

4. Conclusions

Project Assumptions: The projects were based on realistic assumptions, the markets were functioning, were well organised and food was locally available. Seeds and livestock were available and within reasonable proximity to the affected area and were displayed in adequate quantities in the fairs.

The Mapou project was not able to foresee a drought that caused crop failure. This adverse climatic phenomenon was beyond project control but its impact was minimised by integrating different project components, the provision of livestock and seeds.

Baselines: Cash and voucher interventions require strong monitoring systems to evaluate the use of the cash distributed and the impact on the local economy and household livelihood. While the Cape Haitian project was able to establish baselines and analyse changes in the food security and livelihood context in the targeted population, this did not happen in the Mapou project. Consequently it was difficult to analyse intervention impact.

Implementing Partners: In both projects Oxfam GB collaborated with and built the capacities of local committees and community based organisations. Working with local partners facilitated access to local communities, understanding specific vulnerabilities and building trust amongst project participants. While in Cape Haitian Oxfam GB was able to continue strengthening and consolidating the local committees, in Mapou there has not been a strategy to continue building capacities and support partners in managing and delivering good quality interventions in the future.

Project participant choice and empowerment: The projects demonstrated that beneficiaries accepted the project and were very pleased to be able to make their own cash expenditure decisions based on their own priorities and needs. This aspect not only increased project ownership, but also permitted participants a more active role.

In the Cape Haitian project the inclusion of rice as part of the CFW payment resulted in complaints, as beneficiaries preferred purchasing their own food, having a choice of a variety of foods and making their own financial decisions.

Project staff in Mapou recommended particular goods that were considered “more suitable” for commercial activities to participating women traders. However, these goods did not always reflect or represent their preferences or priorities. By the end of the project some of the women traders were buying and selling petty trade that reflected their own preferences.

Project cost-effectiveness: The cash and voucher project minimised operational costs as no transportation, storage and distribution costs were incurred. However, these projects could have been planned and managed better to reduce price inflation (during the fairs) and high financial rewards for local shops. These additional costs could have been saved, further reducing operational costs.

The projects were gender balanced: Women actively participated in project activities and had the opportunity to re-establish their petty trade activities or to earn a wage by participating in CFW activities.

Impact: The vouchers and fairs were negatively affected by crop failure, but farmers were able partially re-establish their livestock assets. The project participants were able to purchase the livestock they were looking for (mainly a couple of goats), and had by the time of the evaluation had already doubled their livestock number.

Cash for work and vouchers for female petty traders had a positive impact on the household economy as food access improved, school fees were paid, and to a lesser degree, debts repaid

and commercial activities invested in. Completed public activities were selected via community consultation, were environmentally friendly and had a positive impact on the local economy as they improved access to local markets. The cleaning of drainage canals improved the public health environment and prevented floods in the rainy season. However, as there was no project continuation or long-term strategy to tackle the underlying causes of food insecurity in these disaster-prone areas, the impact was mainly short lived.

5. Recommendations.

- ❑ It is always recommended to gather baseline data at the beginning of the project. Such information is essential for monitoring and evaluating programme achievements, but also for facilitating any project adjustments.
- ❑ In Mapou, the initial assumptions should have envisaged the possibility to support livelihoods through the provision of cash grants instead of organising fairs and vouchers systems, or cash for work activities. The feasibility of including a cash grant component should have been taken into consideration during the food security assessment stage.
- ❑ The seed and livestock vouchers and fairs gave farmers an opportunity to choose the varieties and quantities they wanted to purchase. The fairs are considered as very successful, they were timely, empowered participants, and boosted the local economy. When and where appropriate, fairs should be replicated in the future. Organising fairs should try and incorporate indigenous seed and animal varieties more, and use them as spaces for information exchange amongst farmers and producers.
- ❑ To reduce negative consequences of price inflation during the fairs, it is recommended to invite more producers, disseminate promotional information better and encourage a wider range of products for sale. It could be possible to introduce a fixed price range for goods in order to avoid powerful middlemen monopolising the sale of some goods.
- ❑ Greater community awareness of project objectives and activities prior to implementation is necessary, especially in Mapou. This could have reduced the number of beneficiary complaints and helped the implementing agency to better understand beneficiary preferences and make needed adjustments more promptly
- ❑ Establishing payment rates for cash for work activities has been a key issue that created discontent among the participating population. Fixing rates at a value close to that of the local labour market was an important step taken to avoid a disruption of local labour rates or diversion of beneficiary time from livelihood activities. It also represented the means towards developing a self-selection process of the most vulnerable population. At the same time, the payment value only met half household basic food needs. It is important to know at the beginning of the project how vulnerable households are satisfying their immediate basic needs, and eventually to consider possible additional actions to cover them.
- ❑ The system of using local shops to deliver cash and in kind payments was successful and it should be replicated in similar contexts. However, the financial reward provided to the shops was considered too high and it should be more cautiously calculated in the future.
- ❑ Cash for work programmes should consider supporting vulnerable groups that are unable to work, as was done in the Cape Haitian project. In addition, they should consider providing child caring facilities or hiring care providers especially when a large number of women are participating.

- The humanitarian programmes in Haiti should include clear exit strategies that consider how Oxfam can continue supporting and consolidating local community committees and ensuring long-term sustainability to the project activities.