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**USAID**  
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CARE Haiti

**Final Evaluation of the Food Voucher Program  
"Kore LavniNou – 2"  
implemented in North-west & Upper Artibonite  
Departments**

**Final Report**

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ASEC	Assemblée de la section communale
BMI	Body Mass Index
CASEC	Conseil d'administration de la section communale
CNSA	Coordination nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire
HTG	Haitian Gourde
MARNDR	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et du Développement Rural
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PIN	Personal Identification Number
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

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## Executive Summary

This document reports findings from the final evaluation of Kore Lavni Nou – 2, a food voucher emergency relief project implemented by CARE in three communes of the Upper Artibonite and North-West Departments of Haiti. This intervention aimed at providing food to the vulnerable households affected by the extensive drought and recurring food insecurity to offset harmful coping strategies of the beneficiaries and support them in recovering assets. CARE and its partner pursued the following objectives:

- providing food vouchers as a short-term safety net for 8,000 food insecure and extremely poor families to fill gaps exacerbated by the disasters and to reinforce local markets in Gonaives, Mole Saint Nicholas, and Terre Neuve and,
- piloting healthy diet promotion with fresh fruit and vegetable paper vouchers approach in Terre Neuve commune to reach 1,000 food insecure and extremely poor families.

CARE commissioned Diagnostic & Development Group to evaluate relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and effects of Kore Lavni Nou-2. We used both qualitative and quantitative methodology: a) focus groups and interviews with relevant stakeholders, and on other hand b) survey of representative samples of beneficiary households, non-beneficiary household, operating shops owners and petty traders. Data collection was held from May 13th to May 22nd in Môle Saint-Nicolas, Gonaives and Terre-Neuve. Using those data and the ones from baseline, the project's effects were analyzed via first difference and double differences or difference in differences techniques.

Local authorities and beneficiaries acknowledged that Kore Lavni Nou – 2 was relevant to alleviate hunger in their community. Artibonite and North-West departments were severely affected by the shocks of hurricane Sandy. Households lost small farm plantations, livestock and assets. National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA) reported that prevalence of food insecurity reached 43% in the North-West department and the rate of prevalence of severe food insecurity reached 41 % in Artibonite department in end of 2012. From this study, local authorities and beneficiaries reported that natural disasters and severe food insecurity were the main issues of the communities. Some women reported that loss of their subsistence small farms lead to difficulty to feed newborns and children. In general, households reported that coping strategies were threefold: cutting trees for charcoal, increasing debts and consumption of immature mangoes with salt.

Specific criteria and participation of community leaders eased the implementation process. Local authorities, registered vendors and beneficiaries also acknowledged that Kore Lavni Nou – 2 was innovative and safer compared to previous food distribution programs in the communities. Beneficiaries reported that they enjoyed the privacy of redemption process respecting their dignity. Following initial redemption, effective solutions were found to address crowd and pushing in Gonaives. In fact, CARE was challenged by low supply capacity of local shops and their informal status. Other challenge emerged from holdup in negotiating with Action Contre la Faim (ACF) a common strategy for promotion campaign of fresh food in Terre-Neuve.

Indeed, beneficiaries could hedge against hungry during project's food supply. From the baseline to the final evaluation, in Terre-Neuve the percentage of household with children at risk of acute malnutrition dropped from 31,2 % to 28,1% (-3,1 points) while it increased for the control group at 33,8%, which means a net decrease of 5,7 points. In Gonaives a net decrease of 2,1 points was observed. However, in Môle Saint-Nicolas, the situation worsened for 2 points. Coping strategies of households were improved from initial situation: borrow food dropped from 83,2% to 55,7%; begging from 48,1% to 17,4%, the households that decreased the number of meals they usually consumed daily decreased from 100% to 82,4%. Nonetheless, the contagion effect due to

beneficiaries sharing with non-beneficiaries limited the conclusion regarding the net effect. Kore Lavni Nou-2 contributed to recapitalization of households by cumulating savings from food vouchers. Those savings were mainly allocated to children education (34%), to health service care (20,9%) and to invest in livestock (9,5%) or in savings (9,5%). Similarly, vendors and petty traders reported that sales volume at least doubled and gross margins increased.

This project was a short term emergency intervention. Interviewed beneficiaries and community leaders indicated resurgence of previous hunger situation. Petty traders in Terre-Neuve reported a decline in their number of clients, after end of Kore Lavni Nou-2, despite beneficiaries claimed a higher share of consumption of vegetable. Local authorities' wondered why CARE did not invest or reinforce agriculture and irrigation systems for a sustainable intervention.

Key lessons learnt are important for initiatives targeted or similar communities. Kore Lavni Nou-2 revealed the prominence of community involvement and definition of specific, tangible criteria to select poor families among vulnerable ones. Second, assessment of signal coverage is necessary prior project design in order to choose either electronic or paper food voucher. Third, beneficiaries are sensitive and value self-respect in food distribution program. Fourth, nutrition awareness campaigns related to the fresh fruit and vegetable consumption are important to even it is hard to separate a consumption shift from necessity in such distress living conditions. Fifth, CARE and its partners should address leaders' critics that those short sight interventions have no impact on the root causes of hunger and drought. Finally, implementers should be aware to mitigate unintended results of increasing dependence on food assistance by household.

Following recommendations are set forth to inform future design of similar projects:

**Community members:** A predefined quota of elected and non-elected community members should be used to counter balance political influence from deviating the selection process from purpose. Programs should budget trips and refreshment for committee participants. Elder without national ID should be prioritized as part of their exclusion in society.

**Electronic voucher system:** Cost of electronic voucher program can be improved by using company who have pre-established money transfer system or technology. Therefore, price should not be increased with additional number of clients but opposite. Using beneficiary picture and a unique identification number should ease the process against fraud.

**Promotion of local fresh fruit and vegetable and local production:** The fresh fruit program should be extended to other areas. Vegetables are short term crops, they are more likely to respond to demand within a short term project.

Finally, short term intervention should be part of a more holistic and comprehensive program to address the root causes of the hunger and natural disasters. Partnerships should be built with government technical agencies and other non-governmental organization to leverage positive effects of emergency project such Kore Lavni Nou-2.

Even, dependence behavior on food assistance can be alleviated by sustainable conditional community project such planting trees, irrigation system, watershed protection which may have a higher community pride component than only receiving food.

## 1. Introduction

This introduction section presents the general implementation context of the food voucher program, Kore Lavni Nou-2, in Upper Artibonite and Northwest in the beginning of year 2013. We provide a brief description of the situation leading to the conception and implementation of this project including the scope of this current evaluation. This section is closed by presentation of the methodology adopted to carry out the evaluation.

### 1.1 Context

Food insecurity and malnutrition affects a high proportion of Haitian population and those issues have been aggravated by natural disasters shocks such as hurricanes Isaac and Sandy<sup>1</sup> in October 2012. Following hurricane Sandy, the National Commission for Food Security (CNSA)<sup>2</sup> estimated that 1.5 millions of peoples were in severe food insecurity conditions while six millions are vulnerable. Chronic food insecurity is directly related to insufficient food intake (quantity and quality) and precarious environmental and health conditions. Food insecurity is concentrated more in regions of the country with drought, poor road conditions and poor access to markets. As a result, food prices are increasing in those markets based on the lack of supply to local markets and mainly by low purchase power of habitants of those rural areas. In fact, Artibonite department, despite its larger size and its agricultural potential, had the highest proportion of habitants suffering from severe hunger which was 41,3 %, while this proportion was 21,7 % in the case of North-West department (CNSA, 2012)<sup>3</sup>. For instance, about 5% of the 6-59 months children in the Artibonite department suffer from acute malnutrition<sup>4</sup>. Emergency responses to this acute situation came mainly from the public sector from its social programs and non-governmental organization working in the region with the support of funders such USAID.

Built on its experience in the region and a recent successful food security program, CARE proposed Kore Lavni Nou-2 to address hunger issue of extremely poor households. The project aims to provide food vouchers to protect the health of affected households, offsetting harmful coping strategies, and assisting them to recover from the loss of livelihood assets” by contributing to increase food security for 8,000 extremely poor and food insecure households in Upper Artibonite and North-West departments. CARE and its partners pursued the following objectives:

- provide food vouchers as a short-term safety net for 8,000 food insecure and extremely poor families to fill gaps exacerbated by the disasters and to reinforce local markets in Gonaives, Mole Saint Nicholas, and Terre Neuve and,
- pilot healthy diet promotion with fresh fruit and vegetable paper vouchers approach in Terre-Neuve commune to reach 1,000 food insecure and extremely poor families.

Kore Lavni Nou-2 is a replication of Kore Lavni Nou, an innovative electronic food voucher program implemented by CARE in the Grand’Anse department. This program worked with local registered merchants that supplied dry foods to the beneficiary households. Being aware of the need

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<sup>1</sup> Haiti- Hurricane Sandy, Fact Sheet USAID. February, 2013.  
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/02.15.13%20-%20Haiti%20Hurricane%20Sandy%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

21,5 million d’Haïtiens dans l’insécurité alimentaire élevée, Le Matin,  
<http://www.lematinhaiti.com/contenu.php?idtexte=34399>

<sup>3</sup> Rapport d’évaluation d’urgence des impacts du cyclone Sandy sur la sécurité alimentaire.CNSA. PP 36. <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp254368.pdf>

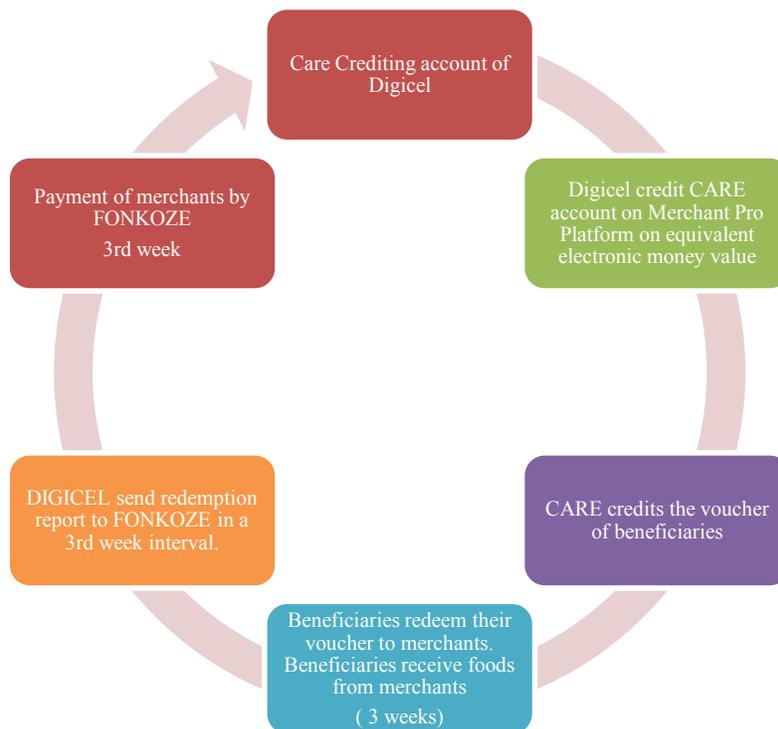
<sup>4</sup><http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLACREGTOPNUT/Resources/HaitiNutritionAssessmentEnglishFINAL.pdf>

to promote diet diversity and intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, in partnership with Action Contre la Faim (ACF), CARE piloted a combined dry staple and fresh food voucher component of the program in Terre-Neuve. Beneficiaries in Môle Saint-Nicolas and Gonaives received only a voucher of 50 USD for dry food but those in Terre-Neuve benefited monthly 38 USD electronic voucher for dry foods such as beans, rice, corn and oil, and a 12 USD paper voucher for fresh fruits and vegetables<sup>5</sup>.

