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# Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE)



**NEAR EAST FOUNDATION**

*Partners for Community Development since 1915*

## **Quarterly Report**

**October 1 – December 31, 2013**

Near East Foundation

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(RECAPE)  
[USAID/OFDA-NEF]

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*Cover Photo: Shallot fields in Mbessena/Korombana.*

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

Ha	Hectare
NEF	Near East Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
RECAPE	Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the activities carried out during the third quarter of the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project, from October 1 –December 31, 2013. The Near East Foundation continued the implementation of activities according to the work plan.

The RECAPE project has provided support to thousands of families affected by the crisis and subsequent food shortage. Targeted interventions in hard-hit communities provided households with the tools and support needed to rebuild their livelihoods, and generate income needed to meet families' food, education, and healthcare needs. During the last quarter, the program:

- Distributed potato seeds to 3,341 women, leading to the resumption of agricultural activity in the targeted 14 female-run market gardens;
- Restored 70 hectares of rain-fed and irrigated rice infrastructure used by 625 farmers (254 women and 371 men) in Koundioum and Falembougou;
- Augmented household grain reserves by 3-6 months through seed distribution;
- Built transhumance and sedentary herders' capacity to maintain herd health in the months leading up the rainy season (May and June), when grasses are especially hard to come by.
- Cash grants totaling CFA 9,500,000 were distributed to 193 individuals in Bambara-Maoudé; a total of 1,900 cash grants have been distributed through the project.

A detailed summary of achievements against targets is included in [Attachment 1](#).

## II. ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the quarter, RECAPE project activities focused on agricultural production, irrigation, and economic recovery. While no specific livestock or fishery activities occurred, the project team continued to monitor the impact of interventions that occurred during the project's first two quarters and provide ongoing support to beneficiaries.

### A. Sub-Sector 3: Improving Agricultural Production/Food Security

The RECAPE project team continues to monitor the impact and results of agricultural activities. During this quarter, the project team monitored millet, rice, and market garden production.

Millet production was low as a result of low rainfall; the average food security coverage is two and half months. Rice production—on the other hand—has been very successful, with an average yield of 6 tons per hectare, providing on average 7 months of food security for direct beneficiaries. The project team continues to monitor production and food security.



Rice fields in Bagui (October 2013). RECAPE interventions have resulted in highly successful rice production, providing beneficiaries with an average of 7 months of food security.

### Activity 3.1. Facilitate Market-Based Access to Seeds and Inputs

Following the distribution of shallot seeds to market gardens during the last quarter, 1,400 kg of certified potato seeds were distributed during this quarter through a voucher system. The certified potato seeds arrived from France in November.

Distribution operations were organized in the villages where market gardens are located, in the presence of township and village authorities (or their representatives), the managers of the 14 market gardens, and the heads of the women's cooperatives.

In total, each target site received 250 kg of shallot (distributed in the second quarter) and 100 kg of potato seed (distributed this quarter). **3,341 women** from 12 villages benefited from this distribution of vegetable seed for market gardens, allowing them to resume agricultural activities. See [Attachment 2](#).

In monitoring market gardening activities, the project team found promising results. All 14 market garden sites have returned to full use, completely planted with crops.

## **B. Sub-Sector 4: Irrigation**

### Activity 4.1: Rehabilitate/Construct Irrigated and Rain-fed Rice Fields

*Falembougou Rice Plain Rehabilitation.* This quarter, RECAPE began the rehabilitation of the Falembougou rice field (30 hectares) in Dangol-Boré. Work began at the end of the harvest in November, and is on schedule to conclude at the end of January 2014. A local business specializing in irrigation development and public works was selected to carry out the following activities:

- Stripping and moving plots;
- Leveling and grading of plots;
- Rehabilitating 720 meters of primary dyke;
- Strengthening secondary dykes;
- Repairing vandalized cofferdams;
- Repairing destroyed control structures.

The rehabilitation of the 30 hectares of rain-fed rice plain in Falembougou will benefit 308 people (98 women, 210 men) who depend on the fields for nourishment and income.

