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



NEAR EAST FOUNDATION

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Quarterly Report

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Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali
(RECAPE)
[USAID/OFDA-NEF]

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Cover Photo: Harvesting fish in rehabilitated pond in Sobbo.

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 fourth quarter of the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project, from January 1 – March 31, 2014. 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. During the last quarter, the project:

- Restored **100 hectares** of degenerated pastureland, benefitting **480 producers** (144 women) and providing a stable source of food for an estimated 80-200 head of cattle for 1-2 months.
- Monitored and evaluated the impact of project activities on production levels at rehabilitated fishponds. Fishers harvested an average of **667.2 kg of fresh fish** (106,032 kg of fish total) from rehabilitated ponds and local fisheries.
- Monitored and evaluated production at 14 women's market garden sites. Participating women harvested an average **196.75 kg of shallot** each, and **141.25 kg of potatoes**. Market gardens have improved women's food self-sufficiency, and the sale of extra produce improved women's livelihoods.
- Evaluated impact of cash grants provided to beneficiaries to recover productive assets. 84.6% of beneficiaries were able to restart enterprises.

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

II. ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the quarter, RECAPE project activities focused on completing the regeneration of bourgou pasture, and monitoring the impact of fishery, agricultural production, livestock, and livelihoods restoration activities.

A. Sub-Sector 1.1. Fisheries

NEF field staff monitored the impact of fishpond rehabilitation, restocking, and equipment distribution and training conducted during the first and second quarters of the project. The project restored five degraded fishponds in the communes of Diaptodji, Korientzé, Noradji, Fanabougou, and Korombana, benefitting 1,428 individuals (722 women; distributed equipment; restocked the fishponds with 19,600 fingerlings; and trained beneficiaries in fishing techniques.

During the last quarter, NEF field staff monitored the



Fish harvesting in a rehabilitated pond.

effects of project activities on the production rates of direct beneficiaries (78 men, 82 women). The project team used a simplified monitoring chart ([Attachment 2](#)) distributed to managers of beneficiary organizations. Beginning in January 2014, managers were asked to record their members' daily catches in nearby traditional fisheries as well as in fishponds rehabilitated by NEF; data was collected over a three-month period.



Carp in the process of drying in Sobbo.



Smoked catfish production, Korientzé.



Fishing with a net in the rehabilitated pond in Fanabougou.



Fresh fish harvested in Sobbo.

After six months of operation, average production stands at an estimated 662.7 kg of fresh fish per fisher for a total capture of 106,032 kg. Species caught include carp (*Tilapia Dageti* and *Sarotheredon Galilarus*) and catfish (*Clarias anguillaris*). The majority of fish caught were sold—fresh, smoked, or dried.

Fish production was lower than expected in the rehabilitated ponds during their first season (target: 1000kg/fisher). Ponds lacked adequate nutrition for the fish, preventing stock levels from rising as rapidly as had initially been predicted. NEF will continue to work with targeted fishers and communities to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to improve production through the use of appropriate techniques. With the use of improved techniques, production is expected to reach (or exceed) targets in the future.

Producers were excited by the amount of fish caught and sold. In the eyes of the producers, the fact that they had the ability and means to catch any fish was unexpected—and viewed as a success.

“Without these investments and tools, we would not be able to talk about production, let alone amount of fish caught,” one fisher said.

B. Sub-Sector 1.2: Livestock

Activity 2.1: Restore community pasture areas.

NEF rehabilitated 100 acres of pasture in Diaptodji (Circle of Douentza), and Korombana and Ourobe Doude communes (Circle of Mopti). An estimated 480 pastoralists (144 women) benefited from this activity. The restored area in each village can meet the needs of 80-200 animals for 30 to 50 days.



Pasture regeneration in Sendégué /Ourobé Doudé.

The RECAPE project trained managers of pastoral societies in pasture regeneration techniques, cutting, planting, and the maintenance of bourgou (*Echinocloa stagnina*). The project then facilitated the transportation of bourgou cuttings for planting, and helped to protect the regenerated bourgou before the arrival of the annual flood.