In collaboration with community committees, the list of the beneficiaries who were eligible for the participation in the program was determined based on the project defined vulnerability criteria. Once the selection completed, the list of beneficiaries was provided to Digicel, a Haitian telecommunication company, to be uploaded on a centralized electronic platform. Digicel provided training to the participating merchants on the use of mobile transfer system, the reimbursement process at Fonkoze (cash-out point after the redemption of the vouchers). CARE field staffs were also trained to provide ongoing support.

Operating local shops owners were approached and selected according to pre-established criteria to supply the beneficiaries with a basket of products composed of the above-mentioned items while petty traders supplied Terre-Neuve beneficiaries also with fresh fruits and vegetables.

The beneficiaries were provided a voucher card and a pin scratch card. The PIN scratch card serial number was electronically linked with the voucher card number and computed in the electronic platform. Every month, the voucher was credited and beneficiaries were advised by mobilizers to visit a registered local merchant to redeem the food. Figure 1 below summaries this process.



**Figure 1. Kore Lavni Nou-2 electronic food voucher process**

<sup>5</sup>Each household received a monthly transfer of 2000 HTG.

## 1.2 Scope of the evaluation

As per the terms of reference, the objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Assess the outcomes of the project, intended and unintended, positive or negative, on the direct beneficiaries and the population living in the 3 target communes of the project versus non-beneficiaries.
- Determine the adequacy of the program design to meet the identified needs in the target area.
- Compare the final conditions with the baseline findings and present persisting gaps in coping strategies used by the households to mitigate their vulnerability.
- Relate lessons learned to appropriate stakeholders.
- Identify key obstacles preventing the correct execution of the program.
- Identify key successes and recommendations for future consideration.
- Evaluate the partnership approach in the commune of Terre-Neuve and added value of the combined methodology for the food vouchers.

To reach these objectives, first, we analyzed the project's objectives and intended results in the lenses of the needs of the targeted population and their community. In other words, the evaluation looked at to what extent the activities and outputs of the program were consistent with the overall goal, the specific objectives, the intended effects, and how these specific objectives and expected effects met the identified needs in the targeted areas.

Second, we sought to understand the extent to which the objectives were achieved or not. In the case the expected results were attained, we also analyzed the strategies that have been used to minimize the gap between planned and realized activities.

Through another axis, we assessed to what extent the intended outcomes were achieved, and what net effect they produced in the daily living of the beneficiaries, the local markets and the community. We also sought to identify and evaluate the intended and unintended, positive or negative effects of the project on the beneficiary families and participating merchants.

Lastly, the evaluation considered the extent to which the observed effects, if any, could be maintained beyond the project's period. Therefore, we analyzed to what extent the program created long-term positive changes in the community, and how long those changes could be expected to be maintained after the project end.

## 1.3 Summary of the Methodological approach

This section presents a brief summary of the methodology designed to carry out the evaluation study. A detailed methodological note was submitted to CARE prior to data collection.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, a mixed perspective was used: quantitative and qualitative approach. Data were collected from the following key informants:

- CARE Staff
- Mobile company responsible for the electronic food voucher service provision
- Monitoring and evaluation staff
- Local authorities
- Local shops
- Beneficiary households
- High risk groups as under five children/handicapped and pregnant women
- Control group (non-beneficiary households)

We acquired also some documents generated during the lifespan of the projects that helped us in formulating a picture of the implementing course of the project, albeit a partial one. The documents surveyed included:

- Project's proposal
- Narrative reports
- Baseline study report
- Data collection tools

To complete our picture of the project, information was collected from all the stakeholders. Quantitative data were collected from a sample of beneficiary and non-beneficiary households and were compared to those of the baseline study. *Non-proportional stratification* was used to select the sample of beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and shops in the three targeted communes (Gonaïves, Môle St-Nicolas and Terre-Neuve).

Considering the *finite population* of 8000 households, to guarantee a 95 % confidence level and a 4.5% margin error, the minimal size of the sample of beneficiary households should be 448 but was rounded up to 500 beneficiaries to balance potential effects of non-answers. This margin of error was considered based on budget and timeframe constraints.

For the control group (non-beneficiary households), the sample size was 60% of that of beneficiary group, say 300 non-beneficiary households. Table 1 records the distribution of the samples in the different communes.

Tableau 1. Distribution of the samples by commune						
Commune	Section communale	Beneficiaries		Non-beneficiaries		Children
		Targetted	Realized	Targetted	Realized	Realized
Gonaïves	Labranle	125	129	75	76	7
	Poteaux	125	131	75	75	4
Subtotal 1		250	260	150	151	11
Môles St-Nicolas	Cote-de-Fer	62	69	38	35	0
	Mare-Rouge	62	67	37	55	10
Subtotal 2		124	136	75	90 <sup>6</sup>	10
Terre-Neuve	Bois Neuf	63	67	38	40	5
	Lagon	63	63	37	40	8
Subtotal 3		126	130	75	80	13
Total		500	526	300	321	34

The control group was chosen from households having similar characteristics as the beneficiary group (table 2). They were selected from a different distance of beneficiaries and randomly by an interval of five households. Indeed, the proportion of households with one or more members suffering from chronic diseases was respectively 4,2% and 5% in the case of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. In both groups, around 31% had at least one child fostered to other household. Other

<sup>6</sup>High variances in the number realized compared to the number targeted are due to the fact some surveyors surveyed more respondents than what was requested. However, this does not affect the quality of data since the selection procedure was respected and because the size sample target was the *minimal* size required.

characteristics such as households with handicapped members or elderly people were quite similar in both cases, except for pregnancy cases. Indeed, the proportion of households with at least one pregnant woman was respectively 3,8% and 8,1% for beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups.

**Table 2. Sample characteristics (% of households)**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Non-beneficiaries</b>
Households with one or more members suffering from chronic diseases	4,2	5
Households with children placed in domesticity	30,9	30,8
Lactating women	2,5	1,6
Pregnant	3,8	8,1
Households with physical handicapped members	15,4	12,8
Households with one or more members suffering from Mental diseases	2,5	1,8
Elderly people	12	15,6

Trained surveyors used a set of qualitative and quantitative tools to collect required data. For households, the questions were principally about their coping strategies, the types and frequency of food consumption, assets possession, etc. The goal was to analyze the conditions of the beneficiary group before and after the project as compared to the non-beneficiary group. Concerning local merchants, the questions addressed principally the value of sales, etc., before and after the project. A special questionnaire was also designed to assess the fruit and vegetable promotion program in Terre-Neuve. The questions were principally about respondents' awareness of nutritional value of the fruits and vegetables, and the type and frequency of fruits and vegetables consumption. The questionnaire was administered to both beneficiary and non-beneficiary group.

We also collected anthropometric measures (height, weight, waist/ hip circumference, arm circumference) on a *random sample* of 30 children aged between 5 and 10 years because they represented a very high risk group. These measures were used, among others, to compute Body Mass Index (BMI) and compared with Child Growth Standards fixed by the World Health Organization since they were not collected by the baseline study.

To complete the quantitative data, interviews and focus groups were held with stakeholders of the project: local authorities (mayors, ASECs, CASECs), beneficiary households, participating local merchants, CARE staff, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) staff, etc. In addition, some focus groups were held with mixed groups (both males and females) and with only females in order to assess the effects of the projects on gender dynamics.

Table 3 reports the number of interviews and focus groups realized and the number of participants of each.

Table 3. Number of interviews and focus groups held and number of participants		
Interviews	Number of interviews conducted	
1. CARE management staff	2	
2. M&E staff	1	
3. CREER/CECRET	1	
4. ACF	0	
5. Digicel	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	
Focus groups	Number of focus groups	Number of participants per focus group
1. Beneficiaries (men and women)	3	8
2. Beneficiary women	3	8
3. Local merchants	3	5
4. Petty traders	1	5
5. Local authorities	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>31</b>

Data collection was held from May 13th to May 22nd in the 3 targeted communes.

### Data analysis

Triangulation was used to capture **key findings** from the qualitative data derived by concordance analysis. In this perspective, different sources of information were used to address each key question of the evaluation. However in some cases, we choose to report stand-alone but contextual comments (quotations) to illustrate specific general situations.

Data related to the project's effects were analyzed using *first difference* and *double differences* or *difference in differences techniques*. First difference allows comparing separately the situations of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries before and after the program (baseline data vs. final evaluation data). For instance, suppose the percentage of beneficiary households who used a specific coping strategy is  $A$  and  $C$  during the baseline and the final evaluation respectively,  $X = C - A$  represents the first difference. That allows assessing the improvement of the situation during the project. However, to evaluate to what extent this improvement could be attributed to the project, we computed on one hand the same first difference for the control group, which suggests what would this improvement be were it not for the project. And, on other hand, the net effects of the project were assessed by computing the difference of these two first differences, the difference in differences. Suppose that the first difference is  $Y = B - D$  in the case of the control group. The net effect of the project on the aforementioned coping strategy is the double difference as measured by  $X - Y$ . Nonetheless, this technique supposes minimal or zero contagion between the two groups.

## 2. Key findings of the evaluation

This section presents the key findings of the evaluation. First we discuss the project's relevance in the lenses of the acute food insecurity prevalence in Upper Artibonite and Northwest departments. This perspective of analysis is crucial for the interpretation of the results while reminding that Kore Lavni Nou-2 was an emergency response with purpose to mitigate the consequences of natural shocks. Second, the evaluation focuses on the project's effectiveness and efficiency analyzing the outputs, the management structure and partnership and the strategies adopted to overcome difficulties. Afterwards, we present an analysis of the project's effects on both direct and indirect beneficiaries; based on the short term scope of the project, we avoid using the term impacts. Lastly, the section is ended with general discussions on the project's sustainability.

### 2.1 Analysis of the project's relevance

The Artibonite and North-West departments were severely affected by the shocks of hurricane Sandy. People lost their cultures, livestock and assets. They are among the departments where food insecurity has been the highest. According CNSA<sup>7</sup>, the prevalence rate of food insecurity has reached 43% of population from the North-West department. After the drought season prevailing in this department, this coordination observed that the households are out of food stock and then should be supplied from the market since the winter crops composed of maize and beans were 50% lower than its normal level. The report<sup>8</sup> of CNSA following Sandy hurricane also confirmed that Artibonite was the department with highest rate of severe food insecurity.

Drought seasons and acute food insecurity were the main issues that came out from the focus groups with both local authorities and beneficiaries. Some beneficiaries reported having lost all (gardens, arable lands, livestock and even houses) after hurricane Sandy. Therefore, it was hard to provide food for household's members and even newborns had to face the lack of food. A woman described her poignant living conditions following hurricane Sandy and affirmed: *"I lost all during the hurricane; even my house was destroyed. If it wasn't for friends to provide the clothing, I would have nothing."* The most common coping strategies reminded by the beneficiaries were cutting trees to make charcoal for sale on the market, contracting debts for basic needs or buying food on credit, and consuming immature mangoes with salt as vegetables.

