



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for
International
Development

Washington D.C.
20523

GHANA - Food Shortage

Date: 1982-1984; declared October 19, 1983

Location: Countrywide, but Upper and Northern Regions, southern Brong - Ahafo, and northern Ashanti (the traditional breadbasket of Ghana) were the most affected

No. Dead: Hundreds, mainly children

No. Affected: Entire population of approximately 12.5 million; about 1.5 million suffered from malnutrition, anemia, and kwashiorkor

Damage: Major crop losses due to drought and fires caused a scarcity of food which in turn led to higher food prices and increased incidences of malnutrition.

The Disaster

The food shortage in Ghana resulted from a combination of events, some natural and some human in origin, which occurred over a two-year period. Starting in 1982 and continuing until the end of 1983, rainfall in all the major food producing areas was late and erratic, and its sudden cessation in July in the Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, and Eastern Regions and in September in Northern and Upper Regions severely reduced the output of maize and other cereals. Widespread maize virus disease and a lack of fertilizer and other agricultural inputs further reduced yields of food grains.

Very dry conditions caused by the prolonged drought, coupled with an extended harmattan (dry wind from the Sahara), contributed to the spread of bush fires, especially in the northern third of the country. These fires damaged both stored and standing crops. In some regions, up to 35% of total food production was destroyed by fires. In addition to the major cereal crops, traditional subsistence crops such as cassava, yams, and plantains as well as cash crops such as cocoa and timber were

seriously affected. The net effect of these catastrophes was to reduce both food availability and foreign exchange earnings, which are used for food imports.

Another factor contributing to the food shortage was the return in early 1983 of several hundred thousand Ghanaians from Nigeria (see OFDA Annual Report FY 1983, West Africa--Expelled Persons). Estimates of the total number of returnees, mainly young men, ranged from 600,000 to over one million. This influx significantly increased demand for food at a time when production was dramatically reduced. The food shortage resulted in spiraling food prices, which rendered even staple commodities unobtainable for many people, and increasing incidences of malnutrition, anemia, and kwashiorkor, particularly among children. Schools were closed for lack of food and hospitals refused to accept patients unless their relatives could provide food.

Action Taken by the Government of Ghana (GOG)

The GOG, recognizing that the growing disaster would require outside assistance, sought help in mid-1983 from the international community. The GOG also moved quickly to solve problems such as pilferage at the ports and lack of fuel. These efforts were led by the National Mobilization Committee (NMC), which had primary responsibility for food relief. (This organization grew out of the Repatriation Task Force, which was formed in early 1983 to resettle Ghanaians expelled from Nigeria.) The NMC played a crucial role in mobilizing GOG resources, reducing commodity losses, and allocating fuel on a priority basis for food donors' vehicles.

The GOG publicized the seriousness of the food shortage, giving daily media attention to food and agricultural imports, back-to-the-land movements, and incentives for gardening and increased food production. During the latter half of 1983 and the first quarter of 1984, more than 147,000 MT of food were imported by the GOG. Most of the food was allocated to GOG institutions and agencies for release into the market at a subsidized cost. A small portion was distributed free of charge.

The NMC also distributed 27,040 MT of maize, wheat, fish, cheese, dried skimmed milk, and corn soya milk provided through WFP. Transport was hired from the State Transport Corporation and private truckers and distribution was carried out through maternal-child health clinics either directly or through local voluntary agencies. The operation was financed in part by the GOG; however, due to fiscal constraints, donors arranged for the sale of some commodities with the proceeds going to defray GOG transport and administrative costs.

The NMC held periodic meetings with international donors to coordinate the relief effort and thereby avoid duplication of assistance and minimize port congestion. Such meetings allowed the GOG to identify and fill unmet needs in assistance and also to respond to donors' requests for GOG support in areas such as fuel allocation, port clearance, and food aid security.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

In response to the deteriorating food supply situation, the U.S. Ambassador on October 19, 1984, issued a disaster declaration and authorized \$25,000 for the rehabilitation of 17 Hyster forklifts belonging to the Ghana Cargo Handling Co. The forklifts were then made available on a priority basis to unload emergency food.

Shortly after the disaster declaration, OFDA dispatched a two-man team to Ghana to assess the situation and review the feasibility of CRS and ADRA proposals to finance emergency relief. The cost of the assessment, including travel and per diem, totaled \$26,213.

A grant of \$999,427 was made to CRS for a nutrition and general assistance program to be implemented through its ongoing Title II program. Elements of the program included: 1) provision of medicines and medical supplies to counter the effects of malnutrition among children; 2) provision of agricultural tools to farmers; 3) expansion of CRS' administrative, supervisory, and logistical capacities to ensure a steady flow of food inland from ports; 4) operation of warehousing sufficient to handle the food assistance; 5) establishment of a communications system to facilitate the movement of food; and 6) provision of tires, spare parts, and tarpaulins as incentives to truck operators (see below for P.L. 480 Title II commodities provided through the CRS emergency program).

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency received a grant of \$559,931 from OFDA to conduct an emergency feeding program using 6,000 MT of Title II food. Through its network of local centers, ADRA distributed monthly rations consisting of six kg of bulgar, two kg of milk, and one kg of vegetable oil to approximately 100,000 needy people. Priority was given to families with children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and families not benefiting from other feeding programs.

