject to particular vulnerabilities that other livelihood strategies do not face. With an estimated 94 million head of livestock (cows, goats, sheep, and camels) (*ibid.*), Chad has one of the largest pastoralist populations in Africa, yet one that remains critically understudied (cf. Food and Agriculture Organization 2001). On the national level, the livelihood strategy faces three main threats: climate change; regional instabilities that limit transhumance; and the economic impacts of Boko Haram. In the area around Mouraye, this last is a pressing concern. Beyond the vulnerabilities created by general instability in the grain market mentioned earlier, losing access to Maiduguri and other Nigerian markets cut herders off from their best and most reliable customers and radically devalued their animals. The largest male camels, which once sold for 400,000 to 450,000 CFA XAF (approximately 680-760 USD), will sell this year for 250,000 (approximately 420 USD); for cattle, the best bulls have dropped in value from 350,000 CFA XAF (approximately 590 USD) to 200,000 (340 USD). This shock was compounded by the instability in the naira; many pastoralists have been obliged to sell off their entire herds and temporarily sedentarize just to break even as the exchange rate for XAF has dropped relative to the Nigerian currency. The pastoralists interviewed worry that the devaluation of their herds may become permanent, a heavy loss for a group that keeps as much of its wealth as possible in animal form.

The relationship between the semi-sedentarized Arab pastoralists and the farmers in Mouraye is, by their own description, a remarkable exception to the usual one, which normally ranges from mutual distrust to outright hostility. Tensions between herders and farmers are at their greatest in April/May and again in October, when the north-south transhumance migration coincides with the planting and harvesting seasons, respectively. As climate change has pushed more herders south, the likelihood of conflict in these seasons has increased. In

Mouraye, the groups' coexistence is precariously maintained; many of the Arabs prefer to leave for Baro or for regions to the south once the rains come, and return after the harvest, in part to search for pasture, but also to avoid conflict from grazing on croplands. When conflicts do inevitably arise, the village chief is particularly capable of finding resolution without involving government authorities before the situation escalates.

The state has also created measures to minimize conflict between herders and farmers. Migration corridors have been marked off throughout the country; farmers who plant within their boundaries have no legal recourse if crops are damaged by herds. The state has also designated zones for watering animals to avoid water resource competition, another major source of conflict. Beyond these basic provisions, however, the government has largely neglected the needs of pastoralists, which generates considerable resentment among the Arabs of Mouraye. Chief among their complaints is the inadequacy of state veterinary health services; understandably, given that inadequate nutrition is the main cause of cattle death in normal years, and the primary factor responsible for weight losses and low production. Government agents pass through every six months for vaccination campaigns (at 100F per animal), but pastoralists are deeply suspicious of their honesty, believing that they are either adulterating the vaccine or reducing the dosage for their own profit. As a result, those with the means to do so choose to revaccinate their herds in Mongo. Nevertheless, anthrax and animal African trypanosomiasis (nagana) regularly decimate their herds. Herders complain to veterinary agents that their animals are sickly, but receive no training or advice.

The degree of state neglect is almost certainly exaggerated in the interviews, but it speaks to the level of frustration that pastoralists feel. Their resentment toward the government derives, underlyingly, from a sense that the social contract between pastoralists and the state has not been fulfilled. Arabs have had a permanent presence in and around Mouraye for at least the last 30 years, have signed contracts with the cantons of their grazing areas, and have developed a peaceable equilibrium with their neighbours through careful diplomacy. In response, the local government profits off them by exacting a surcharge on every animal transaction, but has not set up a single well designated for animals, has ignored their plight in difficult years even as they provide assistance to their neighboring farmers, and has failed to make needed veterinary supplies available. What support the state has provided, they believe, has been largely diverted to undeserving opportunists and corrupt lower-level politicians.

In interviews with male pastoralists, it is clear that selling animals, even in household emergencies, is a difficult decision. Livestock ownership is the absolute determinant of both wealth and social standing, not to mention cultural identity; those with fewer animals provide support to wealthier relatives who hire them to herd their livestock, much in the way that farmers with insufficient holdings are obliged to sharecrop in the lean months before harvest. Many remember the devastating droughts of the 1980s, when herds were so depleted that most families were obliged to sedentarize and very gradually rebuild their herds. Many of the households in the hamlets of Mouraye are the product of these crises, and have chosen one of two paths toward partial sedentarization. Where possible, they have maintained large herds but sent their animals in transhumance with adolescent boys during the agricultural season. More often, the intermediate strategy involves farming on one side of the mountain range, and maintaining smaller herds on the other.