Another participant stressed the erosion and unproductive environment faced by thousands of peoples in the region of North-West department. As this woman, some peoples lost their relatives. She acknowledged:

*"In the aftermath of hurricane Sandy we lost our land, only the stones remained. Even before the hurricane we had to cut down a lot of trees because of hunger. We have no livestock and no land. All other persons that could help us are now dead."* Another woman reported that one night they had nothing to eat, and then they boiled premature mangoes with salt.



Credit: DDG/Focus group with beneficiaries

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.cnsa509.org/Web/Bulletin\\_Observatoires/OSANO/BULLETTIN%20OSANO%2001.pdf](http://www.cnsa509.org/Web/Bulletin_Observatoires/OSANO/BULLETTIN%20OSANO%2001.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>Rapport d'évaluation d'urgence des impacts du cyclone Sandy sur la sécurité alimentaire. CNSA. PP 36. <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp254368.pdf>

Buying food on credit was also a very common coping strategy reported by the beneficiaries from almost all the “sections communales”<sup>9</sup>. Some of them evoked they were sometimes outraged by merchants because they could not pay for food. The latter sometimes went to their home to claim their money. When that happened, they said they stayed inside and told the children to tell the merchants that they were absent. In addition, child malnutrition rate<sup>10</sup> was 12,7 % and 12,1 % respectively for North-West and Artibonite department and counted among highest rates while it was about 7% in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince.

In such a context, the goal “Increased food security for 8,000 extremely poor and food insecure households in the Artibonite and North-West Departments of Haiti”, and the objective to “Provide food vouchers as a short-term safety net for 8,000 food insecure and extremely poor families to fill gaps exacerbated by the disasters and to reinforce local markets in Gonaives, Môle Saint-Nicolas, and Terre-Neuve”, at a first glance seem to be relevant. The needs were manifested. Therefore the goal and objective seem to be consistent with the needs of the targeted communities.

Both local authorities and beneficiaries acknowledged that the project was of great support to mitigate the food crisis that prevailed in the sequel of hurricanes Sandy. During the six months of the lifespan of the project, the beneficiaries could hedge against hunger. However, both groups legitimately reported that at the end of the project the living conditions of the beneficiaries become the same as before the start of the project. Therefore, the project filled in the needs only temporarily since it was an emergency response and the severity of food insecurity is deeper than seasonal shocks or occasional natural disasters.

## **2.2 Analysis of the project’s effectiveness and efficiency**

This section focuses on the project’s effectiveness and efficiency. First, we analyse the outputs as understood by the stakeholders and how they were carried out through different activities. Second, we discuss the general management approach that was adopted from the design of the project to the delivery of services to the beneficiaries. Subsequently, we consider the main issues encountered to achieve those outcomes and the strategies developed to overcome them. The section closes with an analysis of the stakeholders’ satisfaction with the services provided through the project.

### **2.2.1 Project’s outputs**

As mentioned previously, Kore Lavni Nou-2 was a short response intended to contribute to CARE’s primary humanitarian mission as well as USAID’s objective to support the people affected by natural disasters. The project also fell under Haitian Government objective to deliver emergency response to people in North-West department in the sequel of the last two years natural disasters.

According to CARE staff, the project attained the 8,000 targeted beneficiaries in the all three communes except for the first two months where around 290 vouchers were not all redeemed but 265 were authorized to have a last redemption at the end of the project due to the lack of capacity of program vendors for exchanging the coupons. This situation resulted from signal issues, and principally happened in Lagon.

As mentioned in the beginning of the report, each household received a monthly transfer of 2000 HTG for buying dry food except for the commune of Terre-Neuve where they have received 1600 HTG for the dry food and 400 HTG for fresh food. Household size was respectively about 8,6 and 7 in Gonaives, Terre-Neuve and Môles St-Nicolas as depicted in Table 4 below. Therefore, on

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<sup>9</sup>A section communale is the smallest territorial division in Haiti.

<sup>10</sup> EMMUS V

average, each household member received food for an equivalent 262,58, 366,28 and 287,83 HTG in Gonaïves, Terre-Neuve and Môle St-Nicolas respectively. This suggests that at an individual level, each household member in Terre-Neuve would benefit a greater consumption share from voucher than household member of the other two communes.

In general, the monthly transfer amount was greater than the monthly food-consumption-related expenses reported by the households at the baseline moment. Indeed, at this time, about 28% estimated such expenses between 2004 and 4000 HTG, and about 51% between 404 and 2000 HTG. Thus, Kore Lavni Nou-2 contributed to considerably improve access to food for the beneficiary households.

Table 4. Beneficiary household composition				
	Gonaïves	Terre-Neuve	Môles St Nicolas	Overall
Household <i>average</i> size	7,62	5,46	6,95	6,92
Average number of under 18 people	2,81	2,48	3,30	2,88
Average number of under 5 children	1,58	1,40	1,67	1,56
Ratio voucher value/Household size	262,58	366,28	287,83	287,83

All the interviewed stakeholders seemed to understand and discuss the project objective, which proves dissemination of information before the start of the project. The local merchants and the beneficiaries acknowledged training sessions were held periodically from the start to the lifespan.

The local authorities participating to the focus groups acknowledged that the objectives of the project were discussed before the implantation but they criticized the short term approach that they considered insufficient to mitigate effects of chronic food insecurity. It seemed that they did not understand it was an emergency response project. They pointed out that at the end of the project the livelihood conditions of the beneficiaries go back to the starting point, since the project did not intervene on the causes of food insecurity but rather its effects.



Credit: DDG/Focus group with local authorities

A local authority stated the following: *“The conditions of the beneficiaries are now worse than at the start of the project; they were used to struggle with themselves to feed their family. The project brought hope to them for six months, and after this hope is broken.”*

Local shop owners also shared the concerns of local authorities. All agreed that the project was relevant in the aftermath of hurricanes Sandy. However, they pointed out the number of beneficiaries selected was too small as compared to the scope of vulnerability in their areas. They also express the wish that those interventions tackled also structural challenge as drought and land productivity. One of them pointed out *“There are so many vulnerable households in my area that the number of selected households was insufficient [...]. The people really needed the food project. However, it would be better to strengthen the project with an irrigation component. This might better mitigate the vulnerability situation of the people.”*

## 2.2.2 Mechanism selection of beneficiary households and criteria

According to World Food Program (WFP) to be considered food secure, a household should have all-time access to sufficient and nutritious food. This entails food availability in sufficient and consistent basis, food access through home production, purchase, etc. and food utilization in terms of nutritional impact on the households members<sup>11</sup>.

Moreover, the World Bank defines vulnerability as “the probability or risk today of being in poverty or to fall into deeper poverty in the future”. In the lenses of this definition, vulnerability is then difficult to measure since evaluating the probability of being in poverty is hard to estimate. Therefore, this institution suggests income, consumption and variability as proxies for vulnerability<sup>12</sup>. Vulnerability analysis can be carried out considering variables such as health status, weigh, asset ownership, income level, etc.<sup>13</sup>

We also found the contribution of World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) complementary as it defines vulnerability as the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of disasters<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, children, pregnant women, elderly people, malnourished and people who are ill are at risk groups in disasters and emergency situations.

Taking account of those considerations and the socio-economic context of the targeted regions, the selection process had to be specific, transparent and non-equivoque. From those lenses, the selection of beneficiaries based on the following criteria was relevant:

- i. Women- headed families with multiple children
- ii. Families with adult members with chronic debilitating diseases, infirmity caused by old age or mental illness, or handicapped, not able to engage in sustained livelihoods and earn income,
- iii. Child- headed household
- iv. Pregnant and lactating women
- v. Orphans and internally displaced persons
- vi. Households with children who are “at-risk” or with acute malnutrition

Since vulnerability is hard to measure empirically, it results that it is also a difficult task to rank households according to their degree of vulnerability. In socio-economic surveys it is common to construct socio-economic indices using sophisticated statistical models based on proxies such as households’ assets (both quantity and types), health status (including presence of at risk people), income, etc. Although this approach allows a more “objective” ranking of the households, however it may be both financially and time prohibitive since it requires census of the targeted populations. Therefore, such techniques cannot be applied in short term projects such as Kore Lavni Nou-2.

To select the beneficiary households, CARE used a participatory approach involving community committees composed of mayors, ASECs, CASECs, religious authorities, etc., which, to our opinion, is a good alternative since those people can help differentiating between the most

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/node/359289>

<sup>12</sup> <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPA/0,,contentMDK:20238993~menuPK:492141~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:430367,00.html>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Environmental health in emergencies and disasters: a practical guide.

vulnerable based on the proximity with the community. This approach also gives more credibility to the selection mechanism.

Whether the selection criteria are well defined and the participatory approach adequate and credible, some local factors linked to the vulnerability seemed not to be considered which affected the selection process. First, According to local authorities, to be selected, the beneficiaries also needed to have an identification document such as “Carte d’identification nationale”, birth certificate, etc. In some remote areas, some extremely poor elderly are living alone and are deprived of all even identification documents. Living alone and lack of national documents is evident sign of vulnerability. One CARE staff also reported the cases of people who were initially selected by the local authorities and who did not have any identification document. Thus, special measures should be taken to select those particular elderly.

Secondly, some stakeholders acknowledged that some selected beneficiaries were not the most vulnerable. That was due to the fact that some remote areas are hard to access even by motorcycles, or because the community committee members did not have enough time to go to such areas. It emerged from the focus groups that some local authorities and other committee members did not go to some remote areas because they knew they would not be reimbursed their travelling fees. Though they recognized it was a good way to contribute to alleviate the hardship of the social conditions of the people, most of them reported that the project should at least reimburse such fees. One of them stated *“We took part to all the meetings. Some of us live very far; we had to pay the travelling fees ourselves. CARE did not even give us water, though we were dying from thirst. So days we were looking for potential beneficiaries from 7am to 4 pm; some of them live very far from us.”* Another one reported: *“People from some remote areas are the most vulnerable; they are deprived of everything. For instance, 3<sup>e</sup> Terre-Neuve cannot be accessed by car neither motorcycles. When I got back from there, I could not do anything except going to bed.”*

The effectiveness of the beneficiary selection was also discussed in the focus groups with the local shops owners but in a more contrasted way than with the local authorities. Some operating shops owners accused the local authorities to have selected people that were not vulnerable at all; they selected people who voted on them. They also mentioned that at redemption days, some handicapped persons and elderly who were not selected came to their shops with the hope to receive food, while some beneficiaries were very young. They also reported that in some cases the holder of the voucher did not even live in the community, some of them dwelling in Port-au-Prince. This point of view was contrasted by other participants who clearly indicated that the most vulnerable people were actually selected; in some cases, they are either handicapped or very old, so they could not come for redemption and had to send someone else to get the food for them.

### **2.2.3 Activities and indicators**

The following results were expected from the execution of Kore Lavni-2:

- (i) Increased access to staple foods at local markets.
- (ii) Increased awareness of the importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet.
- (iii) Increased access to these food products at local markets.

These expected results as defined are verifiable in a reliable and credible fashion. However, we think that the expected results 1 and 3 are quite similar. Furthermore, a set of objectively verifiable indicators were defined in the project log frame as means of verification. Thus, the project could successfully monitor activities and assess progress during implementation and achievements at completion. However, since results 1 and 3 are similar, so are the corresponding indicators (See log frame in annex: Table A1).

