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FINAL PROGRAM REPORT

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Figure 1 Women's Vegetable Garden at Kewala, photo taken by Mr. Dente

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It would have been impossible to implement the program without the support and cooperation of program beneficiaries and communities, local authorities and other humanitarian partners who participated in the program implementation. We are grateful for the opportunity to work and learn together.

Affirmation

This report is the product of team work among World Vision Mauritania staff with the support of partners who participated in the implementation and monitoring of KEAP activities. Except as acknowledged by the references to other authors and publications, this report consists of our own work, undertaken to document and share with our donors and other stakeholders what has been learned and achieved through the interventions implemented under KEAP. The data described in the report was collected through general onsite program monitoring, post distribution monitoring (PDM), and market based food security monitoring, Households Dietary Diversity Scale (HDDS) and Household Hunger Scale (HHS) surveys. The data remain the property of the communities.

Acronyms

| | | |
|--------|---|---|
| ADIG | - | Association pour le Développement Intégré du Guidimakha |
| ADP | - | Area Development Program |
| CBFV | - | Cash Based Food Voucher |
| CDPP | - | Community Disaster Preparedness Plan |
| CIDA | - | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CODEP | - | Commission Departmental |
| COVACA | - | Community-Owned Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment |
| CSA | - | Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire |
| DMC | - | Disaster Management Committee |
| DRR | - | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| FPMG | - | Food Program Management Group |
| GoM | - | Government of Mauritania |
| EFSP | - | Emergency Food Security Program |
| FFP | - | Food for Peace |
| FMNR | - | Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration |
| HDDS | - | Household Dietary Diversity Score |
| HH | - | Household |
| HHS | - | Household Hunger Scale |
| IGA | - | Income Generating Activities |
| KEAP | - | Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program |
| LMMS | - | Last Mile Mobile Solution |
| MBFSM | - | Market Based Food Security Monitoring |
| MDR | - | Ministere du Developement Rural |
| MT | - | Metric Ton |
| NCE | - | No Cost Extension |
| PAL | - | Pre-Authorization Letter |
| PDM | - | Post Distribution Monitoring |
| UM | - | Ouguiya (local currency) |
| USAID | - | United States Agency for International Development |
| USG | - | United States Government |
| VFW | - | Voucher for Work |
| WARO | - | West Africa Regional Office |
| WASH | - | Water and Sanitation, Hygiene |
| WV | - | World Vision |
| WV US | - | World Vision United States |

Introduction

The 2010 - 2011 growing season in the Sahel region was affected by a prolonged drought which adversely impacted crop and livestock production. The drought conditions, combined with increased prices of imported cereals and transportation costs, cyclic and chronic household (HH) debt, and depletion of livestock¹, triggered a food crisis in Mauritania. In November 2011, the Government of Mauritania (GoM) projected a decrease of 75% in food production and estimated that 700,000 individuals were at risk of being food insecure. Consequently, the government declared a food crisis in the country and appealed for urgent assistance the same month.

Following this declaration, World Vision carried out a food security assessment in selected areas of Mauritania which revealed many villages in which farmers did not plant at all, or replanted but harvested only about 30% of the previous year's harvest. The assessment also revealed deficits in fodder production which is critical for the survival of pastoral communities.² This underscored the need for an emergency intervention to assist vulnerable households most of who were already suffering from the effects of the food crisis. It is against this background that an Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP), the Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP), was proposed to assist some of the worse affected households in the five communes of Kankossa District through cash-based food vouchers designed to reflect an illustrative basket of food commodities that would meet about 50% of household daily energy requirements.

The Pre-Authorization Letter (PAL) for KEAP was issued by USAID Office of Food for Peace (FFP) on February 29, 2012 and program implementation began in March 2012. In the first phase (March 1 – October 31, 2012), the program targeted 4,070 vulnerable HHs in 119 villages selected in collaboration with the CODEP, the government's relief structure. The beneficiary HHs had a population of 30,702 as against an estimated 24,420. In the second phase (November 1, 2012 – October 31, 2013), the program beneficiaries were adjusted slightly upwards to 4,323 HHs (with about 25,938 individuals) in 147 villages in an effort to reach more vulnerable people. This number included 3,739 HHs which benefitted from the program in phase I while the remaining 584 were new beneficiaries (331 being replacements for 306 original beneficiary HHs which moved to new locations outside the program area and 25 households the heads of which were deceased before the start of phase II of the program).

Even though the focus of KEAP was to provide emergency food assistance, especially in phase I, the use of cash-based food vouchers was an innovation in the context of Mauritania. The system of linking voucher distributions to community assets' creation, rehabilitation and protection was a creative means of addressing some community felt needs while ensuring targeted households received food to meet part of their daily energy requirement. The second phase which built on the achievements and lessons from phase I emphasized livelihood recovery and community resilience building. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was therefore integrated as a critical component for reducing chronic vulnerability. This made a significant contribution to communities' capacity to minimise their vulnerability to hazards within their context. By working with the communities to strengthen their structures and systems around

¹ WFP and Commissariat a la Sécurité Alimentaire report on Mauritania – July 2011 – Bulletin de suivi de la sécurité alimentaire

² WV January 2012: WAR Food Security and Nutrition Rapid Assessment Final Report

vulnerability assessment and mitigation, the program laid a good foundation on which beneficiary communities can build in order to better cope with future shocks.

Another significant contribution of the program was the transfer of relatively new techniques and approaches to resilience building through some of the VFW projects implemented. The construction of half-moons to check erosion and enhance water and soil conservation for agricultural or pastoral purposes as well as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) techniques, for instance, have added to the stock of knowledge of the communities. The resultant capacity transfer has also empowered the personnel of government technical services, especially CSA and MDR, who supported the supervision and monitoring of the VFW projects. The likelihood of replicating some of the techniques in other communities is therefore high. This has also provided a good basis for sustaining the achievements of the program by the communities and other partners who participated in the program.

The program also incorporated some gender dimensions and ensured that women were empowered through fair representation on committees, capacity building in business skills for appropriate participation in Income Generating Activities (IGAs), especially vegetable production and marketing, and a conscious targeting of female-headed HHs as program beneficiaries (1,936 out of 4,070 in phase I and 2,730 out of 4,323 in phase II). This has increased the confidence of women and enhanced their contribution in household and community resilience building.

In line with the requirements for FFP sponsored programs, the design and implementation of KEAP ensured that fundamental principles were upheld as indicated below:

- In the process of providing food and other forms of assistance to beneficiaries, the program respected local customs and other socio-cultural arrangements and avoided doing harm to beneficiary households and their communities through this assistance. Also, the impact of the food assistance on the local economy was monitored.
- The interests of the beneficiaries were kept at the centre of the program design and implementation by ensuring appreciable consultation with local authorities and community representatives, and providing mechanisms for feedback.
- The program strived to maintain the highest standards of human rights and dignity in the provision of assistance to beneficiaries. Access to food was provided to those in greatest need in an impartial manner, without bias or prejudice, as indicated by regular PDM reports. Accountability and feedback mechanisms were established to receive and address all concerns.
- The VFW approach used by the program enabled communities to find some durable means to meeting their own needs in terms of reducing chronic vulnerability.

This report describes the activities implemented by World Vision Mauritania throughout the entire life of the project and the achievements made towards the program goal and planned targets, and how these achievements have contributed to saving lives and strengthening the resilience of beneficiary households and communities.