Because pastoralists will sell animals only very reluctantly, women and children in their households often face a level of health and food insecurity that is not well indicated by a simple measure of the household's assets. Goats and sheep, rather than cattle or camels, are most frequently used to weather moments of crisis, such as health emergencies, crop failures or outbreaks of animal disease. Even when its members are malnourished, households prefer to sell an animal for grain or macaroni than to slaughter the animal for meat; in a normal

year children will eat meat only a few times a year, when animals are slaughtered at times of ceremonies or as a gesture of hospitality for visitors. Even in the case of a child's health emergency, women do not have the right to kill or sell a healthy animal, although an older animal without market value may be slaughtered for meat. Pastoralist households tend to avoid the health center in Kofilo until treatment is urgently needed, although they suffer heavily from malaria, jaundice, and the "hemorrhoid" epidemic.

The seasonal calendars of the partially sedentarized pastoralist men and women of Mouraye occur almost entirely in parallel: the larger and male-dominated economy centered around the buying and selling of animals; and the subsidiary, female economy based on the sale of milk. Women and men plant separate crops in the summer months: men millet, women sesame and peanuts. Livestock also give birth in the summer months, and women sell milk predominantly from July until the October harvest. Because milk production requires adequate fodder, the milk economy tapers off in the dry season when men travel with the herds, and women turn increasingly to supplementary activities such as the fabrication of mats and sieves. Women sell some milk locally in Mouraye and the surrounding villages, but primarily rely on sales in the market in Baro.

Women have considerable autonomy within the milk economy. At marriage, the wife gets a cow from the husband's family; even when the cow joins the larger herd, it and all its offspring belong entirely to her. Inheritance loosely follows shari'a custom, with sons receiving twice as much as their sisters, and only a small portion going to the surviving wife. However, women are generally allowed to retain animals they were able to purchase through milk sale profits. Unlike their agriculturalist counterparts, women do not appear to have greater decision-making power in the seasons of male migration, since there is always a male relative to maintain authority in the husband's absence.

The deep pastoralist mistrust of state institutions extends to credit and banking structures; most eschew even the cereal bank in Mouraye, and completely avoid formal credit in Baro and neighboring towns. In turn, credit associations generally distrust pastoralists for both practical reasons (i.e. the difficulty of securing guarantees from nomads) and racist perceptions of Arabs' untrustworthiness. Instead, most rely heavily on family relationships and highly extensive kinship and social networks, often extending across wide geographic ranges and even internationally into the Sudan. Pastoralist women, however, are effectively excluded from credit entirely. The WFP feeding program supported a large number of pastoralist households, since many qualified with malnourished children. However, none of the pastoralists were able to participate in the FFA program because they could not abandon their animals, although they were deeply invested in its construction, since the *dalot* permits them free movement of their herds year-round.

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## APPENDIX A: Data collection instruments (original French version)

Evaluation USF: Guide d'Entretien pour les Entretiens Communautaire	
Nom du Village :	Enquêteur :
Commune :	Date de l'enquête:
Arr./Sous-Préfecture :	Noms des hameaux :
Début Enquête (heure) :	Fin (heure) :
1. INFORMATIONS GÉNÉRALES DU VILLAGE	
<p><b>1.1. Situation géographique :</b> distance au centre urbain en km, état de piste, conditions du terroir, questions de définition (hameaux, terrains contestés avec d'autres villages, etc.)</p>	
<p><b>1.2. Historique du village :</b> Quelle est la date approximative de la fondation du village? Quelle est la famille fondatrice du village? Quels sont les groupes ethniques, les religions et langues parlées au village?</p>	
<p><b>1.3. Changements :</b> Grands évènements ou crises que le village a connu pendant votre vie (y compris échec des programmes de développement, crises économiques). Notez les changements importants dans les stratégies de vie menée par la population?</p>	
<p><b>1.4. Population du village:</b> Quelle est la population estimée au village? Pourcentage des femmes? Nombre des ménages?</p>	
<p><b>1.5. Organisation sociale :</b> Quelle est l'organisation sociale du village (hiérarchie, castes, prise des décisions, etc.)? Quelle est l'organisation sociale du travail au village (activités des hommes et des femmes au cours d'une année normale, identifiant les saisons des activités différentes)? Est-ce que cette organisation des activités du village a changé dans les 20 ans derniers?</p>	
<p><b>1.6 Biens du ménage :</b> Est-ce que les hommes et les femmes de ce village ont le même accès aux biens du ménage ?</p>	