## 2.2.4 Project's management and partnership

Two key points are analyzed in this subsection. First the overall project's management as seen by the different stakeholders is evaluated, and second the evaluation considers the partnership between CARE and ACF, and between ACF and CRECER/CECRET.

### 2.2.4.1 Overall management

From our analysis, overall, the management structure of the project was effective despite some issues encountered during the course of the project. The central coordination was based in Port-au-Prince, while some managerial staffs were based in Gonaives, a strategic area for both Artibonite and North-West departments in terms of geographical considerations. To mitigate errors in exclusion and selection of beneficiaries, community committees participated to beneficiary selection since in such situation or quasi general poverty it is hard to differentiate the most vulnerable.

A project manager coordinated the field activities and supervised a team of mobilizers based in different communes. Joint visits were organized with ACF team to contribute to the coordination in Terre-Neuve (where the two organizations were working with the same beneficiaries).

The local authorities, the vendors and the beneficiaries acknowledged the good coordination of the project as compared to other previous food distribution initiatives. Before the start of the project, meetings were held with all stakeholders to explain the project's objectives and its structure. Periodic trainings were held with beneficiaries and vendors based on the feedback received from M&E activities that proved to be very effective. Among others, M&E activities included post redemption survey of a random sample of beneficiaries to verify whether they actually received the food and price survey of samples of vendors to monitor prices for comparison with prices of the local markets. A vendor affirmed the following: *"Every month CARE met with us to discuss the previous month outputs in order to analyze the gaps and how we should correct them. [...] This partially explains the success of the project."*

The local authorities pointed out that the effectiveness of the project's coordination allows supplying the beneficiaries with dignity, which was highly promoted by CARE. In this perspective, one of them stated: *"As compared to other programs, CARE respected the beneficiaries' dignity. In other post cyclonic programs, the people were fighting to get food. Some of them even died."*

The beneficiaries also acknowledged an effective planning and respect of beneficiaries' dignity. Generally, food distribution is complicated in areas where almost all the people are food insecure, which involves overcrowded distribution, physical insecurity, and often the use of force by the police or security staff. The use of the voucher system and the different points of redemption increased and facilitated the distribution of food in Kore Lavni Nou2. The fact that each participant has 30 days to redeem the voucher eliminated crowd and stigmatization compared to previous food distribution project in target communities. A woman from Labranle testified that: *"It is the first project in the community where pregnant women did not breathe tear gas."* A vendor supported this observation by stating: *"It is never easy to distribute food. It is for the very first time I observe food distribution activities where no one was beaten with a baton and no one was injured. This is the result of good planning [...]"*.

Besides planning, the technology is one of the components that made the difference of Kore Lavni Nou-2 with others.

#### ***2.2.4.2 Partnership mechanism***

Based on lessons learnt from Kore Lavni Nou executed in the Grand'Anse department, CARE decided to reinforce Kore Lavni Nou-2 with health diet promotion of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in Terre-Neuve. CARE partnered with ACF to implement this component. According to CARE, ACF demonstrated a good record of field mobilization capacity and experience of implementing fresh food vouchers in targeted communities.

Interviews with CARE staff revealed that there were some difficulties to set up a common strategy for the coordination of the fresh fruit and vegetable consumption promotion campaign. It was then hard to have a planning accepted by both CARE and ACF teams. Efforts to share information and periodic meetings with both teams seemed to help solve this problem. Unfortunately, though our efforts, ACF did not complete the interview guide. The field manager hesitated to have a face to face interview without authorization of his supervisor, we sent them the interview guide and it was not returned properly.

ACF also partnered with CREER a “cooperative” based in Gonaives with an extension in Terre-Neuve (CECRET) with the purpose of reaching out to the petty traders at the markets and paying them back with no significant delays. The representative of CREER provided good feedback on the partnership with ACF. CREER did not participate in a voucher program in the past since its main activities are savings and microfinance. The representative expressed complete satisfaction with the experience and indicated that CREER would be prepared to enter into the same partnership in the future. The petty traders confirmed they were reimbursed by CREER with no delay. However, CARE notice that “a better organization on reporting format would have been needed.”

#### **2.2.5 Issues to achieve results and strategies used to overcome them**

The implementation of the project faced several types of issues mainly in the beginning. However, all the key respondents unanimously acknowledged that timely and appropriate actions were taken to mitigate them. In the following, we discuss the principal sources of issues encountered.

##### ***2.2.5.1 Issues with the community committees***

One of CARE staff interviewed reported that members of the community committees complained on the fact neither themselves nor their relatives could benefit from the project. Finally they understood and accepted the rules. However some of those who participated in the focus groups still complained and did not demonstrate such understanding; they considered themselves as vulnerable as well as some of their relatives, which is reflected in the following declaration: “*Some of the community members are vulnerable, really vulnerable; neither themselves nor their family could benefit from the project. It is hard to feed others while you or your family is hungry. That may generate conflict with your relatives since they actually are hungry.*”

As mentioned in the previous section, the local authorities and some other committee members also complained on the fact they were not provided with even travelling fees. Some of them had to travel up to five times a month to identify potential beneficiaries. For example, travelling from Terre-Neuve to Lagon cost 350 HTG.

However, according to this staff most of the local authorities were keen on continuing without paid. These complaints may be somewhat surprising since as aforementioned the community committees were composed of elected persons whose job is to represent and seek the interest of the population. Thus, it is clear that they could not benefit from the project and it is unfair that they considered themselves vulnerable as compared to other people. Furthermore, to avoid conflict of interest, their

relatives could be selected neither. Nevertheless, taking account of the poor financial of the local authorities in such areas, it is worth budgeting their transport fees for long distance in order to increase efficiency and participation.

#### *2.2.5.2 Issues with the selection of the operating shops owners*

It was intended that local operating shops owners would be selected according to the following criteria: (i) fully registered businesses (with all permits and tax registration) or able to quickly become fully registered (merchants will be given a period of time within which to complete registration with the Government of Haiti); (ii) willing to sign an MOU with CARE Haiti; (iii) willing to undergo training and abide by the project's guidelines; (iv) able to maintain adequate quality food stocks in a timely manner; and (iv) at least 1 year experience in food sales.

In our opinion, these criteria seem to be relevant, although in rural areas some might be hard to meet. Indeed, not surprisingly, in some areas, no local operating shops satisfied such criteria and few of them were fully registered business; the informal sector dominating Haitian economy. For instance none of the local merchants operating in Lagon could be selected, and only 6 were selected in Gonaives to supply 75% of the beneficiaries, say 6,000. In Terre-Neuve, there was only one merchant but with very limited supplying capacity. Those issues resulted in complaints of beneficiaries for redemption during the first month of the project. In Gonaives they register some incidents like pushing during redemption because some vendors were not able to supply all the beneficiaries. Fortunately, a rapid solution was implemented by linking bigger suppliers with small vendors in some sections communales and asking other qualified vendors to open local shops in remote areas where none of the existing local merchants met the previously mentioned criteria (see Table 5). This we think was an effective strategy to counterbalance the low supplying capacity of the local operating shops.

**Table 5. Large capacity operating shops distribution per section communale**

<i>Department</i>	<i>Communes</i>	<i>Sections Communales</i>	<i>Name of operating shops</i>
<b>.Artibonite</b>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>2eme Section Bassin (Praville)</i>	<i>Mr &amp; Mme Brice Delva Provisions Alimentaires</i>
	<i>Terre-Neuve</i>	<i>Terre Neuve (Centre Bourg)</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>4eme Section Poteaux (Carrefour Gros Morne)</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>3eme Section Bayonnais (Vieux Poste)</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>4eme section Poteaux</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>1ere section Pont Tamarin</i>	
<b>Artibonite</b>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<b>KGP Trading</b>
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
<b>Artibonite</b>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Raco Produit Alimentaire</i>
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
<b>Artibonite</b>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Sel et Lumiere Multi Service</i>
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Martine Darius Oxima Provisions Alimentaires</i>
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
	<i>Gonaïves</i>	<i>Gonaïves</i>	
<b>Môle Saint-Nicolas</b>	<i>Môle Saint-Nicolas</i>	<i>1ere Section- Cote de Fer (Rodolphe)</i>	<i>Le Grand Dieu de Jehovah</i>
	<i>Môle Saint-Nicolas</i>	<i>2eme Section- Mare Rouge</i>	

Moreover, some merchants did not want to participate in the program. They did not trust such a payment system. They evoked their bad experiences in the past with the cooperative system. Local merchants from Grand'Anse who participated to Kore Lavni Nou were invited to share their experiences with potential participating local merchants and some were willing to participate only after the "success" of the first redemption.

### **2.2.5.3 Issues with the electronic food voucher**

According to Digicel there were many issues with the technical component of the project. Some names were duplicated. Some people tried to register in the system more than once by moving from an area to another during the registration process. There also were some printing mistakes such identical number. Sometimes, the registration process took longer than expected and then increased stress in the process. One CARE staff interviewed confirmed the duplication issues and the cases of beneficiaries with different names but the same PIN number.

The voucher amount was only scheduled to be valid for 30 days, allowing redemption during this period. Upon the expiration of a 30-day period, unused amount was returned to CARE account. There also were cases of PIN loss and network coverage issue. Digicel was asked to issue another PIN to those beneficiaries. Some vendors reported issues with Digicel signal. Normally once the

PIN number is entered, the vendor receives a success message. In some cases, the vendors received the message “requête en cours” (request is being proceed) or no message at all. In such cases, the vendors did not know whether the transaction was completed or not. According to these vendors, the beneficiary then had to go to CARE office for verification purposes. Afterwards, CARE staff called the vendors to ask them to deliver the food to the beneficiary.

According CARE, “Digicel significantly improved their capacity to tweak all technical problems, however they are still somewhat disorganized as they are shifting the main platform and this affects their human capacity to cope with multiple projects”.

#### 2.2.5.4 Satisfaction with the project

In general, all the stakeholders seemed to be satisfied with the project. As previously mentioned, the local authorities, the beneficiaries and the local merchants expressed their satisfaction with the management structure of the project as compared to other food distribution programs.

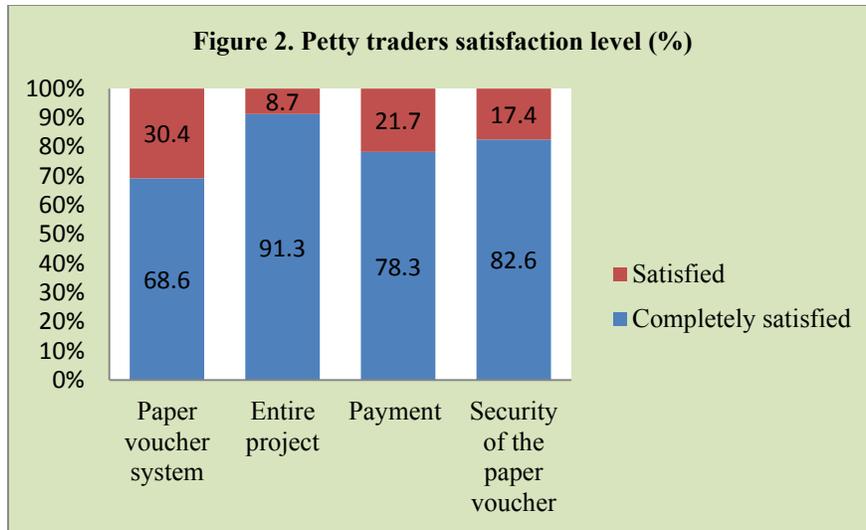
Globally, the beneficiaries did not report issues with the local merchants. They confirmed redemption happened in time and they received the pre-established basket of food. Thus, this confirms the achievement of the expected result 1.