Commune	Villages	Area (ha)	Number of Beneficiaries
Diaptodji	Samanguiraye	15	240
	Daba	15	
	Karma	10	
	Poye	10	
S/T 1		50	
Korombana	Korientzé	25	143
S/T 2		25	
Ourobé Doudé	Sindégué (Sekawol)	25	97
S/T 3		25	
TOTAL		100	480

C. Sub-Sector 1.3: Improving Agricultural Production/Food Security

Market Gardens. The RECAPE project worked with 14 women’s market gardens to repair critical agricultural infrastructure damaged during the crisis, distributing emergency seed through a voucher program to offset the gap in local supply. Through this support, women were able to immediately resume production for household consumption and sale in local markets.

The project team evaluated the impact of market garden support on crop production at six (Tiécouraré, Mbessena, Korientzé Ngorodia, Bagui and Dari Tiécouraré, Mbessena, Korientzé Ngorodia, Bagui and Dari) of the 14 women-run market gardening sites, where the annual crop cycle for shallots and potato was complete. Market gardens are roughly one hectare in size, and provide space for approximately 40 women cultivate shallot and potato.

The evaluation recorded an average production level of 7,870 tons of shallots per site (roughly 196.75 kg per woman). This is enough to cover at least 10 months of household consumption needs, although one-half to two-thirds is typically sold at market. The potato crop fared equally well. On average, each woman harvested 141.25 kg of potatoes for a total yield of 5,650 tons per

site. Approximately two-thirds of the potato harvest is sold in the market. Women use revenues from the sale of products for household expenditures, including healthcare and their children's education.



Harvest of shallot in Tiécouraré.



Shallot harvested.



Potatoes harvested in Korientzé.

D. Sub-Sector 1.4: Irrigation

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

The RECAPE project completed the rehabilitation of the Falembougou rice field (32 hectares) in Dangol-Boré and the Koudioum rice plain (40 hectares). Work included the rehabilitation of rainwater dams and structures in Falembougou, and the reconstruction of water catchments, irrigation canals, and diversion structures in Koudioum.

E. Sub-Sector 2.1: Livelihoods Restoration

The RECAPE project provided small cash grants to enable conflict-affected beneficiaries to recover productive assets and infuse money into the local economy. During the last quarter, project staff conducted follow-up meetings with individuals who received grants. Approximately 84.6% of beneficiaries were able to restart their microenterprises.

Local market conditions support NEF's findings:

- Fattened animals (sheep, goats) are present at concessions visited.
- Local markets appear more dynamic with attendance close to pre-crisis levels.
- Small traders have strong capital reserves.

- Local micro-finance institutions have begun to lend again, suggesting beneficiaries are sufficiently confident in the stability of the business climate to take out debt.

Overall, the local economy continues to recover as security improves. Women beneficiaries interviewed report an increased sense of optimism in the community, and hope the upward trend continues over the coming months.

III. PROJECT SUCCESSES

As the subsistence needs of communities affected by the social and climatic crises have been addressed, the impact and success of the project has increased. Key successes noted this quarter include:

- Completed rehabilitation of 40 ha of irrigated perimeter in Koudioum and 32 ha of rice plain in Falembougou. 625 farmers will be able to plant and harvest rice in these areas during the 2014-2015 season.
- Strong production recorded at market gardens and rehabilitated fishponds.
- 84.6% success in relaunch of economic activities in targeted areas through cash grants. Local markets have attendance close to pre-crisis levels, and local micro-finance institutions have begun to lend capital again.

Success stories are included in [Attachment 3](#).

IV. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE QUARTER

The project did not encounter any difficulty in the implementation of its activities during the fourth quarter.

V. OVERVIEW/IMPACT OF SECURITY SITUATION

The security situation in the project area is gradually improving. During this quarter, no acts of banditry were reported. Social and economic life has generally returned to its normal course.

