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ENHANCING AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES' RESILIENCE TO FOOD INSECURITY THROUGH CASH INJECTION: A CASE OF THE KITA CIRCLE IN MALI

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of emergency cash injections within Project Kita III during the challenging agricultural period of 2021 in the Kita Circle. Targeting vulnerable households and agricultural cooperatives, this study investigated the multifaceted dimensions influenced by these injections, ranging from distribution processes to the overall resilience and community engagement of beneficiaries. To conduct this research, a sample of 157 beneficiaries were chosen, with a predominant representation of women at 75.80%. The study employed a dual-pronged approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative insights gleaned from 10 focus group discussions. The findings of this study unveiled a significant positive impact on mitigating the repercussions of the poor harvest experienced in 2021. Notably, the emergency cash injections played a pivotal role in attenuating reduced crop yields and addressing food insecurity prevalent among the beneficiaries. By extending the duration of available food stocks within households, these injections effectively reduced the dependence on harmful survival strategies that were previously employed due to scarcity. Moreover, cash injections contributed to the amplification of community engagement within agricultural cooperatives. This enhancement in participation indicated a positive shift in the involvement of beneficiaries in cooperative organizations, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to agro-ecological practices. While the assistance was acknowledged as relevant and beneficial, concerns regarding its adequacy were prevalent among the beneficiaries. Many expressed a desire for larger amounts of cash assistance, implying a potential gap between the actual received aid and the perceived need, emphasizing the continued vulnerability and need for further support. The study underscores the critical necessity of addressing the root causes of agricultural underperformance to ensure sustainable, long-term food security within these communities. It emphasizes that while emergency cash injections proved instrumental in addressing immediate challenges, they must be complemented with strategies that tackle the underlying issues affecting agricultural productivity. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential for these injections to strengthen the sustainability of Project Kita III by bolstering cooperative organizations, promoting ecologically sound agricultural practices, and fostering enduring community engagement. However, it identifies a need to mobilize internal resources within these cooperatives to ensure sustained success beyond the scope of external aid.

Key words: Agriculture Cooperatives, Food insecurity, Resilience, Cash injection, Kita



INTRODUCTION

Agriculture holds immense significance in Mali's economy, contributing to around 30% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), employing 80% of the workforce and generating over 40% of its foreign exchange earnings [1]. Agricultural cooperatives play a vital role in community development by promoting collective action and resource sharing among farmers. Their primary objective is to boost the income of their members by providing essential services [1]. By helping farmers overcome obstacles in accessing markets, these cooperatives encourage healthy market competition and elevate product quality standards [3]. Moreover, agricultural cooperatives offer a wide range of services covering production, marketing and economics. They pool financial resources, engage in collective production efforts, and enhance product value to achieve economies of scale. Additionally, they manage the entire value chain collectively and improve market access through negotiations with buyers [4]. Cooperatives also provide essential training, networking and extension services, including education and advice on production techniques. By enabling members to share knowledge and experiences, these cooperatives enhance their business management skills and resilience [5]. Furthermore, agricultural cooperatives play a crucial role in enhancing the resilience of their members, shielding them from potential risks and ensuring the continuity of food security and rural development [6].

In this context, resilience refers to the ability of agricultural cooperatives to endure and recover from external shocks such as climate change, market fluctuations and economic crises. Numerous studies, including the research conducted by Candemir [7], emphasize the pivotal role of cooperatives in bolstering resilience among smallholder farmers. These studies highlight the potential of cooperatives not only in enhancing food security but also in stabilizing incomes.

Despite the benefits of the agricultural sector, agricultural production remains vulnerable to various risks that impact producers. To address these issues, providing financial support to impoverished households and communities becomes crucial. Such support, whether in the form of direct cash injections or through multiplier effects, is viewed as an investment in the economy rather than just a drain on public funds for social welfare purposes. These strategies aim to reduce risk aversion and enhance resilience among rural producers, thereby promoting increased investment and sustainable growth in production [8].

Recent perspectives on social protection acknowledge the economic value of providing financial assistance. Studies indicate that targeted cash injections are financially viable and more cost-effective than importing food. Moreover, cash injections are essential because individuals facing poverty have diverse non-food



needs, such as foster care grants and pensions, which can provide vital support to households [8]. Cash transfers refer to the provision of financial assistance to households, primarily aimed at increasing their real income. These transfers are typically directed toward the poor or individuals at risk of falling into poverty without this aid [9]. There are two main types of cash transfer programs: conditional cash transfers (CCT) and unconditional cash transfers. Conditional cash transfers are given to household's contingent upon them fulfilling specific requirements, often related to factors like school attendance and healthcare utilization. In contrast, unconditional cash transfers are provided without imposing any conditions. The overarching goal of cash transfer programs is to support vulnerable households in meeting their basic needs and caring for disadvantaged children [11].