However, some beneficiaries and local authorities mentioned in the beginning some operating shops owners did not treat the beneficiaries with courtesy. However, they recognized that over the course of the project obvious changes were observed. The local authorities explained this change of behavior as consequences of the periodic trainings provided by CARE field staff. “[...] *after that, those vendors supplied the beneficiaries with a big smile on their face*” said a local authority. The beneficiaries also explained the courtesy of local vendors by the fact these latter knew that the beneficiaries could use their voucher at any of the local shops that participated to the project. One of them stated the following: “*The voucher is mine as well as the money. Thus, if a vendor did not treat me with courtesy, I went to another one to redeem the food.*”

Those qualitative data are reinforced by the quantitative one. Indeed, from Table 6 below we may observe that all the surveyed beneficiaries were satisfied with the project and the quality of the products while only 0,7% reported being dissatisfied with the services from the vendors.

Table 6. Beneficiaries' satisfaction level		
Questions	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Are you satisfied with the project?	100,0	0,0
Are you satisfied with the quality of the products?	100,0	0,0
Are you satisfied with services from the local shops?	99,3	0,7

All the local merchants seemed to be satisfied with the project. They expressed their satisfaction with the general management of the project. They particularly appreciated the monthly meetings with CARE which allowed discussing on the general issues and above all on solutions. They felt safe to use the voucher system though, as me mentioned earlier, at the beginning some did not trust it and did not want to integrate the project. Figure 2 shows that the participating pretty traders (Terre-Neuve) also were totally satisfied with the project. They felt safe using the paper voucher and the corresponding payment system. Few reported issues with some beneficiaries who wanted fruits and vegetables for only part of the voucher and requested the balance in cash.



## 2.3 Project's effects

This section of the report discusses the effects of the project on beneficiaries and local merchants (Operating shops owners and petty traders).

### 2.3.1 Effects on beneficiaries

This section discusses the effects of the project on the beneficiary households. It starts with a first general overview of the situations after the closure of the project as compared to their initial conditions. These discussions are principally based on information from the focus groups that are reinforced with some quantitative data.

#### 2.3.1.1 General situation

The general context in which the project was implemented may be fairly described by this participant to a focus group with beneficiaries at Labranle who stated: *“The project was implemented while we faced drought problems. It did not rain at all; all the trees died. The six-month project helped us a lot and was very useful for our children.”*

Other beneficiaries interpreted the project implementation as a divine intervention, which is reflected in the following affirmation held by a woman *“Our most urgent need was food and education for our children. [...] only God and mother and our father would do what USAID did for us.”* Another woman participating to the same focus group supported: *“I do not have a garden. I did not know where to go. When I was selected in the project, it was like God got down from heaven for me.”* Thus, a local authority legitimately affirmed: *“The people saw the project as windfall getting down from heaven [...]”*

All the stakeholders acknowledged the relevance of the project as we reported it in section 2.1 and then recognized that an emergency response was crucial to alleviate the burden of food insecurity. In such a context, long term positive effects are hard to achieve since the project did not intervene on the food insecurity factors. Thus, as reported at the beginning of this general section, the local authorities legitimately considered that the objective of the project was too much limited in time to produce long term positive changes. In this perspective, a beneficiary woman reported: *“Now we are facing the same drought issues as before. It does not rain and life is very hard. Children have*

*to eat premature mangoes with salt as coping strategies to lack of food [...]*". Three other women from Terre-Neuve supported with the following:

- *"[...] somebody gave me those three mangoes; I am going to smoke and eat them."*
- *"Before the project I struggled with myself to eat; I cut off trees. Unfortunately, I have to do the same now."*
- *"Recently I sent someone to buy some flour on credit, but the merchant refused because I did not have money. We then went to bed without eating. We got back to the same point after the end of the project."*

For more potential long term effects, local authorities suggested to strengthen such food projects with interventions on agriculture and irrigation. Other suggested conditional aid such as requiring each beneficiary household planting a fruit tree during the lifespan of project. We found this suggestion interesting; however this would also require seedling distribution to the beneficiaries and therefore additional costs. Many local authorities and operating shops owners reported that during the project fewer trees were cut off than before. This also came out from the focus groups with beneficiaries. However, since the structural causes of food insecurity such as natural shocks threaten and the social conditions of the people are still the same, those effects were only very short as pointed out above.

One could manifestly observe a general sense of despair from the beneficiaries participating to the focus groups. The general sentiment is that they are desperately waiting for another food project to come. Most of them emphasized they got back to the same point at the end of the project. The same coping strategies because of lack of financial means are used: cutting tree, borrow food on credit, eat premature food, etc. In such a context, the short term effect of the project may obviously be diluted.

One of the main effects of the project is recapitalization of participants from savings derived from food costs. The savings from food vouchers were allocated principally to education, health, debt reimbursement and investment in livestock according to the surveyed beneficiaries (Figure 3). Overall, the main use of this saving was on children education (34%). This is a significant result since at the baseline, among the respondents with children who were not attending school, 81,3% reported their children were out of school because they could not afford the fees. The second allocation item of the savings due to food vouchers was health care services (20, 9%) (Physician fees, medicines, pills, etc.), followed by investment in livestock assets or saving (9, 5 % each one). In Môle Saint-Nicolas, despite education had the priority, debt reimbursement and savings were the two other most important components (23,5% and 19,9% respectively), while in Terre-Neuve, the two most important components were livestock acquisition (16,4%) and health (14,8%).

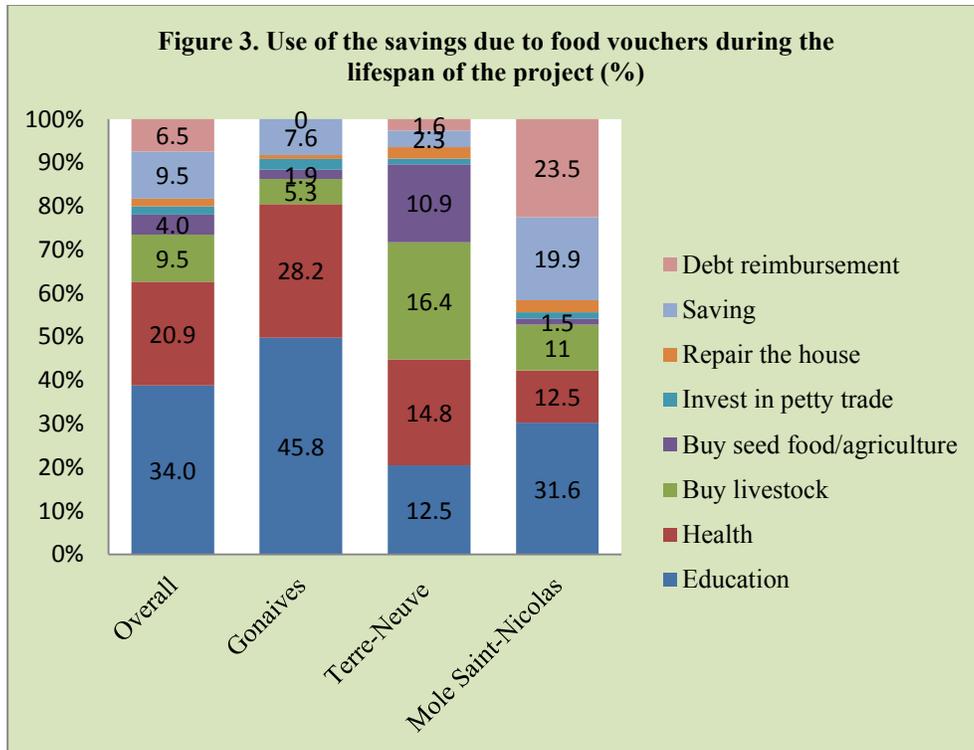


Table 7 below seems to confirm the resurgence of coping strategy pattern prior the project. For both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households, debt was contracted in the three target areas mainly to cover food needs during the 4 weeks before the survey. Indeed, in all three communes there were more than 57% of beneficiaries who have been liability for food. Nonetheless, 21,6% of beneficiaries clearly said they did not take credit against 18,1% of non-beneficiaries, say a difference of 3,5%. This difference is greater in Terre-Neuve where more than 27,7% of the beneficiaries did not take credit 4 weeks prior the final evaluation survey against 16,7% of non-beneficiaries. Unfortunately, no comparison can be done with the baseline results because those data were not collected at that time.

**Table 7. Credit during the 4 weeks prior to the survey (%)**

<b>Credit</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Gonaives</b>	<b>Terre-Neuve</b>	<b>Môle Saint-Nicolas</b>
<i>Beneficiaries</i>				
No	21,6	21,7	27,7	15,4
Yes	57,4	67,2	36,6	58,1
I wanted but I had no access	21,0	11,1	35,7	26,5
<i>If yes, why?</i>				
Food	53,3	56,3	33,3	58,2
Health	12,3	12,5	20,0	7,6
Education	24,0	21,0	31,1	26,6
Housing	,7	1,1	,0	,0
Marriage/funeral	1,3	3,4	,0	3,8
Investments (goods)	1,3	0,6	4,4	1,3
Family	3,0	0,0	4,4	2,5
Other	4,0	5,1	6,7	0
<i>Non beneficiaries</i>				
<b>Credit</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Gonaives</b>	<b>Terre-Neuve</b>	<b>Môle Saint-Nicolas</b>
No	18,1	18,3	16,7	12,5
Yes	48,3	58,2	26,4	61,4
I wanted but I had no access	31,2	23,5	56,9	26,1
<i>If yes, why?</i>				
Food	41,3	40,4	25	46,3
Health	18,7	24,7	8,3	11,1
Education	19,4	19,1	50	13
Housing	1,3	1,1	0	1,9
Marriage/funeral	7,1	7,9	8,3	5,6
Investments (goods)	7,1	1,1	0	18,5
Family	1,9	1,1	0	3,7
Other	3,2	4,5	8,3	0

Tables 7 also give insight on the allocation of credit by those who effectively took on. In all three communes, and for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, food purchase was the main reason (53,3% and 41,3% respectively). In Gonaives and Môle Saint-Nicolas, such beneficiaries counted for 56,3% and 58,2% of the corresponding samples respectively. The two other most components of credit allocation were education and health weighting 24% and 12,3% respectively of the overall sample. In Terre-Neuve these proportions are 31,1% and 20% respectively. These results are yet more eloquent recalling that during the life span of the project, education and health were the two main allocations of the savings due the project as declared by the beneficiaries (Figure 2).

### 2.3.1.2 Food availability

Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were asked whether they had breakfast the day of the survey and whether they would have lunch or dinner the same day. For both questions, overall the percentage of non-beneficiaries who answered yes was higher than that of beneficiaries who gave the same answer (Table 8). Indeed, 25,6% of the beneficiaries said they had breakfast against 33,2% for the control group. About 36% of the surveyed beneficiaries declared they would have lunch or dinner the same day against approximately 42% of non-beneficiaries. However, for beneficiaries, concerning lunch or dinner, in Terre-Neuve and Môle Saint-Nicolas those percentages were 61% and 63% respectively against 22,2% and 55,7% respectively for non-beneficiaries.