ATTACHMENT 1: PROGRESS ACCORDING TO INDICATORS

Sub-sector	Indicators & Targets	Achieved in Quarter	Achieved Overall
Objective 1: To promote increased food production and emergency recovery of capacity in cereal production, fishing, market gardening, and livestock production.			
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) This support has enabled the resumption of production in 5 rebuilt fishponds and traditional fisheries that were in use prior to the crisis. The project was under-target due to individuals leaving trainings for health reasons and the prolonged absence of around a dozen fishing groups that were identified in the zone prior to the crisis.
	Average number of kilograms of fish harvested per fisher in six-months, by sex. (Target : 1,000 Kg per fisher)	662.7kg After 6 months of operation in the 5 rehabilitated ponds and traditional fisheries, the average production per fish is estimated at 662.7 kg of fresh fish. Based on discussions with fishers, the output gap is due to insufficient fish food to support the rapid and equal increase in fish production.	662.7kg
Livestock	Number of animals benefitting from or affected by livestock activities (Target : 100,000)	-	101,500 43,000 cattle; 57,000 sheep and goats; 1,000 donkeys; 500 camels. Distribution of supplemental feed and rehabilitation of water points satisfied at least 60% of needs of 101,500 animals during the lean period and migration season in the areas covered by the project.

	Number of people benefitting from livestock activities, by sex. (Target 2,428 ; 850 women)	480 people (144 women) Benefited from pasture regeneration in Diaptodji (50 ha), Korombana (25 ha), and Ourobé Doudé (25 ha)	5,698 people (2,478 women) Benefited from supplemental feed distribution, restoration of water points, and regeneration of pastures.
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 Rain fed rice (Nerica L2) = 3 months Irrigated rice (ADNY 11) = 6.5 months Women's Market Gardens/Shallot and Potatoes = 10 months Women sell a portion of production at markets, with funds earned covering health, education, and other expenses.	2.5 - 10 months (4 months average for grains; 10 months average for vegetable gardening)
	Number of people benefitting from seed systems/agricultural input activities by sex. (Target: 7,800 direct participants; 3,980 women)	-	7,800 (4,234 women)
Irrigation	Number of hectares irrigated. (Target: 100)	- 32 hectares restored in Falembougou	102 ha
	Number of people benefitting from irrigation activities, by sex. (Target: 1,000; 500 women)	-	1063 people (378 women)
	Projected increase in number of months of food self-sufficiency due to distributed seed system/agricultural irrigation equipment activities. (Target: 6 months)	- Rain fed rice (Nerica L2) = 3 months Irrigated rice (ADNY 11) = 6.5 months	3 - 6.5 months (variable, dependent on crop; average ~5)

Objective 2: To restore viable livelihoods for conflict-affected communities, returnees, and IDPs in support of economic recovery.			
Seed systems and Agricultural Inputs	Number of people assisted through livelihoods restoration activities, by sex. (Target: 1,900 direct participants; 1,400 women)	-	1900 1400 women 500 men
	Percent of beneficiaries reporting their livelihoods restored within three to six months after receiving support. (Target: 80%)	84.6% Through monitoring exchange visits in 8 targeted communes, it was found that 84.6% of grant recipients were able to restart livelihood activities through the support of the project.	84.6%
	Total USD amount channeled into the program area through sub-sector activities. (Target: \$190,000)	-	\$190,000

ATTACHMENT 2: FISH PRODUCTION MONITORING

Date	Fish Caught		Location	Method Used
	Species	Quantity (KG)		

ATTACHMENT 3: SUCCESS STORIES

A. Sanata Magnata gets a second chance through cash grant

Sanata Magnata is a 43-year old commercial saleswoman from Bagui. For 15 years, Sanata traded smoked fish and root vegetables to feed her family. As a widower, she depended upon income from her small business to educate, clothe, and feed her children.

When the 2011 crisis hit, Sanata's family—like many in the region—was forced to flee the violence, leaving valuable assets behind.