1.0 Program Profile

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Program Title | Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP) |
|---------------|--|

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Country and Region | Mauritania, West Africa |
| Program Number | Award # AID-FFP-G-12-00023 |
| Program Location | Five communes in Kankossa District, Assaba Region (Sani, Blajmil, Hamoud, Tenaha and Kankossa) |
| Program Goal | In response to the Sahel food crisis, WV Mauritania proposed the Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP) to contribute to the reduction of the effects of the food crisis on vulnerable households (Phase I), to initiate early recovery and support longer-term community resiliency (Phase II) in Assaba Region |
| Program Objectives | <p>Objective 1: To provide emergency food assistance to vulnerable households through CBVF</p> <p>Objective 2: To create and rehabilitate community assets to enhance resilience through voucher for work (VFW) interventions. CBVF would provide the most vulnerable households with access to food assistance</p> <p>Objective 3: To reduce chronic vulnerability of affected populations</p> <p>Objective 4: To improve livelihoods recovery for affected populations</p> |
| Target Population | 4,070 HHs (approximately 24,420 individuals) in Phase I 4,323 HHs (approximately 25,938 individuals) in Phase II |
| Start Date of Award | March 1, 2012 |
| Number of Extensions | No-Cost Extension (November 1 - 30, 2013) |
| Estimated Life of Program | 20 Months (with 1 month NCE) |
| Reporting Period | March 1, 2012 - November 30, 2013 |
| Total USAID/FFP Budget | USD \$ 5,365,849 |
| Funding Sources | USAID/FFP |
| | World Vision Cost Share |

2.0 Progress Towards Goal

The goal of the Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP) was to address the food needs of 4,070 vulnerable households (approximately 24,420 individuals) in the five communes of Kankossa District in Assaba Region of Mauritania in response to food crisis caused by drought and compounded by other economic factors. In the second phase, the

program sought to reduce chronic vulnerability of 4,323 targeted HHs (approximately 25,938 individuals) and their communities through livelihood recovery interventions.

In pursuance of the program goal, different activities were implemented in line with the following strategic objectives proposed in the first phase of the program (KEAP I):

- To provide emergency food assistance to vulnerable households through Cash Based Food Vouchers (CBFVs)
- To create and rehabilitate community assets to enhance resilience through Voucher for Work (VFW) interventions.

In the second phase (KEAP II), the focus of the program was on the following objectives:

- To reduce chronic vulnerability of affected populations
- To improve livelihoods recovery for affected populations

2.1 Provision of Emergency Food Assistance

The provision of food assistance and restoring nutritional status were at the centre of KEAP. In both phases, the program significantly contributed to enhanced access to food by providing 15000 UM (approximately US\$54.55) per HH per month in food vouchers. Through 13 rounds of voucher transfers and the movement of food commodities closer to distribution centres by contracted vendors, food was made more accessible to program beneficiaries. Approximately 3,087.52 MT of food commodities were purchased by beneficiary HHs using CBFVs. Even though the food assistance was meant to meet about half of the household dietary needs, some beneficiaries indicated in the final evaluation that it was the access to food created by the program that kept them from moving out of their villages to other communities in search of work in order to feed their families. About 306 beneficiary households moved to locations outside the program area. However, most of the movements happened between the last round of voucher distribution of the first phase of the program in September 2012 and the first distribution of the second phase implemented in April 2013, a period of over six months.

2.2 Creation and Rehabilitation of Community Assets

The project was also designed to build resilience through selected community works using the mechanism of CBFV. Ten out of the thirteen rounds of voucher distributions were conditional such that beneficiaries earned their CBFVs by actively participating in VFW projects which were identified and selected by the government technical services in consultation with the communities based on what was important in strengthening household and community resilience. The projects included reforestation, construction of dikes, small dams and firebreaks, rehabilitation of roads, promotion of water and soil conservation techniques and FMNR activities. In phase I, 119 projects were completed in the 119 communities that participated while 147 projects were implemented in the 147 project communities in phase II. Apart from the 25 new communities that were added to the project in phase II, each project community benefited from two projects of their choice. Through these projects, some communities that were inaccessible because of poor road conditions can now be accessed by vehicles thus improving transportation. Other communities constructed flood defences while some have started the process of restoring arable lands for pastoral and agricultural purposes.

2.3 Reduction of Chronic Vulnerability

Reduction of chronic vulnerability was pursued through ensuring reliable food transfers to meet the food needs of affected HHs and through community resilience building. In terms of food transfers, approximately 1,400.76 MT of food was transferred in a timely manner to the targeted 4,070 HHs through CBFVs in phase I of the program. The 2,111 male-headed and 1,959 female-headed HHs consisted of 32,390 individuals (13,837 male adults, 13,571 female adults, 2,435 boys and 2,547 girls). In phase II of the program, the vulnerability of 4,323 HHs to food insecurity was reduced by ensuring reliable transfer of about 1,686.76 MT of food commodities (mostly rice, wheat, beans and vegetable oil) that benefitted 26,107 individuals. Of this population, 6,781 and 5,742 were respectively boys and girls 18 years and below. Adult males numbered 6,084 while adult females were 7,500. Apart from ensuring food transfers, the program also promoted nutrition education among beneficiaries as a critical step in addressing malnutrition in children and pregnant mothers.



Figure 2 Community constructed dike

Through the creation and rehabilitation of community assets as indicated above, beneficiary HHs and communities were also supported to reduce chronic vulnerability. This intervention enabled communities to improve road conditions that facilitated access to health facilities and markets. Flood defences constructed helped minimise flooding in some communities whilst the construction of dykes, small dams and half-moons contributed to increased availability of water for agricultural and pastoral purposes in some areas. Reforestation and FMNR activities increased community awareness on

the need to enhance the quality of the physical environmental and equipped them with skills in reforestation and natural resource management.

The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) component of the program made a significant contribution towards reducing chronic vulnerability among communities in the program area. Communities were supported to form and strengthen Disaster Management Committees (DMCs). Six (6) DMCs one (1) in the Departmental level and five (5) in the municipal level on the basis of one DMC by commune) were trained and supported to conduct community vulnerability assessments. Action plans were also drawn and implemented to mitigate some of the hazards to which the communities are vulnerable. Although the emphasis was on mitigation, the DMCs were facilitated to develop Community Disaster Preparedness Plans (CDPPs) at the commune level and monitored early warning signs that could trigger the activation of the plans.

2.4 - Livelihood Recovery Improvement

KEAP targeted to improve livelihood recovery for affected populations and this informed the choice of projects selected and implemented by the communities in return for CBFVs. Activities carried out to restore and protect arable land against degradation, harvest rain water for use in agriculture production, enhance pasture production, as well as to protect grazing land were all geared towards improving livelihood recovery. Diversification of farm business activities and production was another area of intervention towards achieving this objective. In

this regard, 27 woman cooperatives were supported to establish vegetable gardens as an alternative source of food and income. 270 members of these cooperatives were trained on better management of garden proceeds. There was also an intentional effort to support business development in the program area. By selecting and contracting only vendors from the program area, an opportunity was created for some existing businesses to grow and, in the process, to encourage the emergence of new ones.