**Table 8. Food consumption during the day of the survey (% of yes)**

	Overall	Gonaives	Terre-Neuve	Môle Saint-Nicolas
<b>Beneficiaries</b>				
Did you have breakfast today?	25,6	20,7	48,4	23,2
Will you have lunch or dinner today?	36,1	26,7	61,1	62,5
<b>Non-Beneficiaires</b>				
Did you have breakfast today?	33,2	37,0	24,4	30,4
Will you have lunch or dinner today?	42,2	43,8	22,2	55,7

Overall, the general dynamic of the number of meals consumed per day did not dramatically change from the baseline to the final evaluation (Table 9). At the start of the project, 70,3% of the surveyed people reported consumption of at most one meal per day. At the final evaluation, this percentage was about 54,5% and 56,9% for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries respectively. That suggests an increasing of the number of meals consumed per day for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Although, the difference between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries is only 2,4 points, the sharing of food phenomenon observed during the project could be one the factors that explain this low difference. Thus, the food voucher program might indirectly contribute to improve the food situation of the non-beneficiaries.

Terre-Neuve seemed to show better improvement than the two other communes. In this commune, at the baseline time, 98,9 % of the beneficiaries declared they had at most one meal daily. At the final evaluation, those beneficiaries counted only for 18,3% against 55,6% for the non-beneficiaries, which represents an improvement of more than 80% for the beneficiaries and more than 43% for the non-beneficiaries. This positive difference between Terre-Neuve and the other communes might partially be explained by the fact that the situation in Terre-Neuve was worse than in the two other communes and the diversification of the vouchers (mix approach).

Table 9. Number of meals consumed per day						
Frequency of food consumption	Final evaluation			First Difference*		Double difference**
	Baseline	Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	A	B	C
<b>Overall</b>						
Sometimes	0,4	4,9	6,7	4,5	6,3	-1,8
Once a day	69,4	49,5	50,2	-19,9	-19,2	-0,7
Twice a day	28,5	38,9	32,9	10,4	4,4	6,0
Three times a day	0,9	6,6	8,6	5,7	7,7	-2,0
No answer	0,8	0,1	1,6			
<b>Gonaïves</b>						
Sometimes	0,4	6,1	7,8	5,7	7,4	-1,7
Once a day	60,2	52,3	63,4	-7,9	3,2	-11,1
Twice a day	36,9	38,2	24,2	1,3	-12,7	14,0
Three times a day	1,4	2,7	4,6	1,3	3,2	-1,9
No answer	1,1	0,8	0,0			
<b>Terre Neuve</b>						
Sometimes	1,1	0,8	1,4	-0,3	0,3	-0,6
Once a day	96,8	17,5	54,2	-79,3	-42,6	-36,7
Twice a day	1,1	60,3	16,7	59,2	15,6	43,7
Three times a day	0,0	21,4	25,0	21,4	25,0	-3,6
No answer	1,0	0,0	4,2			
<b>Môle Saint-Nicolas</b>						
Sometimes	0,0	5,9	9,1	5,9	9,1	-3,2
Once a day	69,1	73,5	23,9	4,4	-45,2	49,7
Twice a day	30,9	20,6	61,4	-10,3	30,5	-40,8
Three times a day	0,0	0	2,27	0	2,3	-2,3
No answer	0,0	0,0	3,4			

\* % of Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=A and % of non-Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=B

\*\* A-B=C

In general some changes had been observed in food insecurity situations as compared to the baseline (Table 10). Food insecurity situation being measured by the percentages of respondents being in the following situation 4 weeks prior to the corresponding survey: worried or concerned because of lack of food, obliged to eat food that he/she did not like because of lack of food and go bed without eating. At the baseline, in all the 3 communes, nearly 100%<sup>15</sup> of the respondents reported being in such situation, while at the evaluation moment, in Gonaïves, about 85% , 87% and 88% of the beneficiaries reported being concerned because of lack of food, obliged to eat food that they

<sup>15</sup> The declaration of mostly 100% in critical situation during the baseline suggests a potential anticipation effect by the population.

did not like and got to bed respectively. This represents an improvement of about 15%, 13% and 12% of the food situation, which is a critical change for a short term emergency project. By comparing these results with those of the non-beneficiaries, the difference in favour of the beneficiaries is not significant. However, as was previously mentioned, the effect of sharing the food with non-beneficiary neighbors might one possible factor to explain this low difference between the two groups. In Môle Saint-Nicolas, in the case of the beneficiary group, these figures (respectively 84,6%, 83,8% and 82,4%) were very similar to those of Gonaïves; however, the non-beneficiary group “exhibited a better performance than the beneficiary group”. For instance, only 63,6% of the non-beneficiaries reported going to bed without eating against 82,4% for the beneficiaries, which accounts for a difference of 18,8% in favour in the non-beneficiaries. Again, the contagion bias observed may affect these results.

In the case of Terre-Neuve, where the fresh fruit and vegetable voucher awareness campaign was piloted, it seems at a first glance that food insecurity situations were significantly mitigated as compared to the baseline situation. Indeed, the percentage of beneficiaries who reported being in the above-mentioned situations 55,6%, 55,6% and 49,2% compared to 100% for all the three cases at the baseline. This general “better improvement” of Terre-Neuve households might probably be attributed to the mix-approach used and the fact production of vegetables is more responsive to market demand. Vegetables are short term crops and they are planted in Sources Chaudes which is a commune close to Terre-Neuve even that some supply came also from Gonaïves.

**Table 10. Food situation during the baseline and four weeks prior the survey**

Food situation	Baseline	Final		First Difference*		Double difference**
		Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	A	B	C
	<b>Gonaïves</b>					
Worried or concerned because of lack of food	99,3	85,5	85,6	-13,8	-13,7	-0,1
Obligated to eat food that you do not like because of lack of resources	99,6	87,4	93,5	-12,2	-6,1	-6,1
Go to bed without eating	100	88,5	90,2	-11,5	-9,8	-1,7
<b>Terre-Neuve</b>						
Worried or concerned because of lack of food	100	55,6	51,4	-44,4	-48,6	4,2
Obligated to eat food that you do not like because of lack of resources	100	55,6	51,4	-44,4	-48,6	4,2
Go to bed without eating	100	49,2	56,9	-50,8	-43,1	-7,7
<b>Môle Saint-Nicolas</b>						
Worried or concerned because of lack of food	100	84,6	76,1	-15,4	-23,9	8,5
Obligated to eat food that you do not like because of lack of resources	100	83,8	72,7	-16,2	-27,3	11,1
Go to bed without eating	100	82,4	63,6	-17,6	-36,4	18,8

\* % of Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=A and % of non-Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=B  
\*\* A-B=C

Table 11 depicts a list of coping strategies investigated. The percentage of beneficiaries who used such coping strategies systematically decreased for all the items from the baseline to the final evaluation. For instance, the proportion of households who borrowed food decreased from 83,2% to 55,7% (decreasing of 27,5%); at the baseline moment 48,1% of the respondents declared begging as coping strategy, at the final evaluation moment, this proportion decreased to 17,4% (decreasing of 30,7 points). The highest decreasing from baseline to the final evaluation (44,5%) was observed for the restriction of the consumption of adults so that children can eat. Thus, albeit the beneficiary complained their situation after the project goes back to the starting point, we can observe some important changes in the food insecurity situation.

Although the non-beneficiary group once again exhibits better performances than the beneficiary group, these results should be interpreted with attention. Indeed, it was observed from both focus groups and the quantitative survey a general solidarity situation between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Hence, uncontrolled contagions effects might potentially bias the results. For instance, from the focus groups a beneficiary declared: *“The project intended to help us mitigating the hunger issues. Not all of us had vouchers. After redemptions, I shared the food with others who did not have vouchers. A lot of beneficiaries did the same.”*

**Table 11. Coping strategies used by households**

Strategies	Baseline	Final evaluation		First Difference		Double difference
		Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	A	B	C
Borrow food	83,2	55,7	52,4	-27,5	-30,8	3,3
Restraint the consumption of adults so that children can eat	95,5	51	44,4	-44,5	-51,1	6,6
Buy food on credit	97,2	87,6	81,5	-9,6	-15,7	6,1
Consume seed stocks	71,7	37,8	41,5	-33,9	-30,2	-3,7
Begging	48,1	17,4	18,2	-30,7	-29,9	-0,8
Count on the support of a neighbor/ a family member to feed the household	84,7	59,5	49,8	-25,2	-34,9	9,7
Work for food	63,8	70,2	60,4	6,4	-3,4	9,8
Perform a risky job to acquire food	74,7	55,5	48,2	-19,2	-26,5	7,3
Consume inappropriate aliments (expired products)	86,2	35,4	33,9	-50,8	-52,3	1,5
Reduce the number of meals that you usually consume a day	100	82,4	77	-17,6	-23	5,4

\* % of Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=A and % of non-Beneficiaries-% in

Baseline=B

\*\* A-B=C

Indeed, overall 96,3% of the surveyed beneficiaries declared having shared the basket of food they received from Kore Lavni Nou-2 with others. Generally, the food was principally shared with neighbours and family members respectively (Table 12).

**Table 12. Percentage of beneficiary households sharing food**

Share of food	Overall	Terre-Neuve		Môle Saint-Nicolas
		Gonaïves	Neuve	
% of yes	96,3	98,3	84,8	98,7
Whom with?				
My children	1,4	0,0	7,5	1,3
Mother/Father	0,3	0,0	2,5	0,0
Other family	34,0	29,5	52,5	34,6
Neighbors	62,2	67,6	37,5	62,8
Other people	2,1	2,9	0,0	1,3

This positive solidarity situation was confirmed from the focus groups with the local authorities who considered that positive effect of the project. One of them reported that some beneficiaries wanted to share the food with him. Since he declined the offer, the beneficiary offered him other gifts such as poultry. A participant to a focus group with the local merchants stated: “*Sharing with others is part of rural communities culture. I have observed that after redemption some beneficiaries shared the food with others who did not have vouchers.*”

### 2.3.1.3 Children Nutrition

The respondents were asked whether there were under-five children at their household with malnutrition symptoms (the symptoms were marasmus, oedemas, beriberi, etc.). In all three communes, the percentage of respondents who answered yes is reported in Table 13 where a decreasing tendency may be seen for the beneficiary group. This decreasing was respectively 0.3%, 3.1% and 3.6% for Gonaïves, Terre-Neuve (where the mix approach was used) and Môle Saint-Nicolas. A better result of improvement of children nutrition was observed in Terre-Neuve which might partially be the result of piloting the fresh fruit and vegetable consumption campaign.

**Table 13. Households with children presenting malnutrition symptoms**

Commune	Baseline	Final evaluation		First Difference*		Double difference**
		Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	A	B	C
Gonaïves	10,6	10,3	12,4	-0,3	1,8	-2,1
Terre-Neuve	31,2	28,1	33,8	-3,1	2,6	-5,7
Môle Saint-Nicolas	12,4	8,8	6,8	-3,6	-5,6	2

\* % of Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=A and % of non-Beneficiaries-% in Baseline=B  
 \*\* A-B=C

Anthropometric data were also collected on a sample of 34 children. Eleven (11) were under five and 13 aged between 5 and 10. Four of the under-five had unilateral oedemas and one bilateral oedemas.