“The crisis changed my life,” Sanata said. “Everything I had built collapsed around me like a house of cards.”

Sanata left her village, leaving all her belongings behind, out of fear that jihadist groups would enlist her children. When she returned 18 months later, her house was in ruins and rebels had taken most of her business supplies.

“I needed funding to rebuild my business, but local agencies were not loaning,” Sanata said.

Too many clients had defaulted due to the crisis, and local funds needed to recapitalize before issuing more loans. Out of work and homeless, Sanata fell back upon the generosity of her family and neighbors to keep her children alive.

Then, with support from the United States Agency for International Development/Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the Near East Foundation began implementing the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) project to address the immediate recovery needs of people in northern Mali to restore livelihoods and food security.

Through the project, Sanata received a cash grant. She reconnected with her network of suppliers and distributors, replaced capital stolen in her absence, rebuilt her house using mud bricks in place of straw, and even purchased a canoe to scale up her fishing activity. Today, her catch has recovered to pre-crisis levels, and she has enough money to pay for food and send her children to school.

“When I first heard that grants were available, I did not believe it,” Sanata said. “But when I received my voucher and learned where and how to claim my grant, I began to cry knowing that someone thought of my suffering, and answered my prayers for help. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”



Sanata Magnanta restarted her fish business through a RECAPE cash grant.

B. A Mayor Reflects on 2011 crisis – and those who came to help.

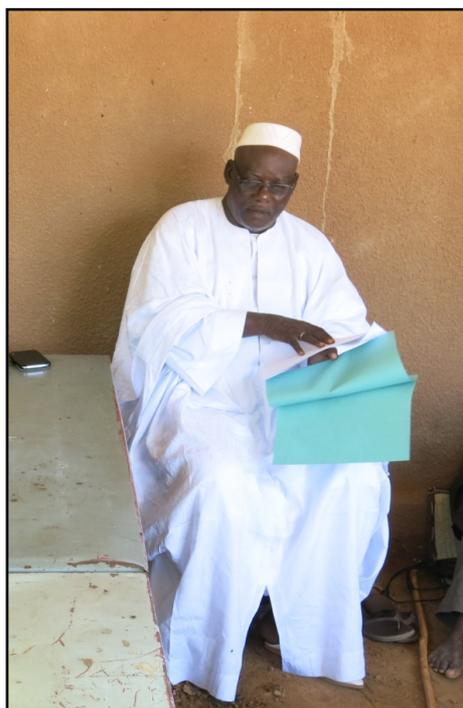
As the 68 year-old mayor of the urban commune of Douentza, Hassane Cissé has seen his share of crises in his lifetime. The droughts of 1973 and 1984 claimed thousands of lives and millions of dollars in lost livestock and cropland. The 2011 crisis presented a whole new challenge for Hassane and his community.

“The 2011 crisis was more traumatic than anything we had ever encountered,” Hassane said. “My community was subjected to rape, theft, harassment, and severe punishment at the hands of the rebels; we lost our most basic freedoms. The security situation deteriorated to such a point that many chose to leave, even if it meant abandoning their possessions. Production began to collapse, because no one could borrow money or find supplies.”

Despite the tense security situation, the Near East Foundation began implementing the Restoring Economic Capacity of Populations Affected by the Crisis in Northern Mali (RECAPE) with support from the United States Agency for International Development/Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA).

The project channeled livelihood support to struggling producers in remote areas where other development organizations could not work. It provided certified seeds to farmers’ cooperatives, restocked fishponds, distributed fishing and agricultural equipment, and rehabilitated vandalized irrigation infrastructure and watering points. The emergency intervention preserved hard-won development gains, and got families operations back on track in time for the start of the annual crop cycle.

“Words fail to capture how grateful we are for the project’s support,” Hassane said. “Your generosity in our time of need will remain in our memories forever. We wish to continue our partnership so that those who continue to suffer can benefit from your good work”.



Hassane Cisse reflects on the 2011 crisis, and the important impact of the RECAPE project.