3.0 Program Achievements

3.1 Provision of Emergency Food Assistance

In order to save the lives of some of the HHs worst affected by the drought, KEAP provided emergency food assistance to 4,070 vulnerable HHs by implementing six rounds of CBFV distributions in its first phase. Three of these distributions were unconditional while the other three were conditional distributions. The second phase involved the transfer of food through CBFVs in seven conditional distributions to 4,323 HHs. Conditional distributions in both phases required beneficiary HHs to participate in VFW projects aimed at creating or restoring community assets as a means to enhancing household and community resilience.

3.1.1 Selection of Program Beneficiaries

The targeting of HHs in both phases was done in consultation with the CODEP based on the GoM data on most vulnerable communities. After sensitization sessions in all targeted villages, village committees were formed and trained to conduct the selection of beneficiary HHs. The selection of beneficiary HHs was based on the criteria indicated below and the lists provided by the communities were verified by program staff before registration:

- Insufficient or no source of income and food stocks that will meet less than 40% of need through the 2012 harvest
- Presence of children under age five
- Presence of a pregnant or lactating woman
- Presence of elderly or disabled
- Not receiving assistance from elsewhere
- Repatriated
- Rely exclusively on agriculture and livestock for their livelihood
- Female headed households.

Basically, KEAP II maintained the beneficiaries of KEAP I but carried out 100% verification that led to the replacement of 331 HHs for reasons of death of some heads of households (25) and other household migration to other localities (306). However, 253 HHs were added to achieve the beneficiary target of KEAP II. The table below shows the number of HHs selected in each of the five communes and the estimated number of individuals that benefited from the food commodities provided by the program in both phases. Apart from Tenaha which recorded a decrease in number of beneficiaries in phase II because of its proximity to the Mali border, many households have been displaced to other more appropriate localities, the number of beneficiaries increased in all the communes during the second phase.

Table 1: Summary of Planned Beneficiaries by Communes

| Commune | Total | Number of Beneficiaries |
|---------|-------|-------------------------|
|---------|-------|-------------------------|

| | Population | HHs | | Individuals | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | Phase I | Phase II | Phase I | Phase II |
| Kankossa | 11,083 | 715 | 759 | 4,290 | 4,554 |
| Sani | 8,928 | 576 | 611 | 3,456 | 3,666 |
| Hamoud | 20,867 | 1,348 | 1,432 | 8,088 | 8,592 |
| Tenaha | 9,255 | 597 | 364 | 3,582 | 3,804 |
| Blajmil | 12,931 | 834 | 886 | 5,004 | 5,316 |
| Total | 63,064 | 4,070 | 4,323 | 24,420 | 25,938 |

3.1.2 Implementation of Voucher Distributions

The Food Program Management Group (FPMG) of World Vision prepared program staff for the implementation of the program by training them on the principles and management of cash based programming and Accountability from March 19 - 21, 2012. The staff was also trained by the WARO WASH team on Infrastructure. Also, WV US team oriented program staff on United States Government (USG) Rules and Regulations to ensure proper grant management. Due to project start-up challenges such as voucher distributions started in the first half of April 2012 instead of March 2012. This displaced the overall planned distribution cycle.

Cash Based Food Voucher Distributions in Phase I

In the first phase, KEAP transferred 24,420 CBFVs (representing 100% achievement of target) in 6 distributions (3 conditional and 3 unconditional) to 4,070 HHs made up of 13,837 male and 13,571 female adults, 2,435 boys and 2,547 girls. Unfortunately, two vouchers were not redeemed because the beneficiaries lost them. In total, 1,400.76 MT of food commodities was accessed by beneficiaries. The value of the food is approximately US\$ 1,335,844.30 against a budget of US\$ 1,332,111 provided for commodity procurement, transportation and warehousing.

Three planned distributions were implemented between April and June 2012. During these distributions, the program transferred 12,153 CBFVs to beneficiary HHs against a planned target of 12,210 CBFVs. The vouchers distributed fell short of planned target because some villages did not meet the target number of beneficiaries allocated to them by the CODEP and actions were taken with local authorities to make up for these shortfalls with local authorities to make up for these shortfalls. Out of the vouchers distributed, 12,151 vouchers worth US\$ 666,734 were redeemed by beneficiary households for 704.137 MT of food but two (2) HHs lost their vouchers. Eight (8) food vendors were contracted by the program to make recommended food commodities accessible to beneficiaries. Food commodities were therefore moved closer to distribution centers.

Between July and September 2012, the program distributed 12,267 vouchers worth about US\$ 669,110.30 in three distribution cycles. The planned target for the period was 12,210 but 57 additional vouchers were transferred to some HHs in Kankossa and Sani which missed out on earlier distributions. Approximately 696.627 MT of food was purchased by the 4,070 beneficiary HHs comprising 30,277 individuals (13,412 females and 12,795 males). The number of food vendors contracted by the program was increased from 8 to 13 during this period to improve access to food commodities (rice, wheat, dried beans, and vegetable oil).

Cash Based Food Voucher Distributions in Phase II

Following the validation of existing program beneficiaries and registration of additional HHs using Last Mile Mobile Solution (LMMS) technology, seven conditional CBFV distributions were implemented for 4,323 HHs (2,730 being female-headed) with 26,107 individuals (6,781 boys and 5,742 girls 18 years and below, and 6,084 male, 7,500 female adults). In total, 30,155 CBFVs were distributed between March and September 2013 against a planned target of 30,261 vouchers, representing 99.6% target achievement. A total of 106 vouchers were not distributed mostly because some households failed to participate in VFW activities in some months and therefore forfeited their vouchers for those months. In addition, one HH relocated outside the program area after registration and there was time lapse before a replacement was registered.

The 30,155 CBFVs distributed represented a transfer of about US\$1,527,415.10 to beneficiary HHs. This made it possible for them to purchase about 1,686.76 MT of food commodities which ensured their survival and provided part of their energy requirement.

Voucher Distribution Summary

The tables below give an indication of voucher distributions and the quantities of various food commodities accessed by beneficiaries. Figures provided are mostly extracted from voucher redemption records provided by recognised food vendors.

Table 2a: KEAP I Distribution Summary

| Month | # CBFVs Distributed | # CBFVs Redeemed | CBFVs Redeemed US\$ | Rice (MT) | Wheat (MT) | Vegetable Oil (MT) | Beans (MT) | Sugar (MT) | Total (MT) |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Apr-12 | 4013 | 4013 | 218,018.50 | 170.169 | 0 | 11.461 | 0 | 61.043 | 242.673 |
| May-12 | 4070 | 4068 | 221,963.95 | 199.342 | 5.7 | 19.549 | 6.795 | 0 | 231.386 |
| Jun-12 | 4070 | 4070 | 226,751.55 | 197.078 | 4.5 | 23.2 | 5.3 | 0 | 230.078 |
| Jul-12 | 4070 | 4070 | 221,963.95 | 198.43 | 1.75 | 23.292 | 5.29 | 0 | 228.762 |
| Aug-12 | 4107 | 4107 | 224,036.85 | 181.73 | 1.75 | 22.113 | 4.849 | 0 | 210.442 |
| Sep-12 | 4090 | 4090 | 223,109.50 | 228.925 | 2.05 | 21.831 | 4.616 | 0 | 257.423 |
| Total | 24,420 | 24,418 | 1,335,844.30 | 1,175.67 | 15.75 | 121.446 | 26.85 | 61.043 | 1,400.76 |