Credit: DDG/Focus group with local authorities

The Body Mass Index is a standard nutrition measure computed by comparing the weight of the children with their size; it allows to classify children based on their nutritional development. This measure was computed for 21 children aged between 5-10 years (only beneficiaries), and based on the World Health Organisation standards, four categories were considered: under nutrition, underweight, normal weight and overweight. For the 21 children under study, 14 were undernourished, 6 underweighted and the other overweight (Table 14). That suggests despite the project, the nutritional development of those children remains critical.

**Table 14. Nutritional development of 5-10 years aged children based on BMI\***

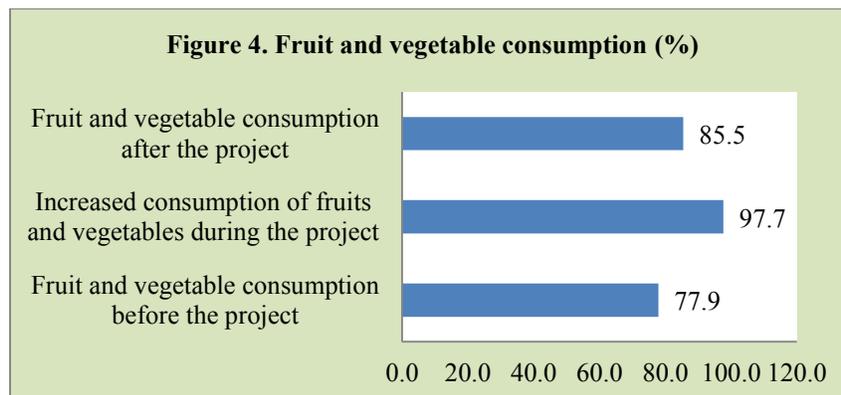
Nutrition situation	Number	%
Under nutrition	14	66,7
Underweight	6	28,6
Normal weight	-	-
Overweight	1	4,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Body Mass Index = weight/(size\*size)

#### ***2.3.1.4 Consumption and awareness of fruits and vegetable consumption***

Based on experiences and lessons learnt from Grand'Anse, CARE introduced a fresh food component for ration delivered to beneficiaries in Terre-Neuve. Thus, all the data presented in this section were collected only in Terre-Neuve.

Close to 78 % of the beneficiaries reported their households consumed fruits and vegetables before the project. However 97,7% reported increasing consumption of such items during the project lifespan and attributed this shift in consumption to healthy diet promotion. Moreover, 85,5% thought their households would keep this habit (Figure 4). It is worth noticing the result below that children in Terre-Neuve had a better nutrition result than other targeted communes.

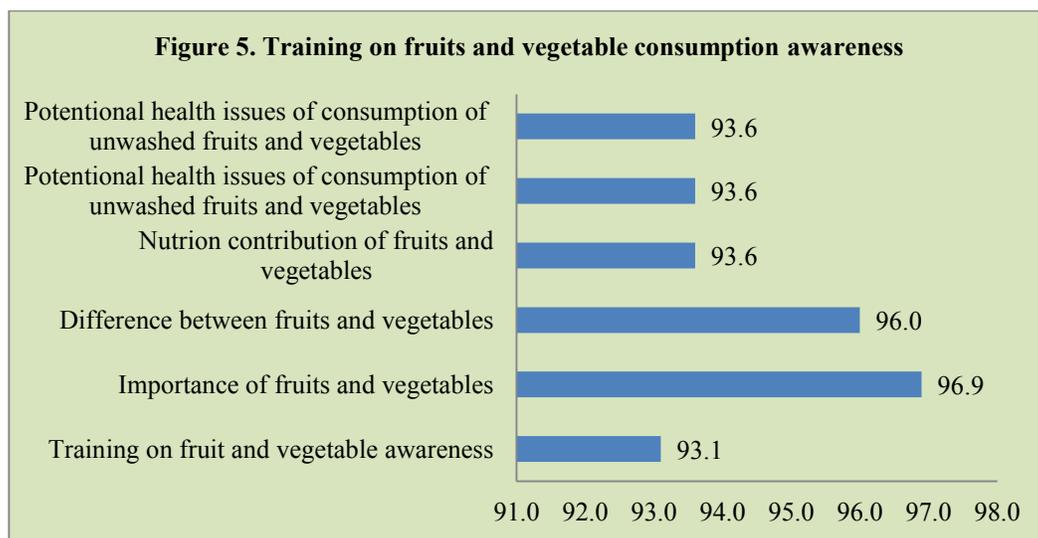


Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were asked how often their household consumed fruits and vegetables. Table 15 shows significant differences between the two groups. Most of the beneficiary household seemed to consume such items at daily basis or between 3 to 6 times a week (43,1% and 46,2% respectively), while 42,6% of the non-beneficiary households would consume fruits and vegetables rarely.

<b>Table 15. Frequency of fruit and vegetable consumption</b>			
Frequency	Beneficiaries	Non-Beneficiaries	First difference
Eachday	43,1	12,8	30,3
3-6 times aweek	46,2	25,5	20,6
1 to 2 daysaweek	7,7	19,1	-11,5
Rarely	3,1	42,6	-39,5

About 93% of the beneficiaries acknowledged they received training on fruits and vegetables from Kore Lavni Nou-2. Figure 5 depicts the main topics they reported of such trainings as reported by the respondents. They mentioned nutrition contributions of fruits and vegetables, difference between fruits and vegetables, nutrition importance of fruits and vegetables, etc.

The beneficiaries (95%) also showed awareness of potential health issues associated with unwashed fruits and vegetables such as microbes and bacteria. More than 90% of them (95,5%) also indicated they properly washed such items before consumption; 78,5% of such beneficiaries indicated it was change of habit following the fresh fruit and vegetable awareness promotion campaign of Kore Lavni Nou-2.



Lastly, we assessed the awareness of the beneficiaries of nutrition contribution of fresh fruits and vegetables as compared to the control group. Table 16 shows that overall the beneficiary group demonstrated a better awareness than the control group. Indeed, Respectively 85,6%, 82,3% and 83,2% of them were aware that such items are sources of vitamins, minerals and energy compared

to 79,5%, 70,5% and 78,6% for the non-beneficiaries respectively. However, a less significant proportion of beneficiaries were aware that fresh fruits and vegetables are also rich in carbohydrates and lipids.

<b>Table 16. Knowledge on nutriment element in fruits and vegetables</b>			
<b>Nutriment element</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>Beneficiaries</b>			
Vitamins	85,6	8,0	6,4
Minerals	82,3	8,9	8,9
Carbohydrates	48,4	18,0	33,6
Lipids	58,1	28,2	13,7
Energy (calories)	83,2	12,0	4,8
<b>Non Beneficiaries</b>			
Vitamins	79,5	6,8	13,6
Mineralelement	70,5	13,6	15,9
Glucide	25,0	45,5	29,5
Lipide	62,8	20,9	16,3
Energy (calories)	78,6	14,3	7,1

Based on the previous results, we can obviously see that the expected result 2 was achieved.

### *2.3.1.5 Effects on gender dynamic*

Most of the project beneficiaries were women, representing 75,63% of the group. Recall that two of the six criteria used for the selection of the beneficiaries were women- headed families with children and pregnant and lactating women. We also wished to examine whether this “overrepresentation” of the women affected gender dynamic within the households.

Table 17 shows the percentage of women headed household for both the baseline and the final evaluation. These results are surprising. In case of the beneficiaries, we would expect increasing percentages for the final evaluation as compared to the baseline based on the selection criteria mentioned above. Nevertheless, the women headed households decreased from 53,4% to 38,5% between the two surveys. In Gonaïves, the percentage decreased from 50,5% to 22,2%. Only Terre-Neuve exhibited a converse tendency with 44,7% of such households at the final evaluation against 40,4% at the baseline.

<b>Table 17. Distribution of women headed household by commune</b>						
Commune	Baseline	Final evaluation		First Difference		Double difference
		Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	A	B	C
Overall	53,4	38,5	28,8	-14,9	-24,6	9,8
Gonaïves	50,5	22,2	25,0	-28,3	-25,5	-2,8
Terre-Neuve	40,4	44,7	34,6	4,3	-5,8	10,0
Môle Saint-Nicolas	74,2	49,1	21,6	-25,1	-52,61	27,51

Discussions from the focus groups revealed not much change within the household dynamic, except in rare cases where women considered themselves as the “chef” (chief or head). In general, the participating women reported good relationship with their husbands during the project as it was before. One stated: *“Before the project we used to discuss on what we should do to feed the children. Why should I want to be the head just because I benefited from the project?”* Though less spread out, some women felt their husband were respectful towards them because of their new role to feed the household. One reported the following: *“He had a better respectful attitude towards me. Once I said to him: you spoke a lot when you fed the household. Now, it is my turn, you are quiet.”*

Rather rare situations of men who did not want to keep on working because of the project were also reported. In this perspective a woman from Terre-Neuve stated: *“Some men even liked the food more than their wives. Sometimes they did not even want to go to their gardens. One of them fought with his wife for the food.”*

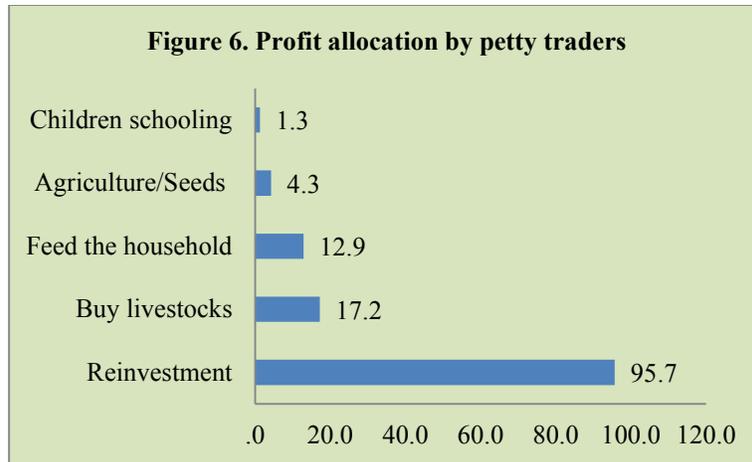
Those results are not surprising at all. First, it was well stated at the start of the project that the food was granted to the entire household and not to the voucher holder who only was a representative of the household. Second, the women were aware of the short term scope of the project. Some of them used such argument to explain why there could not be much change in the household dynamic. Lastly, gender dynamic is more rooted in the cultural background.

### **2.3.2 Effects on operating shops and petty traders**

During its lifespan, the project boosted the local economy. Both participating operating shops owners and petty traders reported significant increasing in the volume sales during the project. Some operating shops owners mentioned that it was the first time the volume of sales went up to 200 thousands HTG monthly. Before the project, some of them only supplied people in their community, but because of the general hard social conditions, sales were very low. Since they needed to supply up 100 or 200 people at redemption, some increased the number of employers from 1 to 4.

In focus group discussions in Môle Saint-Nicolas, vendors mentioned that at the start of the project some vendors supplied up to 150 beneficiaries at redemption while others supplied less. Meetings were organized with all the participating local merchants in the community to discuss on the “problem”. Finally they came to the resolution that no participating local merchant should supply more than 100 beneficiaries in order to “give a chance” to all participating vendors to significantly increase the volume of sales.