In the Kita Circle, where Caritas is involved in the project titled "Kita III," the 2021 cereal production campaign was marked by late and irregular rainfall, leading to an early cessation of rains in most project intervention areas. This situation resulted in a decrease in cereal production, which is the main food source for households. In this context, Caritas initiated an emergency assistance intervention aimed at contributing to the food and nutritional security of vulnerable households and communities in the Kita Circle. The goal was to reduce the food shortage period in 2022 by providing emergency assistance. The aim was to assist the most disadvantaged households in 10 villages within the Kita Circle in restarting their subsistence activities by providing cash transfers that meet their nutritional requirements and promoting income diversification through vegetable gardening.

With the aim of integrating the humanitarian-development nexus more effectively within a development project, the "Kita III" project in Kita sought to test this approach through an innovative intervention during the increased lean season in early 2022. The objective was to implement a humanitarian intervention in a creative manner that aligns with Caritas' strategy, providing effective aid focused on urgent needs while working towards long-term sustainable development goals.

While cash injections have proven effective, challenges such as fund mismanagement, lack of financial literacy, and inadequate monitoring mechanisms persist. Emphasis is on the importance of designing tailored financial literacy programs to ensure the responsible use of funds. Additionally, implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks is crucial to track the progress of interventions and address emerging issues promptly. This study delves into the transformative potential of cash injections for NGO-funded cooperatives in Mali, shedding light on the mechanisms through which such interventions contribute to agricultural resilience and sustainable development.



Objectives

The research objectives encompass the examination of the outcomes resulting from the emergency cash injections administered in the Kita area during the challenging agricultural season of 2021 under Project Kita III. It sought to analyze the impact on vulnerable households and communities, focusing on assessing how these cash injections contribute to the overall sustainability of Project Kita III. Additionally, the study aimed to extract valuable insights, lessons learned, and best practices from this experience, with a particular emphasis on their applicability to future development projects, especially within the humanitarian-development nexus framework.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in ten villages within the Kita circle, focusing on households that received cash transfers, as well as engaging local leaders, community representatives, members of agricultural cooperatives (OPA), and project staff. Data was gathered from 157 cash transfer beneficiaries through structured questionnaires. The sampling process involved a random selection method. Notably, 75.80% of the sampled individuals were women, while 24.20% were men. The sample selection employed a random sampling technique, applying the Finite Population Correction Factor formula (FPC Formula).

$$n = \frac{N * z^2}{(N - 1) * E^2 + * Z^2}$$

Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires. Data were transmitted online via the KoboToolbox platform and then to stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Qualitative data were collected through 10 focus group discussions (FGDs) by the same respondents, For the focus group discussions, data collection was carried out with the support of the expert assistant and the moderators/interviewers. An initial sorting and verification process was carried out by the expert assistant before the data was transmitted online for auditing and analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research by Ada *et al.* [12] on the impact of humanitarian aid on post-conflict development in Borno State identified a significant positive correlation between humanitarian aid and development. In light of this, the study aims to evaluate the potential contribution of cash injections in humanitarian aid to bolstering the resilience of agricultural cooperatives in Mali. This investigation seeks to determine how such support can facilitate the involvement of these cooperatives in development projects.



The impact of the poor agricultural season of 2021 is mainly reflected in a reduction or loss of crops, which clearly foreshadowed food insecurity. In fact, 100% of the respondents reported a decrease in their harvest, while 40.70% of the respondents (F=39.80%; M=44%) reported a loss of their crops. There is no statistically significant difference by gender ($P=0.817>0.05$) as per Figure 1.