<b>1.7. Services de l'état:</b> Quels sont les services de l'état qui jouent un rôle important dans ce village? En quels contextes est-ce que les habitants communiquent avec ses représentants?	
<b>1.8. Autres services :</b> ONGs et autres organisations qui jouent un rôle important au village. Décrivez.	
<b>1.9. Infrastructures de base :</b> éducation, santé, transportation, puits/forages, latrines, marchés (fréquence, proximité), etc.	
<b>1.10. Systèmes de vie :</b> Quelles sont les occupations principales? (Agriculture, élevage, pêches, petit commerce, artisanat, autres). Décrivez-les.	
<b>1.11. Migration:</b> Est-ce que la migration est une stratégie de vie ici? Combien de familles ont au moins un membre qui fait la migration?	
<b>1.12. Contraintes :</b> Quelles sont les trois contraintes principales au village? Solutions tentés et envisagés ? Au cours d'une année normale, quelles sont les périodes les plus durs ici?	
<b>2. INTERVENTIONS FONDÉES SUR LES MARCHÉS</b>	
<b>2.1 Marchés :</b> La population fréquente quels marchés ? Pour quels besoins ?	
<b>2.2. Accès :</b> Est-ce que les habitants de ce village ont accès aux sources de crédit ou d'épargne? Lesquels et depuis quand ?	
<b>2.3. Activités du PAM :</b> Que pensez-vous des activités du PAM et ses partenaires ici ? Qu'est-ce qu'ils font dans ce village ? Est-ce qu'il existe d'autres organisations qui font un travail pareil ?	
<b>2.4 PAM et genre :</b> Quel est le niveau d'implication du PAM chez les femmes comparativement aux hommes ?	

## USF – ETUDE DES ACTIVITES DU PAM – ENQUÊTE DU MENAGE

Nom Chef Ménage: Début Enquête (Heure): Fin (Heure): Date:

Identité du Ménage: No Téléphone: Village: Nom Enquêteur:

### A. Caractéristiques du Ménage

#### 1. Diagramme de la Parenté du Ménage:

Notez ci-dessus la structure du ménage. Indiquez sur le diagramme le chef du ménage et les personnes enquêtées. Renseignez-vous sur les ethnies, niveaux d'éducation, occupations principaux, scolarisation des enfants, et autres caractéristiques du ménage, puis résumez les points à retenir dans l'espace au-dessous. Notez en particulier s'il y a des membres du ménage bénéficiaires des programmes du PAM.

#### 2. Résumé des caractéristiques:

### B. Résidence et Habitat

**B1. Histoire de résidence :** *Est-ce que ce village est votre village d'origine ? Si non, racontez l'histoire de vos lieux de résidence.*

**B2. : Sources d'eau et d'énergie :** *Sources d'énergie pour la cuisine, types des sources d'eau utilisé et consommé, distance de pointe de collecte, et remarques*