OFDA funded contracts totaling \$33,349 for a food aid manager and a food monitor to assist the USAID Mission in implementing and supervising the emergency program. They oversaw the unloading of food at the ports, visited distribution centers to monitor program administration, and worked with the GOG to coordinate the international response.

An engineer provided through the WASH project at a cost of \$7,711 spent three weeks in Ghana assessing the water shortage. The supply, which is normally poor, was further depleted by the drought); he subsequently made a series of recommendations for short term emergency actions and longer term improvement projects.

As a result of the water engineer's assessment, OFDA funded the transport costs (\$40,000) of well drilling equipment from Baltimore, Maryland to Tema for a water project in Wenchi District, Brong-Ahafo Region, sponsored by a Catholic mission. The goal of the project is to provide good drinking water in 75 villages in Wenchi District. Three Peace Corps Volunteers are serving on the project, one as advisor and two on the drilling team. The equipment, including drills, water pumps, vehicles, and spare parts worth \$550,000, was purchased with private funds in the U.S. and Europe (see below, Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies).

In response to a GOG request for rice seed (the 1983 crop suffered a 95% loss), USAID/Accra arranged for the purchase of 160 MT of rice seed from the Philippines. Of the 160 MT, 120 MT was purchased and transported with USAID/Accra project funds (\$55,800 for the rice seed and \$330,000 for air freight) with the remainder funded by UNDP (see Assistance Provided by the International Community). The rice seed was distributed by the Ghana Feed Company, a USAID project, to farmers in northern Ghana.

A total of 31,478 MT of P.L. 480 Title II commodities were provided by Food for Peace for direct distribution by CRS and ADRA. CRS received 25,478 MT valued at \$9,456,100 plus freight costs of \$2,914,500; ADRA received 6,000 MT of bulgar, non-fat dried milk, and vegetable oil valued at \$2,074,300 plus shipping costs of \$800,000. Another 5,646 MT of non-fat dried milk and rice (\$3,640,000) was provided by the USG for sale by the GOG to generate local currency to help cover internal transport costs of the CRS and ADRA programs.

The USG also contributed 2,160 MT of P.L. 480 commodities valued at \$509,800 for distribution through WFP. Ocean freight came to \$162,500 bringing the total cost to \$672,300.

Summary of USG Assistance

Ambassador's authority.....	\$25,000
Food shortage assessment.....	\$26,213
Grant to CRS.....	\$999,427
Grant to ADRA.....	\$559,931
Food aid monitors.....	\$33,349
WASH project water engineer.....	\$7,711
Transport of well drilling equipment.....	\$40,000
 Total OFDA Assistance	 \$1,691,631
 Purchase and transport of rice seed.....	 \$385,800
 P.L. 480 Title II commodities.....	 \$19,557,200
 TOTAL	 \$21,634,631

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

ADRA - conducted an emergency feeding program funded by the USG. Utilized existing staff and a network of distribution centers to implement the program; value of expended ADRA resources unknown.

CARE - funded two transportation systems experts for the FAO multidonor assessment mission; provided two logisticians on detail through FAO to help the GOG National Mobilization Committee with port and inland transport operations.

CRS - with funding provided by the USG, increased its regular Title II program by 40% to meet the food crisis. CRS used its long established management system and operational agreements with GOG agencies to accommodate the expanded program.

Divine Word Missionaries - with \$550,000 provided through private donations in Ghana, Great Britain, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Scotland, the U.S. and West Germany, purchased well drilling equipment for the Wenchi water project.

TOTAL \$550,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EEC - donated 9,500 MT of rice, 2,500 MT of butteroil, and 1,000 MT of dried skim milk as well as an unspecified amount of seeds and medicines; total value of \$2,125,000. Also provided \$1.65 million to fund internal road transportation costs incurred by various food aid donors.

FAO - funded a multidonor mission to assess the food supply situation.

UNDP - in conjunction with USAID/Accra, funded purchase and transport of 40 MT of rice seed from Manila at a total cost of \$128,600.

WCC - contributed an unspecified amount of rice through WFP.

WFP - contributed 10,800 MT of maize, 10,000 MT of wheat, 1,080 MT of dried skim milk, 1,080 MT of fish and cheese, and 1,080 MT of corn-soy milk for free distribution to women and children under age five; 13,000 MT of wheat for Upper and Northern Regions; and 10,000 MT of wheat were donated for sale, with the proceeds used to cover internal transport costs; total value of \$14 million. The Resident Representative headed the multidonor food assistance coordinating group.

Governments

Australia - 5,000 MT of rice and 8,500 MT of wheat, value not reported.

Canada - provided 15,000 MT of wheat and two food monitors, value not reported.

Denmark - 3,500 MT of wheat, value not reported.

Germany, Fed. Rep. - 4,000 MT of sorghum grains, value not reported.

Japan - 6,000 MT of rice, valued not reported.

Netherlands - 800 MT of rice, value not reported.

Spain - 2,500 MT of wheat, value not reported.

Switzerland - provided a balance of payments support grant of \$6.3 million to rehabilitate 50 trucks and maintain for 18 months the State Transport Corporations' fleet of 90 trucks.

United Kingdom - 12,000 MT of maize and 5,000 MT of sorghum through WFP, value not reported.

Voluntary Agencies

Consortium consisting of Caritas, the Salvation Army, the Sudan Interior Mission, and WCC - 10,000 MT of food grains, value unknown.

TOTAL \$24,203,600