Table 2b: KEAP II Distribution Summary

| Month | # CBFVs Distributed | # CBFVs Redeemed | CBFVs Redeemed US\$ | Rice (MT) | Wheat (MT) | Vegetable Oil (MT) | Beans (MT) | Sugar (MT) | Total (MT) |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Mar-13 | 4322 | 4322 | 235,765.10 | 167.815 | 43.231 | 26.65 | 4.835 | 0 | 242.535 |
| Apr-13 | 4322 | 4322 | 216,100.00 | 192.445 | 47.669 | 30.90 | 5.134 | 0 | 276.15 |
| May-13 | 4275 | 4275 | 213,750.00 | 181.267 | 44.602 | 21.941 | 7.304 | 0 | 249.414 |
| Jun-13 | 4321 | 4321 | 216,050.00 | 127.825 | 16.176 | 14.37 | 4.116 | 0 | 162.482 |
| Jul-13 | 4269 | 4269 | 213,450.00 | 189.607 | 33.712 | 21.09 | 5.83 | 0 | 250.333 |
| Aug-13 | 4323 | 4323 | 216,150.00 | 202.277 | 22.513 | 21.35 | 6.603 | 0 | 249.239 |
| Sep-13 | 4323 | 4323 | 216,150.00 | 207.502 | 10.083 | 24.40 | 5.512 | 0 | 247.493 |
| Total | 30,155 | 30,155 | 1,527,415.10 | 1,268.74 | 217.986 | 160.70 | 39.335 | 0.00 | 1,686.76 |

Table 2c: KEAP I & II Distribution Summary

| Month | # CBFVs Distributed | # CBFVs Redeemed | CBFVs Redeemed US\$ | Rice (MT) | Wheat (MT) | Vegetable Oil (MT) | Beans (MT) | Sugar (MT) | Total (MT) |
|--------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| March | 4322 | 4322 | 235,765.10 | 167.815 | 43.231 | 26.653 | 4.835 | 0 | 242.534 |
| April | 8335 | 8335 | 434,118.50 | 362.614 | 47.669 | 42.363 | 5.134 | 61.043 | 518.823 |
| May | 8345 | 8343 | 435,713.95 | 380.609 | 50.302 | 41.49 | 14.099 | 0 | 486.5 |
| June | 8391 | 8391 | 442,801.55 | 324.903 | 20.676 | 37.565 | 9.416 | 0 | 392.56 |
| July | 8339 | 8339 | 435,413.95 | 388.037 | 35.462 | 44.385 | 11.12 | 0 | 479.004 |
| August | 8430 | 8430 | 440,186.85 | 384.007 | 24.263 | 43.458 | 11.452 | 0 | 463.18 |
| Sept | 8413 | 8413 | 439,259.50 | 436.427 | 12.133 | 46.226 | 10.128 | 0 | 504.914 |
| Total | 54,575 | 54,573 | 2,863,259.40 | 2,444.41 | 233.736 | 282.14 | 66.184 | 61.043 | 3,087.52 |

3.1.3 Impact of CBFVs

Data collected in December 2012 for the final baseline report of KEAP I which was completed in February 2013 indicated an average household diversity score (HDDS) of 5.6 which represented a moderate dietary diversity. The household hunger scale (HHS) was 2.56 corresponding to moderate hunger in the households surveyed. The data was collected during the harvesting period and the score would have been considered low in normal times.

In March 2013, the average HDDS data indicated a 5.9 score³. However, in June 2013, it was estimated at 5.2, indicating a fall by 0.4 compared to the baseline conducted in December 2012 (the harvest season) and a 0.7 decrease compared to March 2013. This showed moderate dietary diversity among households in the program area. Similarly, the June 2013 HHS scored 2.0 compared to 2.35 in March 2013 and 2.56 in December 2012. This gave the indication that households experienced moderate hunger in the program area. It is most likely that the food assistance provided by KEAP has had a cushioning effect for beneficiaries.

3.2 Community Vulnerability Reduction and Livelihood Improvement

Dry spells, rain deficits, floods and locusts invasion are perennial occurrences in the program area. KEAP targeted to reduce chronic vulnerability of households and communities in the area through interventions designed not only to meet the urgent food needs of vulnerable HHs but also to strengthen the resilience of communities to better cope with recurring hazards. Thus activities were implemented in an attempt to restore and protect arable land against degradation through various VFW projects, enhance skills to manage community risk, diversify farm business activities and production, and promote nutritional skills and better management of vegetable gardens.

3.2.1 Community Mobilization for Assets Creation

In order to ensure successful implementation and ownership of VFW projects, feasibility studies were conducted by the government technical services (CSA and Ministry of Rural Development and Environment) and communities were involved in the identification of projects based on the need to protect community assets and strengthen household and community resilience. KEAP was intentional about community mobilization which made it possible for the projects to be implemented even though most of them were identified late and were beyond the ability of only beneficiary HHs to implement.

³ KEAP II HDDS and HHS monitoring, March 2013

All the 119 beneficiary villages involved in phase I and the 28 new villages added in phase II were facilitated to establish project committees which worked with other community leaders to ensure that community members mobilised and implemented the projects. The project committees were trained on their roles and supported with voucher for work tools to facilitate project work in accordance with the projects' contracts signed between KEAP and the communities.

3.2.2 Creation and Rehabilitation of Community Assets

In both phases of KEAP, a conscious effort was made to integrate resilience building in the provision of food assistance. As a result, each beneficiary village worked with the technical personnel from the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development to identify an appropriate project to be implemented in order for beneficiary HHs to receive CBFVs.

In KEAP I, 119 projects involving tree planting, construction of dikes, rehabilitation of road paths and water-harvesting techniques were implemented. Even though it was only registered HHs that received vouchers for investing their labour in the work projects, other community members in most of the villages supported the project implementation because they understood the importance of the projects and their benefits to the entire community.

Building on this experience, the second phase of the program tied all seven rounds of CBFV distributions to VFW projects in order to create and rehabilitate more community assets and further strengthen the resilience of the participating communities. In this phase, 147 projects were implemented between February and September 2013.

3.2.3 Accomplishment of Community Work Projects

In KEAP I, a total of 74 dykes were rehabilitated in all five communes: 6 in Sani, 19 in Blajmil, 6 in Kankossa, 12 in Tenaha and 31 in Hamoud. Also, 10 road paths were rehabilitated in two communes: 8 in Tenaha and 2 in Hamoud. Furthermore, 28 villages in four communes (5 in Sani, 10 in Kankossa, 7 in Blajmil and 6 in Hamoud) were engaged in sanitation improvement to rid their environment of solid waste. Finally, 450 tree seedlings (*Panicum tergidum*) were planted in 7 villages (3 villages in Sani and 4 in Kankossa).



Figure 3 Community constructed half-moons

In KEAP II, the following were achieved through VFW projects:

- 8716.5 linear metres of dykes and small dam walls was constructed in 61 projects against a target of 8,323 metres, representing 104% achievement of planned target.
- 33 kilometres completed on 7 rural road paths being 117% of target set.
- 28 hectares of half-moons constructed at 26 sites, about 485% target under achievement due to over-estimation of life of project target
- 180 000 tree seedlings transplanted at 39 FMNR and tree planting sites.
- 244 km of fire breaks constructed at 14 sites being 100% achievement of target.