### C. Biens du Ménage

<b>C1 : Biens du ménage :</b> <i>Quels sont les biens de grande valeur ou de grande utilité dans votre ménage (e.g. charrettes, bicyclettes, mobylettes, motos, moustiquaires et les outils de cultivation). Notez combien et qui a le droit de les utiliser ?</i>																				
<b>D. Activités quotidiennes des hommes et des femmes</b>																				
<b>Heure</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>HOMMES</b>																				
<b>Saison sèche</b>																				
<b>Hivernage</b>																				
<b>FEMMES</b>																				
<b>Saison sèche</b>																				
<b>Hivernage</b>																				
<b>E. Agriculture</b>																				
<b>E1. Pratiquez-vous l'agriculture ?</b> <i>Si oui, cultures pratiquées, superficies en ha, nbre de parcelles, cultures sous pluies, irriguées et autres....</i>																				
<b>E2. Régime foncier :</b> <i>Abondance des terres ? types de propriété des parcelles ; qualité des sols ?</i>																				
<i>Femmes et accès à la terre ?</i>																				
<i>Est-ce qu'il y a des parcelles qui sont louées ? Reçu en empreint ? Pratique du métayage ? Location de terres ? Emprunt de terres ?</i>																				
<i>Est-ce que toutes les parcelles sont entièrement exploitées (collectivement ou individuellement) ?</i>																				
<i>Peut-on acheter ou vendre la terre ?</i>																				
<b>E3. Appréciation de l'évolution des prix de vente de vos produits et de vos intrants :</b>																				
<b>F. Elevage</b>																				

<b>F1. Animaux :</b> <i>Pratiquez-vous l'élevage ? Si oui, quels sont les animaux que vous avez actuellement ? Notez les types et nombres et à qui ils s'appartiennent (femmes ?)</i>	
<b>F2. Vente/Achat :</b> <i>Est-ce que vous avez vendu ou acheté des animaux dans l'année dernière ? A quel prix ? Quelles sont les raisons de l'achat/vente ?</i>	
<b>F3. Morts :</b> <i>Est-ce que vous avez perdu des animaux dans l'année dernière ? Quelles sont les causes de mort ?</i>	
<b>G. Principales Sources de Revenu Monétaire (pour tous les membres du ménage)</b>	
<b>G1. Sources de revenu :</b> <i>Quelles sont les principales sources de revenue monétaire du ménage ?</i>	
<i>Est-ce qu'il y avait d'autres sources qui n'existent plus ? Citez-les et la raison du changement.</i>	
<b>G2. Emigration saisonnière :</b> <i>Est-ce vous ou d'autres membres de votre ménage font l'emigration saisonnière, quittant le village pour retourner chaque année ? Pourquoi et où font-ils l'émigration saisonnière ?</i>	
<b>G3. Envois de fonds :</b> <i>Recevez-vous de l'argent des membres de la famille qui habitent hors de la maison ? Si oui, combien avez-vous reçu cette année ?</i>	
<b>G4. Changement des revenus :</b> <i>Est-ce que vos revenus monétaires ont augmenté ou diminué au cours des 12 derniers mois ? Quels sont les facteurs qui ont contribué à la baisse ou à l'augmentation des revenus ?</i>	
<b>H. Prêts</b>	
<b>H1. Prêts actuels :</b> <i>Qui sont les membres du ménage qui ont une dette en ce moment ? Quel est le montant, taux d'intérêt, et durée pour rembourser tous les prêts du ménage ?</i>	
<i>Quelles sont les raisons des prêts ? Quelles sont les sources de ces prêts ? Y a-t-il des dettes en nature ?</i>	
<b>H2. Histoire des prêts :</b> <i>Solliciter d'un membre du ménage avec un prêt actuel l'histoire de ses prêts, citant les sources des prêts et l'utilisation des prêts. Qui dominant entre les AGR et les besoins de consommation ?</i>	
<b>H3. Stratégies de remboursement :</b> <i>Est-ce que vous avez prêté de l'argent pour payer une dette ? Avez-vous vendu quelque chose de valeur pour rembourser une dette ? Si oui, quel(s) objet(s) et à quel prix ?</i>	
<b>H4. Prêts aux autres :</b> <i>Avez-vous prêté de l'argent ou des biens à quelqu'un ? En espèce ou en nature ? Combien ?</i>	