*Koundioum Rice Plain Rehabilitation.* The RECAPE project also made significant progress in the rehabilitation of 40 hectares of the irrigated rice plain in Koundioum; work is 80% complete and is expected to be finished at the end of January 2014. The project team met with contractors, beneficiaries, local authorities, and technical services to plan and organize the rehabilitation work. Activities include the following:

- Reconstructing 1200 meters of damaged dyke supporting main channel;
- Reinforcing 800 meters of canal with cement;
- Reconstructing 2 catchments with concrete slab and brick;
- Installing control valves in 24 water basins;
- Consolidating secondary dykes located at the interior or rice fields; and
- Parceling rice fields.

The rehabilitation of the Koundioum rice plain is expected to benefit 317 individuals – 156 women and 161 men.



**Koundioum rehabilitation work in progress (left) and completed (right).**

### **C. Sub-Sector 5: Livelihoods Restoration**

#### Activity 5.2 Provide cash grants to restart income-generating activities.

RECAPE economic field agents worked with members of the Union of Bambara-Maoudé Associations to identify eligible grant recipients in the commune of Bambara-Maoudé in the region of Tombouctou. NEF/Nayral staff delivered vouchers to interested parties. Recipients then cashed these vouchers on an individual basis in December. In total, NEF/Nayral distributed CFA 9,500,000 (~\$20,000) to 193 men, in Bambara-Maoudé of which 60 were displaced. In total, the project has distributed the full target of 1,900 cash grants.

#### Activity 5.3 Build capacity for successful livelihoods restoration.

Individuals receiving grant money during this quarter reported that they would use their funding to fatten sheep and goats for eventual sale either in the community or at livestock fairs in neighboring communities.

As of January 2014, 65% of individuals who received cash grants in Quarters 1 and 2 reported increased livelihood security following the intervention. This figure does not include feedback from the 193 beneficiaries who received grants this past quarter.

### **III. PROJECT SUCCESSES**

*Irrigation activities lifts struggling families out of poverty.* Putting food on the table had never been an easy task for Kaadi Tangura. A father of four, Kaadi worked hard to grow millet on the hills outside his home in the village of Bagui, but each year, drought caused him to lose his crop. To make ends meet, Kaadi was forced to sell household possessions and work odd jobs. When local work was hard to come by, he would move to the city in search of work.

“Most years, low rainfall meant I could only harvest 2-3 months worth of grain for my family,” Kaadi said. “To make up the difference, I had to sell the family’s goats and sheep just to put food on the table, or find temporary work in Bamako or Mopti.”

Then, in 2005, the Near East Foundation came to Bagui, and worked with local community members to install an irrigation system. The new infrastructure helped families like Kaadi's to make the most out of what little water was available, allowing them to stagger crop hydration and ultimately increase their yields. From 2007-2012, the Tangura family produced enough food to meet their own needs and beyond. He was even able to sell her excess grain at market to recoup the animals and equipment sold during leaner times.

When political crisis struck in 2011, rebels in the North of Mali roamed from town-to-town in search of homes and businesses to loot, vandalizing infrastructure in towns like Bagui.

"After so many successful years, we lost everything", Kaadi remarked. "I was so discouraged... I considered uprooting my family and moving somewhere safer to start all over again."

Through the RECAPE project, NEF distributed vouchers for food aid, fertilizers, and seeds to hundreds of households like the Tangura's, and worked with local leaders to repair vandalized infrastructure. Agricultural activity has resumed, and the local economy is slowly sputtering back to life. Along with others in the community, Kaadi and his family have begun to recover.

"It is often said that where there is life, there is hope," Kaadi attested. "Thanks to the RECAPE project, I can personally attest that this saying is true. Thank you to all who have contributed to my village's rebirth, and helped us to preserve our dignity."

*Feed Supplements Preserve Pastoralists' Investments* – Like others pastoralists, Samba Allaye Dicko – a 60-year old husband and father of 8 from N'Gourma – depends upon the annual rains to stock pastures with the grasses needed to feed his herd. In better years, Samba and his colleagues would travel north in search of verdant pastures, and divide rangeland to avoid overgrazing.

When the 2012 crisis hit, insecurity on the roads taken by Samba and others dictated that they graze their cattle on the outer limits of their villages. Weak rains that year meant there was little vegetation to share.