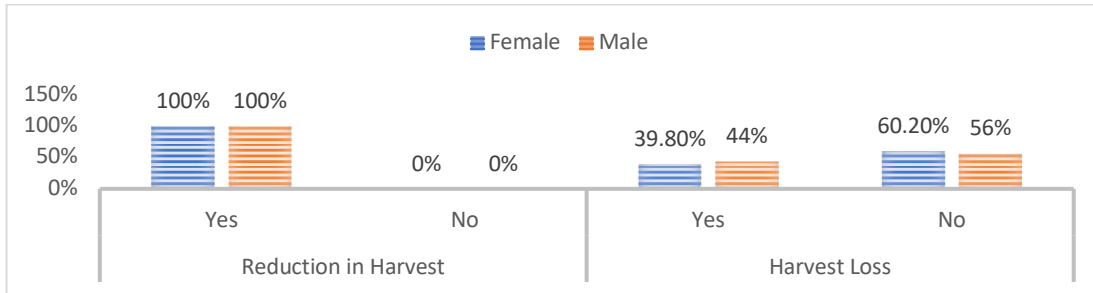


Figure 1: Types of impact on households during a poor agricultural season in 2021

The poor agricultural season of 2021 had significant and widespread implications, as evidenced by the reduction or loss of crops among farmers. The fact that 100% of the respondents reported a decrease in their harvest paints a grim picture of the impact of adverse weather conditions, which can be attributed to factors such as drought, excessive rainfall, or unseasonal weather patterns. This widespread reduction in crop yields clearly foreshadowed food insecurity in the affected regions. With a substantial portion of the respondents (40.70%) experiencing a complete loss of their crops, the situation becomes even more alarming. Loss of crops not only affects the livelihoods of farmers but also disrupts the local food supply chain, leading to increased food prices and limited availability of essential commodities.

Moreover, the absence of a statistically significant difference in the reported crop loss between genders (as indicated by the non-significant p-value of 0.817) suggests that both male and female farmers were equally affected by the poor agricultural season. This equality in impact highlights the universality of the issue, cutting across gender lines. However, it is essential to recognize that while the impact may be uniform, its consequences could vary based on the existing socio-economic disparities between genders. Women, who often play a significant role in agricultural activities, might face unique challenges in coping with the loss, potentially leading to increased vulnerabilities, especially if they lack access to resources, credit facilities, or social support networks.

The consequences of this agricultural crisis are multifaceted. First and foremost, there is an immediate threat to food security in the affected regions. With a substantial reduction in crop production, communities are at risk of hunger and

malnutrition, which can have long-term health implications, particularly for children and pregnant women. Additionally, the economic implications are severe, as farmers face financial losses due to the decreased harvests. This economic strain can lead to increased poverty levels, debt and a decline in overall living standards. Furthermore, the lack of surplus crops for sale impacts the income of farming households, contributing to a cycle of poverty and economic instability.

Analysis of Household Survival Strategies

In response to a challenging agricultural season in Kita, agriculture cooperatives implemented various survival strategies. These approaches were crucial in helping them navigate the difficulties such as hunger, lack of medical fees, school fees, et cetera, linked to a decrease in agriculture production experienced during the lean period as shown in Figure 2.

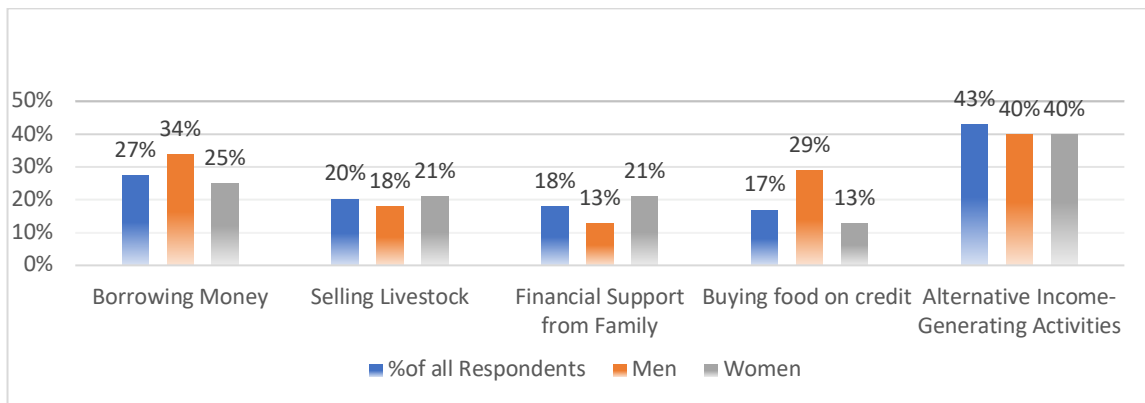


Figure 2: Adaptation strategy to the food crisis

The data highlighted several survival strategies employed by households in dire circumstances, but it also shed light on their potential drawbacks. Borrowing money, a tactic employed by 27% of all respondents, provided immediate financial relief but often led to a cycle of debt, making it difficult for families to escape poverty in the long run. Similarly, selling livestock (20% of respondents) eroded a family's primary source of income and assets, depleting their means to sustain their livelihoods in the future. Relying on financial support from family members (18% of respondents) strained relationships and created dependencies, leading to long-term familial tensions. Buying food on credit (17% of respondents) trapped families in a cycle of indebtedness, exacerbating their financial woes. Lastly, while alternative income-generating activities (43% of respondents) seemed promising, lack of initial capital often hampered these ventures, making it challenging for families to diversify their income streams effectively.