<b>H5. Systèmes d'épargne :</b> <i>Avez-vous des moyens d'épargner de l'argent ? Citez-les. Quel est le montant de vos épargnes maintenant ?</i>	
<b>H6. Urgences :</b> <i>Où est-ce que vous trouvez de l'argent en cas d'urgence ?</i>	
<b>I. Alimentation du Ménage</b>	
<b>I1.</b> <i>Au cours des 12 derniers mois, êtes-vous parvenu à satisfaire tous vos besoins alimentaires ? stratégies adoptées ?</i>	
<b>I2. Production :</b> <i>Est-ce que votre production de l'année dernière a été normale, plus que normale ou moins que normale ? Pendant combien de mois votre propre production a-t-elle duré depuis la dernière récolte ? Si la production ne suffisait pas à couvrir les besoins du ménage, pourquoi ?</i>	
<b>I3.</b> <i>Avez-vous donné de la nourriture à d'autres personnes en dehors de votre ménage au cours de l'année écoulée ? (Expliquez)</i>	
<b>J. Stratégies de survie par rapport à la consommation alimentaire</b>	
<b>J1 : Stratégies :</b> <i>Quelles sont les stratégies de survie que vous utilisez le plus souvent pendant les temps difficiles ? Avez-vous vendu un objet de valeur pour subvenir aux besoins alimentaires ou autres pendant les temps difficiles ? Lesquels ? Si oui, décrivez la situation. (Puis : déscolarisation, réduction des repas, emprunt, vente des bétails ou parcelles)</i>	
<b>K. Problèmes de santé du ménage au cours des 12 derniers mois</b>	
<b>K1 : Maladies :</b> <i>Quelles sont les maladies les plus fréquentes dans le ménage ? Qui sont les membres les plus souvent atteints de maladies ?</i>	
<b>K2. Travail :</b> <i>Dans les derniers 12 mois, est-ce que quelqu'un dans le ménage a eu une maladie qui lui empêchait de travailler ? Si oui, pendant combien de temps ?</i>	
<b>K3. Traitement :</b> <i>Où cherchez-vous des traitements (centre de santé, marabout, féticheurs, autres traitements traditionnels, pharmacies, vendeurs ambulants, etc.) ?</i>	
<b>L. La prise des décisions au sein du ménage</b>	

<p><b>L1.</b> Pour chacun de ces cas, expliquez comment les décisions sont prises au sein du ménage. Qui est impliqué et de quelle façon ? Qui a le mot final ?</p>	<p>Recherche des soins médicaux ou autres pour les enfants ?</p> <p>Nutrition des enfants ?</p> <p>Vente des biens en cas d'urgence ? (terrain, animaux, etc.)</p> <p>Que faire avec du revenu gagné par le mari ? Par la femme ?</p>
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**M. CFW/FFA et ses impacts**

<p><b>M1. Participation :</b> Est-ce que votre ménage participe (ou a participé) dans les activités CFW or FFA ici ? Si non, pourquoi pas ? <b>[Sauter à la ligne M6].</b> Si oui, pourquoi ? Comment est-ce que votre ménage a décidé qui participera dans le travail ?</p>	
<p><b>M2. Heures de travail :</b> Décrivez le travail que vous faites. Quelles sont les heures et les saisons de travail ? Comment parvient le ménage à rattraper le temps perdu de vos autres obligations ?</p>	
<p><b>M3. Activités :</b> Que fait votre ménage avec les revenus du travail ? Comment cette décision est-elle prise dans votre ménage ?</p>	
<p><b>M4. Préférence :</b> Préférez-vous de recevoir de paiement en espèce ou en nature? Pourquoi ?</p>	
<p><b>M5. Impacts sur le ménage :</b> Qu'est-ce qui est possible pour votre ménage aujourd'hui à cause de l'appui de PAM qui n'était pas possible auparavant ?</p>	
<p><b>M6. Impacts sur la communauté :</b> Quelles sont les impacts principaux de CFW/FFW au niveau du quartier ou du village ?</p>	
<p><b>M7. Appréciation :</b> Qu'est-ce que vous aimez de cet appui ? Quels sont les aspects qui ne vous conviennent pas ?</p>	