"There were too many of us grazing our cattle in one area, so we quickly ran out of food," Samba explains. "In the first months of the crisis, I lost nearly half my herd, and with it, half my wealth."

To make matters worse, security considerations forced shopkeepers to raise the price of animal feed supplements and other goods to cover increased transportation costs and lapses in supply. The RECAPE project intervened to mitigate the food shortage, distributing feed supplements to hard-pressed pastoralists who could not afford to pay inflated prices at the local shops.

"We never imagined that we would ever receive the level of support the RECAPE project provided at a time when so many of us were struggling," Samba said. "Their assistance carried my herd and my colleagues' herds through the lean season. Without it, more than half of my investments would have been wiped out."

NEF also rehabilitated 5 watering points that had fallen into disrepair at the height of the crisis, without which the migration northward would be impossible.

"I know I speak for others in my community when I say that RECAPE helped us to stay afloat at a difficult time," Samba said. "Our livelihoods and our families are more secure, and we could not be more thankful."

*Cash Grants Restart Income-Generating Activities.* Cash grants have had a significant impact on the lives of beneficiaries. During the crisis, Djénéba Talome's husband abandoned the family, leaving her to support their three children. It was only through the help of an aunt that she was able to start a small juice business, but low returns prevented Djénéba from achieving true financial security. Through the RECAPE project, she received a cash grant that allowed her to strengthen her juice-selling business, and expand sales into more areas around Douentza. She now has returns of 3500 to 4500 CFA.



Djénéba (right) with a staff member at Sudu Baaba – a women's cooperative in Douentza.

#### IV. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE QUARTER

Project staff had some difficulty accessing project sites due to annual flooding, which delayed the delivery of equipment and production materials to be used in reconstruction projects. This difficulty was especially pronounced in Koundioum, where stream crossings are required.

Meteorological data for the 2013/2014 crop season indicates that the annual rains began late and ended early. On average, precipitation levels across the region were significantly lower and more erratic this year (439 mm in 31 days) than last year (625 mm in 37 days).

These conditions forced farmers to sow their cereal crops later than usual. When the rains ceased in late August, the heat quickly decimated entire crops of young seedlings. Similarly, all pastureland in Douentza, Bandiagara, Mopti, and Youwarou has dried up prematurely. In normal years, the water level at the region's lakes, dams, and rivers is high enough to sustain two crop cycles per year, but this year's rainfall deficit will limit producers to one crop cycle at best.

The RECAPE team conducted interviews to assess the combined impact of low rainfall and crop failure on household livelihoods and food security. They found that producers are anticipating labor shocks and food shortages in the coming months, and are adopting appropriate strategies to cope. Conditions have already deteriorated substantially:

- Lack of adequate pasture caused transhumance herders to begin their annual migration early in a bid to capitalize on what little grass is left.
- Food insecure households are downsizing meal portions and cutting back from 3 to 1-2 meals a day in an effort to extend the life of existing grain reserves, placing family members at increased risk of malnutrition and disease.
- Low supply has led to increase in food prices, particularly in Bandiagara and Douentza.
- Able-bodied workers have migrated to urban centers in search of employment.

The food-security situation remains tenuous across much of the region due to the lapse in annual rainfall. Households will require additional assistance to mitigate the impact of crop failure.

#### V. OVERVIEW/IMPACT OF SECURITY SITUATION

The security situation in the region continues to be tenuous, and the project team takes appropriate precautions. Although the distribution of seeds, subsidies, and fertilizer progressed smoothly, ongoing insecurity in the region necessitated that project staff take extra precautions when transporting money within and between Douentza and Bambara. For instance, beneficiaries were paid at a different location every day as a precaution against looting.

