

Project evaluation report

Evaluation details	
Project title	Support to food, seeds and tools distributions in Markounda and Boguila sub-prefectures
Organisation	Action contre la Faim (ACF)
Sector	Food security
Project duration	30 April – 31 July 2007
Project budget (ERF)	\$100,000
Place	Markounda and Boguila sub-prefectures
Dates of evaluation	2 – 3 October 2008
Evaluation team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicolas Bokossy, FAO • Vincent Boulardot, DRC The French Cooperation had planned to participate in the evaluation but was prevented from doing so at the last minute for security reasons
Examined documents	Project document, work plan, final narrative report

Context

Briefly describe the context in which the project was implemented, including the local security and political context, the displacement situation, and the assessed needs of the people in the area.

Armed conflict, insecurity and violence in Markounda and Boguila sub-prefectures in Ouham in the northwest have forced thousands of people to flee their villages, 14,000 in Markounda sub-prefecture alone. For a long time, humanitarian presence was very low, apart from COOPI and the ICRC carrying out distributions of food and non-food items in 2006. The arrival of ACF in Markounda in 2007, in addition to MSF-Holland, has helped tremendously to assess and respond to the needs of vulnerable people affected by conflict in this area.

Results

Compare the results (outcomes and impact) on the ground with the 'expected outcomes' and indicators in the project sheet and work plan. If possible, add summaries.

The project's main objective was to reinforce the capacities of ACF's sub-office in Markounda to facilitate the distributions of food, seeds and agricultural tools to 15,000 people. The ERF project document and the work plan list the project objectives.

Reinforce the logistics capacities to render ACF's sub-office in Markounda operational

ACF constructed a 120m² warehouse for food and non-food items and renovated buildings to use them as office space. After visiting these buildings in Markounda, the evaluation team considers this objective as fully achieved.

Distribute WFP-food rations to 15,000 displaced people and residents in Markounda and Boguila sub-prefectures

The objective of the food distributions was not only to provide nutritional support but also to protect distributed seeds. The distribution was done in four phases, reaching 13,549 people in 47 villages. Food rations included maize flour, legumes, CSB (corn-soya blend), vegetable oil, sugar and salt. During the fourth phase of the distribution, only 5,066 people received the full ration, 5,196 received rations without salt and others only received sugar and oil. The evaluation team found that overall 13,549 people had received food, about 90% of the initially planned 15,000 people. The evaluation team considers this achievement highly satisfying given the difficult accessibility of the area – as witnessed during a visit to the Maïtikoulou 92km northeast of Markounda – as well as some security constraints.

Distribute 3,000 agricultural tools kits and seeds to 3,000 families

Agricultural kits included a hoe and a machete, and were distributed to 2,811 families. Local authorities at one point stopped the distribution claiming that these tools could be used as deadly weapons in case of inter-communal tensions. ACF negotiated with the authorities but could not convince them to reverse their decision. Nonetheless, the objective has been achieved at 94%. The evaluation team considers this equally satisfying as the distribution of the remaining 189 kits could not be carried out for reasons independent of ACF.

The distribution of seeds reached 3,003 families. The seeds rations included 10kg of maize and 5kg of sorghum seeds per family. Maize seeds were specifically included to increase nutritional diversity as people in the area rarely planted it before. Unfortunately, 45% of the maize seeds were eaten during an interruption of the food distribution (see chapter on constraints below). Nonetheless, with the remaining seeds, families produced a sufficient amount of food, according to interviews with villagers who had received maize seeds in 2007. According to the ACF team, maize seeds were also distributed with a view to put in place a community-based cereal bank. Unfortunately, 70% of families kept most of their maize harvest as food and seeds stocks, and 30% sold most of their harvest on markets in neighbouring Chad. Of the stocked seeds, insects befell about 60%. The sorghum harvest was less successful as birds ate parts of the plants on the fields before they could be harvested, according to ACF's post-harvest follow-up study. Of the distributed sorghum seeds, families used about 20% for consumption. With regard to seeds distributions, the objective has been reached at 100%, with 3,003 families (about 15,015 people) reached.

Constraints

What constraints were faced during the implementation of the project, including security and logistical constraints or constraints internal to the organisation (lack of staff, etc.)? Was the project duration extended as result? If yes, was it justified?

ACF encountered several difficulties stemming from insecurity, inaccessibility and interference from local authorities during the implementation of this project. A WFP truck bringing food rations to Markounda turned over at a bridge near the town of Bodjomo, losing all its cargo. The resulting interruption of the food distribution forced people to eat part of the distributed seeds.

Impact of ERF funding

What impact did ERF funding have on the overall programme activities of the organisation? Were ERF-funded activities compatible to activities of other organisations in the same area? Were these well coordinated?

In addition to of MSF-Holland, the presence of ACF in Markounda has greatly contributed to the increase in humanitarian presence in a remote area that directly borders Chad. With ERF-funds, ACF

constructed a warehouse to secure and conserve food stocks and provided the necessary logistics support for food, seeds and tools distributions. According to villagers who benefited from the distributions, their living conditions have improved. One mother of 11 children said that all her family had fled to Chad but after she had received a food ration, seeds and tools, she could bring them back. She then used the harvested maize to exchange it for school materials enabling her children to resume their education. She also emphasized that thanks to ACF, agricultural production had resumed in Markounda and Boguila, and that villagers had benefitted from ACF training on agricultural techniques after the distributions. This project was thus a pilot phase to address an emergency situation, which was followed by other, more long-term programmes. During this first phase other needs were also evaluated, e.g., with regard to water and sanitation, and follow-up action was planned. (ACF's water and sanitation programme is also partly funded by the ERF.) Continuing activities in the food security sector include pilot fields to demonstrate the use of sesame and cassava that is resistant to cassava mosaic disease (CMD, a plant disease). Seeds distributions have also enabled farmers to multiply seeds for the 2008 agricultural season. Overall, the evaluation team found that this project had a very positive impact on improving the living conditions of conflict-affected people in the area in the short- and, with ACF's ongoing activities, in the long-term.

Conclusion

What is the evaluation team's overall conclusion? Was ERF funding helpful? Was the project implemented according to the plan? Did it have an impact on the ground? What are the lessons learnt?

The project responded to the urgent needs of conflict-affected people in the Markounda and Boguila area. The distribution of agricultural kits and food contributed to reducing food insecurity and to restart agricultural production. The introduction of maize in the area has had a particularly positive impact. Farmers should have been better trained on the production of sorghum as the post-harvest study showed that many did not harvest the plants on time. The training of some farmers by ACF to follow-up with and train others, especially in remote villages on the Maïtikoulou – Markounda road, will help to address this issue. On this road, 37 out of 47 villages are still empty as their inhabitants are too scared to return home. Taken into account this difficult situation and the delicate proximity to the border with Chad, an increase in the number of humanitarian organisations working in other sectors would be welcome.