**N. CT/DGC et ses impacts**

<p><b>N1. Ciblage :</b> <i>Est-ce que votre ménage était bénéficiaire d'un appui CT ou DGC ? Que pensez-vous du système de ciblage ? Si non, pourquoi imaginez-vous que votre ménage n'était pas choisi ? [Sauter à la ligne NX]. Si oui, qui est-ce dans le ménage qui a été identifié comme bénéficiaire direct ? [Indiquez sur la diagramme A1.]</i></p>	
<p><b>N2. Distribution :</b> <i>Expliquez comment vous avez reçu de l'appui. Combien et quand avez-vous reçu ?</i></p>	
<p><b>N3. Utilisations :</b> <i>Qu'avez-vous fait avec l'appui donné ?</i></p>	
<p><i>Dans votre ménage, comment est-ce que les décisions sont prises sur l'utilisation de soutien ? Qu'est-ce qui se passe au cas où il y a une différence d'opinion ?</i></p>	
<p><b>N4. Préférence :</b> <i>Préfériez-vous de recevoir de paiement en espèce ou en nature? Pourquoi ?</i></p>	
<p><b>N5. Impacts sur le ménage :</b> <i>Qu'est-ce qui est possible pour votre ménage aujourd'hui à cause de l'appui de PAM qui n'était pas possible auparavant ?</i></p>	
<p><b>N6. Impacts sur la communauté :</b> <i>Quelles sont les impacts principaux de CT/DGC au niveau du quartier ou du village ?</i></p>	
<p><b>N7. Appréciation :</b> <i>Qu'est-ce que vous aimez de cet appui ? Quels sont les aspects qui ne vous conviennent pas ?</i></p>	
<p><b>Avez-vous des questions ou des commentaires à ajouter?</b></p>	
<p><b>O. Mobilité du Participant (Femme)</b></p>	
<p><b>O1. Histoire de résidence :</b> <i>Est-ce que ce village est votre village d'origine ? Si non, racontez l'histoire de vos lieux de résidence. (Si oui, avancez à B3).</i></p>	
<p><b>O2. Liens de village d'origine :</b> <i>Est-ce que vous gardez contact avec votre village parental ? Vous avez l'habitude de les rendre visite ? Est-ce qu'il faut l'accord de votre mari avant de les visiter ? De les appeler ? Au cas où il y a des problèmes au sein de votre ménage, avez-vous accès au soutien de vos parents ?</i></p>	
<p><b>O3. Mobilité :</b> <i>Dans les douze mois passés, combien de fois êtes-vous sorti du village ? Vous allez aux marchés ou centres urbains avec quelle fréquence ? Qu'est-ce qui limite la fréquence de vos sorties ?</i></p>	
<p><b>O4. Durée hors village :</b> <i>Dans les 12 mois passés, combien des fois avez-vous passé la nuit hors du village ? Quelle était la durée de votre séjour hors village la plus importante ?</i></p>	



P. Communication (Femme)	Numéro Portable :
<p><b>P1 : Accès aux portables :</b> <i>Dans votre ménage, qui a des portables ? Avez-vous en accès pour envoyer ou recevoir des appels ? De l'argent ? Décrivez la façon dans laquelle vous utilisez les portables.</i></p>	
<p><b>P2. Possession du portable :</b> <i>Est-ce que vous avez le portable vous-même ? Vous l'utilisez de façon individuelle ou collective ? Est-ce que vous pouvez l'utiliser à tout moment ? Uniquement devant le mari ? Expliquez.</i></p>	
<p><b>P3. Renseignement sur le marché :</b> <i>Comment vous renseignez-vous sur le marché ? Sur les prix et disponibilité des produits ? Sur le dynamisme du marché et les aspects sociaux ? Quel genre d'information avez-vous l'habitude de trouver par portable ?</i></p>	
<p><b>Participez-vous directement aux activités de marché ? [Si oui, passez au MV partie C]</b></p>	

## Evaluation USF: Guides d'Entretien pour les Groupes Focus

Nom du Village: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Participants du Groupe Focus FFW/CFW

Prénoms et Noms	Age	Occupation Principale	Bénéficiaire d'autre(s) programme(s) du PAM ? (oui/non) Si oui, précisez.	Sait lire et écrire ?	Numéro de Téléphone
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

*Début Enquête (heure):* \_\_\_\_\_ *Fin (heure):* \_\_\_\_\_ *Nom(s) Enquêteur(s):* \_\_\_\_\_