Amidst these challenges, cash injection emerged as a viable solution. By providing direct financial assistance to households, cash injection broke the cycle of borrowing, selling valuable assets and depending solely on family support. With

cash in hand, families could meet their immediate needs, including purchasing essential items like food, medicine and seeds, without resorting to detrimental strategies. Furthermore, cash injections empowered families to explore alternative income-generating activities without the burden of debt, fostering entrepreneurial ventures and sustainable businesses. This approach not only alleviated immediate financial strain but also set the stage for long-term economic stability, enabling families to escape the harmful cycle of survival strategies and build a more secure future. Additionally, cash injection initiatives tailored to support women, who were often disproportionately affected by these challenges, had a profound impact. Women, constituting 25% of those resorting to borrowing money and 21% relying on selling livestock, faced unique barriers in accessing resources. Targeted financial aid and support empowered women specifically, enhancing their economic independence and overall well-being. By addressing the harmful consequences of survival strategies and providing strategic cash injections, communities paved the way for sustainable development, ensuring that families, especially women, were not only able to survive but also thrive in the face of adversity.

Relevance of emergency Cash injection

The research findings underscored the significant impact of the 2021 agricultural campaign's failure on households, resulting in crop losses and reduced harvests. For 82% of respondents who primarily relied on subsistence agriculture, the impact was particularly severe. Stakeholders unanimously emphasized the vital role of cash injection. Cash injection not only provided essential support during the lean season but also bridged the gap between the shock period and the post-shock phase. Moreover, all respondents affirmed that these activities effectively met their needs and priorities, aligning seamlessly with both national and Caritas/donor policies. Consequently, the researcher considered the activities carried out in this context relevant.

Based on the provided data in Table 1, the action appears to be well-designed, adapted to the community's needs, coherent with other projects, and innovative in its approach. These factors are indicative of a thoughtfully planned and executed intervention, which is crucial for achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes in community development or aid initiatives.

Effectiveness of emergency Cash injections

In the context of the implementation of the project 'Food Security and Nutrition in Kita III,' one of the expected results by Caritas Switzerland was as follows (Result 2): the food shortage period for vulnerable households in the Kita Circle is reduced by one month. The strategy adopted to achieve the project's second result was to transfer money to vulnerable families. The selection criteria for beneficiaries in the



Kita III project encompassed active membership in relevant farmers' organizations within the maize, peanut, or vegetable value chains. Priority was given to individuals residing in climate-vulnerable areas, particularly those most susceptible to its impacts. Limited access to information was a crucial consideration, highlighting the need to target those facing challenges in obtaining essential agricultural knowledge. Additionally, beneficiaries had to exhibit deficiencies in production, processing, or marketing, pinpointing areas where intervention and support are most needed.

The determination of Cash to be distributed was calculated based on food basket mainly maize and sugar to 2,850 of the most vulnerable households in the Kita Circle. The transfer of cash was carried out in collaboration with the telecommunications operator Orange Money Mali. With a net amount of 43,345 FCFA (Franc de la Communauté Financière d'Afrique) per household for two months, totalling 86,690 FCFA per household. This calculation was based on 9 kg of maize per person per month for two months and 10 kg of sugar per household; the food basket was based on market assessment and the available budget for the project. Almost all respondents 99% of households (F=99%; H=97%) spent a share of their funds on the purchase of food in line with the objective of an emergency Cash injection, while 14% of respondents allocated the aid to health expenses (F=12%; H=19%).

Based on above data and findings from focus group discussion, the cash injection has been effective in relation to: 1) The distribution of emergency Cash injections to the most vulnerable households, 2) Reducing harmful survival strategies and 3) Diversifying household incomes through vegetable gardening by constructing market gardening areas. However, there is still much to be done, as there were significant food expenses that the assistance could not cover during the lean period. This is not only due to the substantial number of households affected by the shock in 202,1 but also because of the inadequacy of the allocated amount, as reported by more than half of the beneficiaries. An overall grade of A is assigned to this criterion.