3.2.4 Community Work Projects and Resilience Enhancement

Some of the benefits of these projects to the communities include the following:

- The creation and rehabilitation of dykes and small dams prevented some of the villages from flash floods and blocked rain water for crop farming and livestock use. The standing water may serve as breeding ground for mosquitoes and becomes a health risk. The communities were sensitized on some of the health hazards posed by the stagnant water such as the risk of children getting infected or drowning in the water if used for swimming, the risk of mosquitoes breeding in the water and causing malaria, etc.
- The construction of half-moons helped in erosion control and promoted soil and water conservation to restore degraded lands for reforestation purposes as well as for agricultural and livestock production.
- Rehabilitated roads served to connect the communities and improved access to the hospital and the main markets in Kiffa and neighbouring Mali.
- Village clean up improved the sanitation of villages and reduced the prevalence of malaria, cholera and other hygiene-related health problems especially among children during the rainy season in particular.
- Tree planting served to check the desert from encroaching the villages and farm lands.
- Creation of fire breaks minimised bush fires and preserved fodder for livestock consumption. This also has the potential of improving soil fertility in the long-term.

3.3 Community Livelihood Improvement

Livelihood protection was pursued through techniques that sought to restore and protect arable land against degradation. The construction of half-moon structures to harvest rain water for use in agricultural production, construction of fire breaks to protect grazing land and enhance pasture production, and diversification of farm business activities and production were some of the interventions implemented as indicated in the community assets' creation and rehabilitation section. Community skills enhancement in disaster risk reduction and nutrition, and management of vegetable gardens are other ways the program employed to its quest to improve livelihoods as a means to reducing chronic vulnerability.

3.3.1 Community Disaster Risk Reduction

In consultation with the Hakem (head of local government in the district) and technical services, (Environment Ministry, Community Development Ministry and Health Ministry staff) the disaster risk reduction component of KEAP was to align to the disaster management structure and strategy of the Kankossa department.

Working with the Departmental DMC, one DRR committee for each of the five communes and the District Disaster Management Committee were strengthened through appropriate training. These committees were able to carry out Community-Owned Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (COVACA) in each of the 5 communes. The assessment increased community awareness of the hazards confronting them and led to the crafting of action plans to mitigate existing and potential impact of those hazards posing greater threat. With the support of KEAP, the District Disaster Management Committee supported each of the DRR committees in all five communes to develop disaster preparedness plans for their respective communes.

Also, KEAP facilitated the training of 155 persons (33 women and 122 men) in local early warning systems. The training built the capacity of the communities to review their local Early Warning Systems in relation to surveillance, transmission of early warning information, and actions taken in response to early warning for particular threats. All 147 communities that participated in the program now have the capacity to actively collect and disseminate early warning information. DRR Committees have also been trained on actions to be taken in order to activate their Disaster Preparedness Plans in the event of an anticipated disaster event occurring.

3.3.2 Health and Nutrition Messaging

Sanitation and hygiene are major factors challenging the health and nutritional status of children and mothers in most communities where KEAP was implemented. To enable communities better manage these challenges, some conditional vouchers were dedicated to clean-up exercises in worst affected communities in the program's first phase. Beyond clean up exercises, the program trained 143 community representatives as TOT on hygiene promotion and nutrition. The training created more awareness on the need to maintain good sanitation and hygiene to enjoy healthy life. It also equipped the community representatives with relevant skills to work with other community members and promote good hygiene and sanitation practices. Women groups were sensitized and trained on nutritional meal selection and the importance of hygiene in meal preparation.

In the second phase, KEAP trained 288 beneficiaries (63% female and 37% male) from all 5 communes on basic nutrition and sensitized them on the medicinal and nutritional advantages of the moringa tree. KEAP staff continued to sensitize beneficiaries during pre-distribution addresses to ensure a wider coverage and dissemination of health and nutritional messages.

3.3.3 Vegetable Gardening

As part of efforts towards livelihood improvement, KEAP supported women cooperatives engaged in vegetable production. The target was to support 500 women in 50 cooperatives of 10 members each. Applying the qualification criteria of groups already established, previously engaged in gardening program, and having access to water source, only 27 women

cooperatives were selected in collaboration with the local government ministry of agriculture technician. However, 6 of the selected cooperatives were supported to deepen their wells in order to increase the water yield to be able to support vegetable production.



Figure 4 Women's gardening group and cooperative

In all, the 27 women cooperatives had about 1,240 members (almost 250% of the target). However, the membership of the larger cooperatives, especially in Kewala, could not be split due to socio-cultural sensitivities. Based on the recommendation of the government agriculture technician, the program

supported the women to cultivate okra, tomato and egg-plant which are suitable for dry season production. Each cooperative was supported with tools and seeds worth approximately US\$600 in vouchers that were exchanged during a one day tools and seeds fair held in

Kankossa. All the cooperatives were trained by a technician from the Ministry of Agriculture and are now producing vegetables for marketing and for consumption by their families.

3.3.4 Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration

Livelihood improvement through farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) focused on environmental and land restoration through tree planting and nurturing existing tree stumps to develop into trees. Given the desert conditions prevalent in the program area, FMNR is critical to livelihood improvement for both crop growing and livestock keeping HHs.

In phase I, KEAP facilitated the planting of 450 *Panicum tergidum* seedlings in 7 villages (3 villages in Sani and 4 in Kankossa). In the second phase, about 180,000 seedlings of assorted tree species of economic value such as *Ziziphus mauritian*, *Balanites aegyptiaca*, *Acacia senegal* and *Acacia raddiana* were nursed and transplanted on demarcated plots of communal land and on individuals' plots. Working in collaboration with ADIG, a local NGO, FMNR activities are implemented in sites covering about 814 hectares. However, only 672 hectares have been protected by the communities with fencing materials provided by KEAP. A total of 982 farmers (532 women and 450 men) engaged in FMNR activities have been trained and 7523 assorted trees have been pruned in FMNR sites. The trees pruned are mostly species of balanites, ziziphus, acacia Senegal, acacia raddiana, hyphaene, acacia flava, combretum micranthum and date palms. The table below summarizes FMNR activities accomplished.

Table 3: Summary of Key FMNR Activities Implemented

| | Sani | Tenaha | Kankossa | Hamoud | Blajmil | Total |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Number of hectares of land under cultivation at FMNR sites | 96 ha | 75 ha | 131 ha | 313 ha | 199 ha | 814 ha |
| Number of hectares of land under FMNR protected | 56 ha | 130 ha | 70 ha | 236 ha | 180 ha | 672 ha |
| Number of trees pruned | 1100 | 885 | 1320 | 3332 | 886 | 7523 |
| Number of farmers trained on FMNR | M : 52 F : 75 Tot: 127 | M : 74 F : 73 Tot: 147 | M : 63 F : 87 Tot: 150 | M : 148 F : 205 Tot: 353 | M : 113 F : 92 Tot: 205 | M: 450 (47%) F: 532 (53%) Tot: 982 (100%) |

4.0 Indicator Tracking Table

There were common indicators to both phases of KEAP but some of the indicators for phase I did not continue in KEAP II. On the whole, there was good achievement of results. The tables below show the program performance in terms of indicators set to measure its achievements during KEAP I & II. It is worth noting that following an agreement reached with FFP, household dietary diversity score (HDDS) and number of months of household food sufficiency as indicators of early recovery of beneficiary HHs were abandoned. Percent reduction in food debt burden was adopted as outcome indicator and intended to be measured during the final evaluation.