1. Guide d'Entretien: Groupements OP	
1.1. L'économie du village	
<b>1.1.1. Contraintes</b> : 3 contraintes principales au village?	
<b>1.1.2. AGR</b> : Quelles sont les activités qu'on mène actuellement au village afin de générer des revenus ? Quelles activités est-ce que vous voulez entreprendre mais ne pouvez pas ? Qu'est-ce qui vous empêche d'entamer ses activités ( <b>Puis</b> : manque de temps libre, manque d'argent, manque de mains d'œuvre) ?	
<b>1.1.3. Temps difficiles</b> : Au cours d'une année normale, quels sont les périodes que vous trouvez les plus difficiles ? Est-ce qu'il y a des périodes de l'année dans lesquelles vous avez tendance à prendre des prêts en espèce ? En nature? Pour quelles raisons ?	
<b>1.1.4. Crédit</b> : Est-ce que vous avez accès aux sources de crédit ? Si oui, citez-les. Avez-vous utilisé d'autres sources de crédit? Si oui, quand et pour quel besoin ? Existents-ils d'autres systèmes de crédit ici auquel vous n'avez pas accès ? Si oui, pourquoi pas ?	
<b>1.1.5. Groupements d'épargne</b> : Y a-t-il parmi vous des individus qui font partie des tontines ou groupements d'épargne? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?	
<b>1.1.6. Autres organisations</b> : Existents-ils des autres groupements au village? Quelles activités mènent-elles? Est-ce qu'il y a des individus parmi vous qui sont membres?	
<b>1.1.7. Travail des femmes</b> : Constatez-vous que le travail des femmes au village a augmenté depuis les cinq ans derniers? Est-ce qu'il a diminué ? Comment expliquez-vous ce changement?	
1.2. FFW/CFW	
<b>1.2.1. Participation</b> : Pourquoi est-ce que vous avez décidé de participer au programme CFW/FFW ? Comment est-ce que votre ménage a sélectionné les individus qui participeraient au travail.	
<b>1.2.2. Travail</b> : Décrivez le travail que vous faites. Comment est-ce que vous arrivez au site de travail ? Quelles sont les heures et les saisons de travail ?	

<b>1.2.3. Partage de travail :</b> <i>Comment est-ce qu'on divise le travail par genre ? Est-ce qu'il y a autres divisions par communauté ou autre ? Comment assurer que la division du travail est juste ?</i>	
<b>1.2.4. Temps:</b> <i>Comment parvient vos ménages à rattraper le temps perdu de vos autres obligations ? Qui prend la relève ?</i>	
<b>1.2.5. Activités :</b> <i>Que fait votre ménage avec les revenus du travail ? Comment est-ce que cette décision est-il prise dans votre ménage ?</i>	
<b>1.2.6. Forme de paiement :</b> <i>Préfériez-vous de recevoir de paiement en espèce, en nature, ou en coupon ? Peut-être il y a une combinaison de formes de paiement qui vous convient ? Pourquoi ?</i>	
<b>1.2.7. Contraintes:</b> <i>Sans l'appui de CFW, FFW quelles sont les stressés économiques que vous affrontez ? Sont-ils les mêmes pour les hommes aussi bien que les femmes ? Est-ce que l'appui de PAM a su répondre à ces contraintes?</i>	
<b>1.3. Impacts et avenir de CFW/FFW</b>	
<b>1.3.1. Impacts de CFW/FFW au sein des ménages :</b> <i>A votre avis, quels sont les impacts les plus importants de CT/DGC au sein des ménages ici ? Pour les femmes ? Pour les hommes ?</i>	
<b>1.3.2. Impacts de CT/DGC sur les relations sociaux au ménage :</b> <i>Est-ce que l'appui de PAM induit des effets sur les relations dans les ménages ? Ex : relations époux/épouse ; relations entre coépouses, relations entre chef de ménage et membres de sous-ménages ?</i>	
<b>1.3.3. Impacts de CT/DGC au niveau communautaire :</b> <i>A votre avis, quels sont les impacts les plus importants de CT/DGC au niveau communautaire ?</i>	
<b>1.3.4. Pérennité :</b> <i>Comment voyez-vous les impacts de longue terme de CT/DGC ? Si le soutien disparaîtrait quelles seront les effets de long terme ?</i>	
<b>1.3.5. Avis :</b> <i>A votre avis, qu'est-ce qui marche très bien au groupement OP ? Qu'est-ce qui ne marche pas bien ?</i>	