## ATTACHMENT 1: PROGRESS ACCORDING TO INDICATORS

Sub-sector	Indicators & Targets	Achieved in Quarter	Achieved Overall
<b>Objective 1: To promote increased food production and emergency recovery of capacity in cereal production, fishing, market gardening, and livestock production.</b>			
Fisheries	Number of people trained in fisheries, by sex. (Target: 160; 80 women)	-	156 fishers (82 women) trained
	Number of people benefitting from fisheries' activities, by sex. (Target : 1600 ; 900 women)	-	1,584 people (804 women) <i>This support has enabled the resumption of production in 5 rebuilt fishponds.</i>
	Average number of kilograms of fish harvested per fisher in six-months, by sex. (Target : 1,000 Kg per fisher)	TBD	TBD <i>The 5 fishponds were re-stocked. Harvest is planned for April 2014.</i>
Livestock	Number of animals benefitting from or affected by livestock activities (Target : 100,000)	101,500	101,500 <i>43,000 cattle; 57,000 sheep and goats; 1,000 donkeys; 500 camels.</i>
	Number of people benefitting from livestock activities, by sex. (Target 2,428 ; 850 women)	-	5,218 people (2,334 women)
Improving Agricultural Production/ Food Security	Projected increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed systems/agricultural input for beneficiary households. (Target: 6 months)	Millet = 2.5 months  (poor rainfall resulted in poor crop production; based on sample of 40 producers from 5 villages)  <i>Market garden production will be evaluated in February 2014.</i>	TBD
	Number of people benefitting from seed systems/agricultural input activities by sex. (Target: 7,800 direct participants; 3,980 women)	3,341 (3,341 women)  <i>3,341 female producers benefited from potato seed distribution.</i>	7,800 (4,234 women)
Irrigation	Number of hectares irrigated. (Target: 100)	70 ha  <i>30 ha in Falembougou and 40 in Koundioum in</i>	100 ha

		<i>process of rehabilitation</i>	
	<b>Number of people benefiting from irrigation activities, by sex. (Target: 1,000; 500 women)</b>	<b>625 people (254 women)</b>  <i>308 in Falembougou 317 in Koundioum</i>	<b>1063 people (378 women)</b>
	<b>Projected increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed system/agricultural irrigation equipment activities. (Target: 6 months)</b>	<b>3-6.5 months</b>  Rain fed rice (Nerica L2) = 3 months Irrigated rice (ADNY 11) = 6.5 months	<b>3-6.5 months</b>
<b>Objective 2: To restore viable livelihoods for conflict-affected communities, returnees, and IDPs in support of economic recovery.</b>			
<b>Seed systems and Agricultural Inputs</b>	<b>Number of people assisted through livelihoods restoration activities, by sex. (Target: 1,900 direct participants; 1,400 women)</b>	<b>193</b>  <i>60 displaced men 133 local men</i>	<b>1900</b>  1400 women 500 men
	<b>Percent of beneficiaries reporting their livelihoods restored within three to six months after receiving support. (Target: 80%)</b>	<b>65%</b>  <i>This figure does not include the views of the 193 beneficiaries who received grants this past quarter.</i>	<b>65%</b>
	<b>Total USD amount channeled into the program area through sub-sector activities. (Target: \$190,000)</b>	<b>\$190,000</b>	<b>\$190,000</b>

## ATTACHMENT 2: DISTRIBUTION OF POTATO SEED FOR MARKET GARDENS

Communes	Villages	Association or Cooperative Society Benefiting	Quantity of Seeds Received (kg)	
			Shallot <sup>1</sup>	Potato
Dangol boré	Falembougou	Benkadi-Ton Cooperative	250	100
		Women's Agro-pastoral Cooperative	250	100
	Koressana	Women's Village Association	250	100
	Tibouki	Women's Village Association	250	100
Gandamia	Kikara	Women's Village Association	250	100
Diaptodji	Dari	Faso Baara Multipurpose Women's Association	250	100
	Déri	Badenya Women's Cooperative	250	100
Koubewel Koundia	Adia Dindari	Women Farmers' Association	250	100
	Koïra bery	Women Farmers' Association	250	100
Korombana	Korientzé	Socourani Women's Cooperative	250	100
		Ciwara-Ton Women Farmers' Cooperative	250	100
	Mbessena	Faso Yiriwa Women Farmers' Cooperative	250	100
	Tiécouraré	Cèssiry Ton Women Farmers' Association	250	100
	NGorodia	Women's Multi-Function Village Association	250	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>3500</b>	<b>1400</b>

<sup>1</sup> Certified shallot seeds were distributed in November 2013.