Table 4a: Indicator Tracking for KEAP I

| | Performance Indicators | Achievements | LOP Target | Variance explanation |
|---------------------------|--|--|------------|---|
| Project Goals/ Objectives | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| SO 1 | % reduction in food debt burden | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| IR .1 | Amount of MT of food distributed (disaggregated by type) | Rice: 1,175.67 Wheat: 15.75 Oil: 121.45 Beans: 26.85 Sugar:* 61.04 Total: 1,400.76 | N/A | N/A |
| | % of Vouchers redeemed by HH | 99.99% | 100% | The program transferred 12,153 CBFV to beneficiary HH and 12,151 were redeemed. However, two vouchers were misplaced by beneficiaries |
| Activity 1.1 | Number HH sensitized on food distribution process | 4070 | 4,070 | N/A |
| Activity 1.2 | Number HH registered | 4070 | 4,070 | N/A |
| Activity 1.3 | Number of suppliers participating in the program | 13 | N/A | N/A |
| Activity 1.4 | Number of HH receiving unconditional food vouchers | 4070 | 4,070 | N/A |
| Activity 1.5 | Number of person days worked in VFW activities | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Activity 1.6 | Number of infrastructure rehabilitated through VFW | 112 | N/A | N/A |
| Activity 1.7 | Number of trees growing in defined communities | 450 | N/A | N/A |

* Sugar was not included in the commodity basket proposed by KEAP but some vendors allowed beneficiaries to take sugar as part of food rations during the first round of voucher redemption. This was rectified by specifying the food basket in the contracts of vendors recognised by the program.

Table 4b: Indicator Tracking for KEAP II

| # | INDICATOR | BASELINE | TARGET ACHIEVEMENT | LIFE OF PROJECT TARGET | Remarks |
|---|---|----------|--------------------|------------------------|---------|
| | OUTCOME: Early recovery initiated in targeted districts of Assaba Region in Mauritania | | | | |
| | STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE (SO) 1: Reduce chronic vulnerability for affected populations | | | | |

| Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1 – Arable land is restored and protected against degradation using Food Vouchers for Work | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Area of land identified for protection and/or restoration | | 672 Ha | N/A | |
| 2 | Number of trees pruned | | 7523 | N/A | |
| 3 | Number of persons trained in FMNR | | Total - 982 Male - 450 Female - 532 | 147 | |
| 4 | Number of structures constructed | | NA | NA | |
| 4.1 | Half Moons | | 28 hectares | 136 hectares | 28 hectares of half-moons constructed at 26 sites, the target was under achieved due to over-estimation of life of project target. |
| 4.2 | Dykes | | 8716,5 Linear meter | 8323 linear meters | 8716.5 linear metres of dykes and small dam walls was constructed in 61 projects against a target of 8,323 metres, representing 104% achievement of planned target. |
| 4.3 | Small Dams | | 1,961 linear meters | 1,716 linear meters | |
| 4.4 | Road Paths | | 33 Km | 28 Km | 33 kilometres completed on 7 rural road paths being 117% of target set due to the engagement of communities. |
| 4.5 | FMNR with trees planting | | 180, 000 trees transplanted | 175,000 seedlings transplanted | Due to late rainfall, trees transplanting has been delayed. Also some seedlings died after being transplanted |
| 4.6 | Kilometres of fire breaks established | | 244 Km | 200 km | |
| 6 | Metric tons of food purchased by beneficiaries using vouchers (disaggregated by type) | | 1,686.76 MT | N/A | |
| 6.1 | Wheat | | 217.986 MT | N/A | |
| 6.2 | Beans (cow pea) | | 39.335 MT | N/A | |
| 6.3 | Oil | | 160.70 MT | N/A | |
| 6.4 | Rice | | 1,268.74 MT | N/A | |
| 7 | Number of hours worked | | 1,725,466 | 2,420,880 | |
| Intermediate Result (IR) 2.2 – Community skills to manage risks are enhanced | | | | | |
| 8 | Percentage of beneficiaries (M/F) | | N/A | N/A | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| | reporting understanding of the community evacuation or other disaster mitigation plans | | | | |
| 9 | Number persons (M/F) trained in DRR | | 150 | 150 | |
| 9.1 | <i>Male</i> | | 122 | NA | |
| 9.2 | <i>Female</i> | | 33 | NA | |
| 10 | Number of Community Disaster Preparedness Plans developed | | 5 | 5 | |
| 11 | Number of Community Disaster Preparedness Plans in place | | 5 | 5 | |
| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE (SO) 2: Improved livelihood recovery for affected population | | | | | |
| Intermediate Result (IR) 3.1 – On farm business activities and production increased | | | | | |
| 12 | Number of Vegetable garden groups identified | | 27 | 50 | Only 27 existing women groups met the selection criteria but the average number of members was above 10 as estimated |
| 13 | Volume (MT) of seeds purchased under the vouchers system | | 0.320 MT | 0.1125 MT | The gardens are taking place during the rainy season and crops favourable for this season as recommended by local government agriculture technician are okra, tomato and egg-plant. |
| 14 | Number of tools purchased under the voucher system | | 965 pieces (540 watering cans, 85 shovels, 85 diggers, 85 rakes, 85 wheelbarrows & 85 garden forks) | 965 pieces (540 watering cans, 85 shovels, 85 diggers, 85 rakes, 85 wheelbarrows & 85 garden forks) | |
| 15 | Number of farmers groups (M/F beneficiaries) | | 147 groups male groups : 1593 female groups: 2730 | 50 | 1 group per village |
| Intermediate Result (IR) 3.2 – Promote nutritional skills and better management of gardens produce | | | | | |
| 16 | Number of demonstration plots established | | 0 | 5 | Trainings were conducted directly in the women groups' gardens. There was no new demonstration plots established. |
| 17 | Number of participants trained (M/F) in improved garden management techniques | | 100 | 100 | All participants were females |
| 18 | Number of field days training conducted | | 10 | 5 | 2 days of training was given per commune |
| 19 | Number of health and nutrition trainings organized (i.e. exclusive breastfeeding, | | 1 training involving the topics of exclusive breastfeeding, iron supplementation, | 5 | 5 days health and Nutrition trainings were conducted, 1 day per commune, 5 communes. |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| iron supplementation, de-worming, diarrhoea controls, vaccinations, etc.) | | good hygiene practices, nutritional value of moringa and diarrhoea control | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|

4.0 Program Management Challenges

KEAP was the first cash based program implemented by WV Mauritania. Its implementation was not without challenges. Some of these challenges are highlighted below.

Program Design

The design of the program, especially in the second phase, was quite ambitious. Seen as a unique opportunity to address community vulnerability, many components were integrated without realistically considering the budget implication. As a result, some important interventions proposed such as deepening of wells to support vegetable gardening and fencing materials for FMNR sites were not catered for in the budget. Administrative and running costs were also inadequate and affected engagement with personnel from the government technical services on whom the program relied for technical supervision. The travel budget was exhausted before the program was half way through. This placed a strain on the National Office reserves in order to bridge funding gaps and ensure the program was successfully implemented. The additional amount of **\$99,228** was mobilized from the NEPRF budget to cover the gap.