Petty traders in Terre-Neuve also significantly increased their sales during the course of the project. From the focus groups, some reported 500 HTG as maximal daily sales before the project. Participating to the paper voucher program contributed to some extent to triple or quadruple that amount. Therefore, profits significantly increased. Eighteen of the 52 participating petty traders reported having owned a bank account or been member of a cooperative. This number went up to 34 during the project. Figure 6 shows the allocation of profit during the life span of the project. Principally profit was reinvested (95,7%). Only 17,2% bought livestock and in 12,9% of the cases, profit also contributed to feed the household.



However most of the petty traders reported after the project ended they went back to the same sales figures as before the project. Some reported that after the project volume of sales rarely attained 250 HTG.

## 2.4 Project's sustainability

Kore Lavni Nou-2 was a short term emergency program as a response to natural shocks and therefore cannot be expected to impact vulnerability and food insecurity roots. In the current national food vulnerability mapping, Artibonite department, despite its larger size and its agricultural potential, and North-West department are among those where food insecurity is the highest. Moreover, the project targeted the most vulnerable households, though most of them are actually vulnerable.

The project proved to have short term effects on the direct beneficiaries. Changes in negative coping strategies have been reported by the beneficiaries: decreasing in cutting trees, none of them bought food on credit during the project, etc. During the lifespan of the project, most of them used the savings due the food voucher project to education, health care, debt reimbursement, assets acquisition, etc. However the structural causes of food insecurity legitimately seemed to reverse this positive trend only some months after the project ended.

The threat of absorption of the short term effects by the structural conditions of the people were respectively paraphrased by a beneficiary and a CARE staff as follows:

- *“We bought some livestock during the project. For instance the money allocated to buy rice was used to buy a chicken or a goat. Now the project is ended, we need to send the children to school and care of them. Then we sold the assets we acquired during the project since we cannot leave them without schooling.”*
- *“[...] during the project the beneficiaries might use the money they would allocate to food to buy some assets such as poultry and livestock. However other crisis and natural shocks may absorb the projects effects. ”*

The project also proved to have positive short term effects and local economy. Participating shop owners and petty traders reported significant increase in sales during the project though the structural causes of poverty reverse the trend after the project course.

Therefore, lessons learnt from such program may be very useful to other NGOs and government structures in designing long term programs intended to address the structural causes of poverty. Therefore more sophisticated models might be used to set up vulnerability criteria and to target the

most vulnerable households. Such long term programs should also involve the households in their own recovery from poverty for instance by helping them developing income generating activities such agriculture and others. While local authorities pledged for conditioning the assistance for instance by imposing each household planting a tree, none of the beneficiary expressed the desire to be boosted in order to set up income generating activities. Their only hope was the replication of the project. This dependency mentality came out all the focus groups. We explicitly asked them what they could to keep the project's short term effects; the common answer was "CARE should renew the project". None of them expressed the need for a "boost". This may be a very "dangerous" attitude.

The electronic food voucher may also be a good example of social programs that respects the dignity of the people. Local authorities, participating merchants and beneficiaries pointed out the difference between Kore Lavni Nou-2 and other food distribution programs. The voucher system allowed a better management of the distribution and avoid situations such pushing and fighting that generally happen in food distribution.

### 3. Conclusions

This report presented the key findings of the end of project evaluation of Kore Lavni Nou-2. This short term program was implemented by CARE in Upper Artibonite and North-West department as a response to natural disasters shocks that worsened food insecurity in the Communes of Gonaives, Terre-Neuve and Môle Saint-Nicolas.

This project was a replication of Kore LavniNou implemented in Grand'Anse department. Based on reflections with partners, CARE decided to reinforce the electronic food voucher project with healthy diet fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. CARE decided to partner with Action Contre la Faim that demonstrated good field mobilization and fresh fruit and vegetable promotion experiences. This component of the program was piloted in Terre-Neuve.

To carry out the evaluation, moreover desk review of the project documents, interviews, focus groups and surveys were conducted with all the stakeholders. A mix methodology (qualitative and quantitative) was used as a complementary strategy to gather richer and more in-depth information on the project's course.

Eight thousands of households were targeted as the most vulnerable based on a set of prescribed criteria. In a context where food insecurity is quasi general, it is not an easy task to distinguish the most vulnerable. Thus, local authorities such mayors, CASECs and ASECs were part of the beneficiary selection and mobilization in the three targeted communes, which gave a more level of accountability to the project. However, most of them complained on the fact that neither themselves nor their relatives could not benefit from the project albeit they also are vulnerable. Selection and mobilization of beneficiaries required many trips in different areas among them some are hard to access.

Local authorities, participating vendors and beneficiaries acknowledged the good management of the project as compared to other similar programs. There were no hurts, no deaths, no fighting during redemption except at the start of the project where pushing happened in Gonaives because of the lack of capacity of the local merchants to supply the beneficiaries. Prompt and effective solutions were found and no similar issues were reported afterwards. The electronic food voucher then helped to ensure respect of beneficiaries' dignity.

The project also faced other issues: technical problems with the electronic system: registration process, signal issues, etc. few local shops met the criteria, difficulty to set up a common strategy with ACF for the coordination of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption campaign at the start of the project, etc. However, appropriate actions were taken in a timely manner and those issues did not seem to have significant impacts on the project's course.

The project proved to have short term effects on both direct and indirect beneficiaries. Both operating shops owners and petty traders reported increasing in the volume of sales and gross margins. However, the petty traders reported this positive trend dramatically reversed at the end of the project. Indeed, both local authorities and beneficiaries reported that the general conditions of the households went back to the starting point after the end of the project.

However, the project was not intended to mitigate the structural causes of food insecurity and poverty since it only was an emergency response to natural shocks worsening the social conditions of the targeted communities. We do believe that key lessons can be learnt from this experience to build more sustainable long term projects with a view to mitigate the structural causes of vulnerability. In this perspective, should a similar project be implemented, we suggest building on the following and propose the following recommendations.

### 3.1 Key lessons learnt

- i. **Involvement of community committees in the project:** The participation of community members in the selection and mobilization of beneficiaries is a good strategy to effectively differentiating the most vulnerable households. However a good balance between elected and unelected members for more accountability and to minimize political influence.
- ii. **Selection criteria and identification document:** Both local authorities and local vendors reported the case of vulnerable people such elderly who were not selected because they did not have identification document. Special considerations should be adopted in such cases since absence of identification document may also be considered as a criteria of vulnerability.
- iii. **Electronic system:** The electronic voucher may not be appropriate in remote areas where it is hard to receive signal.
- iv. **Respect of the dignity of the beneficiaries:** An effective organization of the voucher program helps to preserve the beneficiaries' dignity; however local vendors should have the enough supplying capacity. In this perspective it might be a good strategy to a priori assign beneficiaries to local merchants based on their supplying capacities.
- v. **Success of the fresh fruit and vegetables consumption promotion campaign:** During the life span of the project more households consumed fresh fruits and vegetables as compared to the start of the project. This reinforcement of such item consumption was attributed not only to 12USD voucher but also to the campaign promotion. In general, the beneficiaries showed more awareness of fresh fruit and vegetable nutrition contribution compared to non-beneficiaries. Vouchers exchange and repayment seemed to be realized in an effective manner.
- vi. **Setting stone to long term program design:** The short term effects of the project are threaten by the structural causes of vulnerability and future shocks. Some months after the project ended, the beneficiaries seemed to go back to their stating conditions. During the project's course, they cut off less trees, used the money normally allocated to food to afford children education and some cases to acquire assets such as poultry and assets. However since the social conditions are the same, these positive effects are temporary.
- vii. **Need to counterbalance dependency mentality:** One side effect observed from the focus groups with the beneficiary was a dependency mentality which may increase with repetition of the same intervention. A general sense of despair emerged from the discussions. The only hope expressed was the renewal of the project and none of them mentioned the need to be "boosted" in order to set up individual initiatives such as income generating activities. Therefore, this emergency project should have other component of livelihood development.

Thus, the following recommendations may help to improve future projects.

## 3.2 Recommendations

- i. **Community committee composition:** A predefined quota of elected and elected members may be used in the composition of the community members to balance political influence. Furthermore, the members of these committees as well as their relatives should be less vulnerable as compared to the others to avoid family conflict.
- ii. **Elderly selection:** Vulnerable people such as elderly living alone should be given priority albeit they do not have identification document.
- iii. **Mixed voucher system:** A mixed electronic/paper voucher system should be used to avoid signal issues in remote areas. The electronic system may be used in more accessible areas while a paper voucher system may be used in the other areas. However CARE should be applied to guarantee anti-fraud mechanism.
- iv. **Extension of the fresh fruit and vegetable consumption promotion campaign to other areas:** This component of the project seemed to be successful. Hence the experience may be extended to other areas. Not only healthier diet promotion diet is carried out but also the local economy is reinforced.
- v. **Promotion of locally grown products:** In order to “boost” local economy a quota of locally grown products may be required in the food basket composition supplied to the beneficiaries, which could contribute to reinforce local markets dynamics.
- vi. **Advocating for long term programs:** More long term projects are needed to actually mitigate the causes and consequences of food insecurity. The food program may be reinforced with income generating activities to attain potential sustainable impacts. Strategies may be used to identify those who demonstrate ability and develop such activities and boost them. Specific trainings may also accompany such interventions to help them identify activities with potential income possibilities. Partnerships should be built with Government technical agencies and other non-governmental organization to leverage positive effects of emergency project such Kore Lavni Nou-2

## Annex:

**Table A1: Logical framework of Kore Lavni Nou – 2**

Kore Lavi Nou-2	Indicators	Means of verification
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Increased food security for 8,000 extremely poor and food insecure households in the Artibonite and Northwest Departments, Haiti.</b>	
<b>Objective One</b>	Provide food vouchers as a short-term safety net for 8000 food insecure and extremely poor families to fill gaps exacerbated by the disasters and to reinforce local markets in Gonaives, Mole Saint Nicholas, and Terre Neuve.	
<b>Result 1: Increased access to staple foods at local markets.</b>	# of beneficiary /voucher months attained (electronic)	Reports from Merchant Pro
	% of recipients are female-headed households	Project beneficiary lists
	# of merchants participating in voucher redemption, disaggregated by sex	MOUs and registered merchant accounts to redeem the voucher, activity of merchants per Merchant Pro and receipts
	% of beans and maize purchased are locally grown	Review sample of receipts. Interview with merchants and recipients.
	Percentage of households with moderate or severe hunger	Review results of Household Hunger Scale (HHS), baseline and end-of project surveys
<b>Objective Two</b>	Pilot healthy diet promotion with fresh fruit and vegetable paper vouchers approach in Terre Neuve commune to reach 1000 food insecure and extremely poor families.	
<b>Result 2: Increased awareness of the importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet</b>  <b>Result 3: Increased access to these food products at local markets.</b>	2.1 # of households reached with nutrition education, by sex	Participant lists, partner activity reports
	2.2 Level of awareness about importance of fresh fruits and vegetables in diets.	Baseline and end-of project survey, focus group discussions
	3.1 # of beneficiary /voucher months attained (paper vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables)	Distribution lists
	3.2 % of recipients are female-headed households	Project beneficiary registration lists
	3.3 # of merchants participating in voucher redemption, disaggregated by sex	List of participating merchants.