The geographic spread of the program was also challenging when it came to implementation. The program structure and staffing strength compared with the scope of work did not match well. With 147 project sites, spread over a vast surface area or rugged terrain, the 5 field monitors proved very inadequate. On average, each monitor had about 29 widely dispersed project sites to monitor. The demands of voucher for work program required more staff to ensure effective monitoring. This challenge became evident in the first phase of the program. Unfortunately, when the opportunity came for a second phase, all the five communes were brought on board and new villages were added to the existing ones. The resulting lapses in project monitoring affected the implementation of VFW projects in terms of delayed completion as well as the quality of the projects in some villages.

Low Capacity of Implementing Partners

KEAP was innovative in its introduction of new techniques of community resilience building. This posed a challenge to the program staff and implementing partners. It was decided that the government technical services will lead the implementation as a way of ensuring sustainability when the program phases out. Unfortunately, the technical services were not very familiar with some of the innovative projects introduced such as the construction of half-moons. The quality of supervision therefore provided by the local government technicians led to poor technical start-up of many community projects and it took the intervention of WARO and FPMG technical staff to remedy the situation.

Program Coverage and Topographic Challenges

Apart from being wide, the topography of the program area significantly challenged the implementation of the program. Most communities were rendered inaccessible in the rainy

season. Even though there has been less than normal rainfall in recent years, voucher distributions were delayed in some instances because many communities in Tenaha, Blajmil and Hamoud communes in particular became temporarily inaccessible following any heavy rainfall. Water normally flows from the mountains and plateau and creates temporary rivers in the gullies with strong currents. During such periods, it is not feasible to access most of these areas for 3 to 5 days depending on the volume of rain that has fallen. The dispersed nature of locations coupled with distances from some villages to designated distribution points also made it difficult for some beneficiaries to redeem their vouchers in a timely manner.

Technological Challenges

The National Office procured Last Mile Mobile Solution (LMMS) technology to facilitate registration of beneficiaries and transfer of vouchers in the second phase. However, the program did not fully enjoy the functionality of the system because it encountered problems reading some beneficiary cards thus necessitating manual registration of beneficiaries whose cards could not be read. Part of the problem was associated with the lack of technical operational capacity to trouble-shoot the challenges and secure their solutions, understandably given the fact that this technology was being used for the first time by WV Mauritania. The effective deployment of the LMMS delayed distribution and reporting processes because of the manual operations involved. However, efforts were made by the National Office and FPMG by training the LMMS officer and ICT staff that helped on the use of the system in the field.

Target Setting for VFW Projects

The implementation of VFW projects was associated with a number of challenges. One of the major challenges was poor target setting based on wrong information generated from the field. For instance, the number of hectares of land for half-moon construction was overestimated by personnel of the government technical services at the beginning of the projects. The M&E plan was designed based on this information. The wrong information was also indicated on some of the visibility boards. When it was realised that some of the information was inaccurate, the surface area of all half-moon sites was ascertained and the affected visibility boards were subsequently corrected. However, it was difficult to amend the M&E plan at the point the mistake was discovered. This has therefore affected the target achievement of half-moon construction.

Short Program Life Vis-à-vis Community Resilience Building

KEAP was implemented for a period of 20 months with an additional month of NCE. The program targeted to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable households but had a long-term perspective of reducing chronic vulnerability so that households and communities can become more resilient to face future shocks. However, the period of implementation of the program is rather too short to ensure the realisation of this objective. Resilience building requires more time than what was available for the program implementation. Nevertheless, USAID/FFP needs to be commended for granting a second phase to the program.

Inadequate Beneficiary Knowledge of Entitlements

Program staff carried out extensive sensitization of beneficiaries on the KEAP program and their entitlements. However, some beneficiaries are still unable to give accurate information

on the number of rations they received which can create the impression that the program did not implement all planned distributions. The problem may be due to low literacy level in the program area which makes it difficult for some beneficiaries to retain basic information. However, some beneficiaries had to forfeit their vouchers in some months because they refused to participate in VFW activities in their communities.

It is also possible that some beneficiaries tend to confuse KEAP with the Kankossa ADP because of the good integration of the two. In that case, it is easier for such beneficiaries to attribute assistance provided by KEAP to the Kankossa ADP.

5.0 Lessons Learned

The implementation of KEAP has provided good opportunity for useful lessons to be learned. During phase I implementation, a Real Time Event (RTE) was conducted to reflect on the program processes and draw useful learning to enhance effectiveness in the remaining period. Additionally, a Lessons Learnt Event (LLE) was conducted at the end of phase I before implementation of phase II began, as well as at the end of phase II covering the entire life of the program. Some of the lessons drawn from these events and periodic reflections on the program are indicated below.

Program Contextualisation enhances Impact

One of the strengths of KEAP especially during the second phase has been a systematic attempt to contextualize its design and implementation. Given the high prone nature of the program to a number of hazards, the program looked beyond the provision of emergency food assistance and integrated resilience building that will capacitate communities to manage their own risks. The government technical services were given the lead role in the technical aspect of the project but when it was realised that the technical services needed capacity themselves in some of the innovative techniques, the program was able to bring in its internal experts to empower the technical service personnel so that they can continue to play their supervisory role.

Timely Involvement of Stakeholders Promotes Program Ownership

From KEAP I experience, all key stakeholders of KEAP II were involved right from the start-up meetings. This engagement ensured that issues and roles were clarified and enhanced understanding of program requirements and expectations from the onset. This facilitated stakeholder collaboration, especially with those external to World Vision, and made it easier to work together.

Integration with Existing Programs Creates Synergy

One of the factors that enhanced program delivery was effective integration. The program was implemented in Kankossa District where Kankossa ADP operates in some of the communities. Enhanced collaboration with the ADP ensured good program delivery in spite of the many challenges encountered. Besides the Kankossa ADP, KEAP maintained good collaboration with the PIDA Base and all the functions within the National Office as well as other program participants including beneficiaries, communities, local authorities and government technical services which generated a lot of support and synergy for the implementation of program activities.

Effective Vendor Management Enhances Program Impact

Vendors played a critical role in the transfer of food to beneficiaries through vouchers. One of the lessons learned is that when vendors are selected from the program area, they are very likely to have high commitment to the program success beyond their commercial interests. KEAP made selected vendors to feel that they were part of the program. This made them to respect agreed prices and other conditions stipulated in their contracts. They saw KEAP's gesture as a measure to develop local businesses instead of 'importing' vendors from the national or regional capitals whose business are already well established.

6.0 Appendices

6.1 Human Interest Stories

Children's Voice from Kankossa

By Brahim Sidi Baba

Communications Officer, WV Mauritania

The villages of Mbeighir and Loudey are good examples of communities that have been suffering from the food crisis in Mauritania. Children in both villages seemed to be very aware of the difficulties people have been struggling with. Their statements were very powerful and well formed. They talked about the situation, how it has been affecting their life, and what they would like to do to change the situation.

"I have not seen a crisis like the one we have been going through this year. Crises we went through were either characterized by a lack of food for humans or pasture for animals. This year the crisis is characterized by a severe lack of both" says Gori Ngoko, an old chief of a village in Kankossa district.



Figure 5 Gori Ngoko, age 72

Gori Ngoko, the chief of Mbeighir village, says for the past year there was almost no rain. "My son and grandson have been in Mali for six months looking for pasture for our animals (cows in particular)," said Ngoko. This means that Ngoko's family lost its main sources that provide for goods: their son and their cows.

He adds, "We have been almost completely relying on vouchers provided by World Vision in Kankossa." Ngoko insists on expressing his full gratitude to World Vision for helping his village. His face is full of happiness and joy, explaining how he gathered

his big family to share with them the good news of being approved to benefit from the vouchers distribution in the area.

World Vision Mauritania in collaboration with the World Food Program, CIDA and USAID launched assistance programs in the Assaba region to help the most affected people. The Kiffa Emergency Operation Program (KEOP), the Barkeol Emergency Assistance

Programme (BEAP) and the Kankossa Emergency Assistance Programme (KEAP) have provided relief assistance for the most vulnerable areas in the Assaba region.

“Two distributions of vouchers took place in Kankossa, and other distributions have been taking place now in Barkeol while there has been cash transfer here in Kiffa as well” says Hamidou Diallo, Kiffa ADP Manager. .

As always the case, children are likely to be the most affected by the crisis. Three children from two small villages in Kankossa expressed their feelings and opinions about the hard situation they are going through.

“Before this crisis, we had good quality cereals and rice thanks to our small farm. Now, my parents have to seek cereal from Mali. There is no milk as well since our cows are not around anymore” says Ramata, a 14-year-old girl from the village of Mbeighir.

Ramata’s friend, Penda, states, “We need all kinds of nutritious food, especially rice, cereals and, milk. We also need equipment to help us in agriculture.”

Children seem to be completely aware of the details of the hard situation here. They express their points of view about the crisis in such a systematic way that leads one to think that they no longer enjoy their childhood.

Abdoullay, a 15-year-old boy from the village of Loudey said: “My people need not go far looking for pasture for their animals. This year they are obliged to do so since there is no pasture in our area. All the people in my village have nothing to eat. We need a lot of rice, cereals, and dried milk. I go to school every day thinking of this hard situation.”

The villages of Mbeighir and Loudey are in the district of Kankossa. World Vision’s Area Development Programme (ADP) in Kankossa covers 139 villages in the area, and it is supported by World Vision Canada. The ADP has also assisted the KEAP team in executing the program where 4,070 HHs and 4,323 HHs benefitted from voucher distributions in phase I and II respectively.

Scenes of the Crisis in Mauritania: Hamoud

*By Brahim Sidi Baba
Communications Officer, WV Mauritania*

Mbouche and her children benefitted from the last two voucher distributions in the area of Kankossa, where World Vision Mauritania and USAID launched a program in response to the prevailing food crisis in Mauritania. The Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP) sometimes provides people with food vouchers so that they have enough to eat in the wake of the food crisis sweeping across parts of West Africa.

“My husband has been away for almost one year now, looking for work in one of the urban areas. Since there was no rain last season, he could

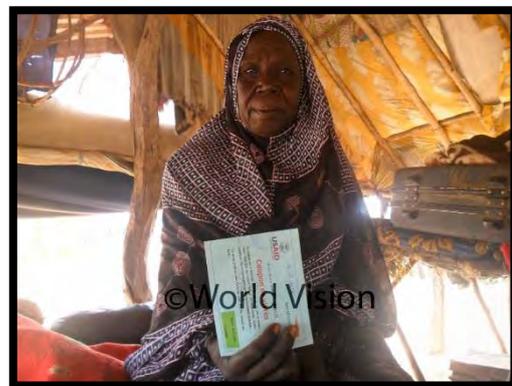


Figure 6 Mbouche holding her voucher

not continue working in his small farm here in Hamoud,” says Meime, a young woman in Hamoud.

Approaching the town of Hamoud, along the Mali border, one notices how the drought has been affecting the landscape in the area so much. Trees look like they have been scorched by a fire, with no more green leaves growing on them. It’s been too hot.



Figure 7 Mbouche exchanging her voucher for food at a vendor

A lake near the town, that provides water for animals, and that women use for washing clothes, has very low water levels. Although the water is too unclean for human consumption, many people in the community fish in the lake. The low water is affecting people and their animals in the area, especially with the increase in the temperature, which can soar to 50 degrees Celsius.

In the midst of this hard situation, an old woman is struggling to scrape together enough food for her children and grandchildren. “I have been struggling daily this year to feed my children. Since my daughter passed away I have also to look after my grandsons as they came here to live with us,” says Mbouche, a 70-year-old grandmother from Hamoud. Mbouche is one of the beneficiaries of the USAID and World Vision emergency program in the area of Kankossa. This program, titled the Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP), entails a monthly distribution of food vouchers to 4,070 households in the area. Each household is composed of an average of six people, so the target population is 24,420 persons in the area of Kankossa.

Mbouche continues, “Before these vouchers, we were obliged to ask people for food. Now, this is the second voucher I received. We managed to live on the last voucher for a month, and hopefully this will be the case this month too.”

Mbouche’s granddaughter, Meime, and her three sons, are living with her. “I am doing the daily housework to help my old grandma. We were used to growing plants here, but this year we could not grow anything due to the drought,” 21-year-old Meime says.

As Meimi talks, Sidi, her two-year-old son, sits in her lap. The other two boys, who are five and eight, are not yet in school. Instead, they sit inside the hut with their mother and grandmother.



Figure 8 Meime with her sons

While her grandma talks about the crisis, Meime is busy knitting a white Malahfa, a

traditional garment worn by Mauritanian women. Asked why she is knitting this Malahafa, she responds, “I do not have money to buy ready-made clothes, so I am knitting them myself.”

The father of the children, Meime’s husband, was forced to leave her and his children, looking for work in a city that is about 1280km away. “Because of the crisis, my husband has been in Rosso (Traraza region) looking for work. He has been there for almost one year. He has been sending some money, but not regularly.”

Due to cultural sensitivities, it was hard for Meime to describe how difficult it is for her to be separated from her husband for a year. In Mauritania, young women cannot talk freely about their married life in presence of older adults. Nevertheless, she was able to state that she would like the situation to get better in order for her husband to come back home.

“If it was not the crisis, my husband would have stayed here with us. He would have been planting cereals to feed us,” Meime states.

The Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program is in response to the prevailing crisis in Mauritania.

“The program will run for eight months. This is the second vouchers distribution in the program. There are two types of vouchers: conditional and unconditional. Beneficiaries have to do some work for their respective communities in order to get the conditional vouchers. The work includes rehabilitation of dykes, sanitation, etc.,” says Johan Razafiarison, Food for Peace (FFP) program manager, who is based in Kankossa. Beneficiaries who receive the food vouchers are required to exchange their labor in Voucher for Work activities and people in the village of Garn le Paris are rehabilitating a dyke that will help preserve water for their farms in case the rain comes in the upcoming months.



Figure 9 The village of Garn le Paris celebrating their dyke

Kankossa Emergency Assistance Program (KEAP) Additional Beneficiaries Testimonies and Success Stories:

<http://wvi.org/mauritania/gallery/kankossa-emergency-assistance-program-keap-beneficiaries-testimonies>

<http://wvi.org/mauritania/video/programme-daide-durgence-de-kankossa-keap-t%C3%A9moignages-des-b%C3%A9n%C3%A9ficiaires>

<http://wvi.org/mauritania/article/no-longer-relying-food-assistance>