Table 2 demonstrates the effectiveness of cash injection to the project's substantial progress in various aspects, including efficient execution of planned activities and the promotion of sustainable income generation. However, the persistence of harmful survival strategies signifies the need for a more nuanced approach, perhaps involving community engagement and tailored interventions. By building on its successes and addressing the identified challenges, the project can further enhance its effectiveness, ensuring a more comprehensive and lasting impact on the community it serves.



Efficiency of emergency Cash injections

The entire focus group participants and respondents reported that from the outset, the project staff held general assemblies with the involvement of village and municipal leaders, as well as representatives of producer organizations (OPA), to explain the rationale behind the initiative. These general assemblies provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to fully grasp and align with the objectives of the project, which significantly contributed to achieving the qualitative and quantitative results obtained. However, 85% of participants in the focus group discussions, 50% of women and 61% of respondents believed that the financial assistance was not sufficient as per Figure 3. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that it served the intended purposes, namely enhancing household resilience during the lean period and increasing their involvement in livelihood improvement activities within the communities. Hence, most respondents (85%) expressed a desire for Caritas Suisse and its partners to increase the allocated amounts, even though they recognized that the assistance helped relieve vulnerable households by covering their immediate food needs.

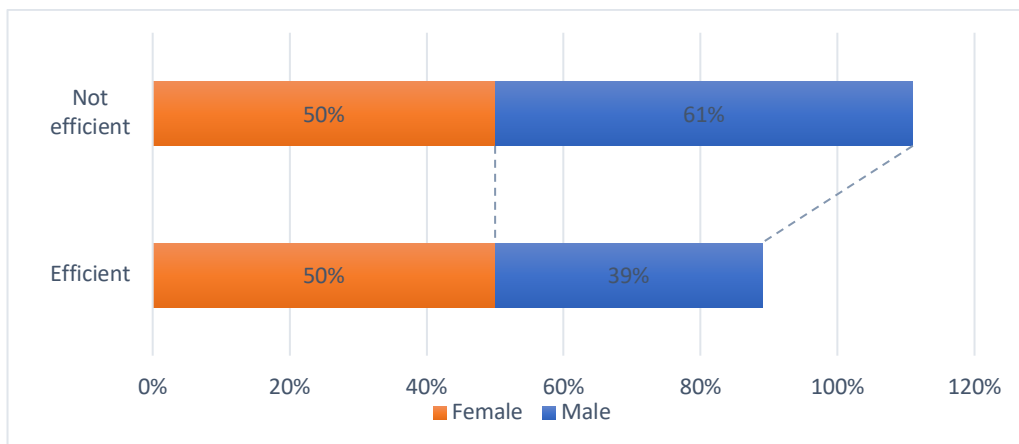


Figure 3: Beneficiaries' perception on efficiency of cash injection

Despite the beneficiaries expressing some dissatisfaction with the amount provided, all the involved parties in the research appreciated the intervention (*"the financial assistance came at the right time"*). For the beneficiaries, *"this experience with Caritas is unique as they have never experienced this with other partners."* According to the officials, the communities continued to express their satisfaction. They believe that, in addition to helping households overcome the period of food scarcity, the financial assistance has been an opportunity to strengthen unity and cohesion within households and even communities. The strengthened community-based organizations (CBOs) intend to remain willing to continue involvement in agriculture project and remain in the cooperatives. One respondent said: *"In our area, those who did not receive the aid expressed regret for not joining the project from the very beginning, realizing the importance of the assistance."* With that said,

it is crucial for Caritas to carefully consider the manner in which assistance is provided in order to prevent the unintended consequence of fostering dependency among cooperative members. While the aid provided has been essential in addressing immediate needs, it is imperative to explore approaches that encourage self-reliance and the pursuit of sustainable development within these cooperatives.

Impact of emergency Cash injections

The emergency Cash injection had an impact on the projections related to food insecurity due to the poor agricultural campaign of 2021 in the intervention area of Project Kita III, which anticipated risks such as crop losses or reductions, the departure of able-bodied individuals, and the development of detrimental survival strategies.

Mitigating 2021 Harvest Impact in Project Communities

The cash injection in line with its goals, aimed to enhance food security and nutrition for vulnerable households and communities in the Kita area by alleviating food scarcity in 2022. Interviews with village leaders, community representatives, and agricultural cooperative members revealed that the financial assistance extended the duration of food supplies in households. Despite the positive reception, the assistance did not significantly improve the majority of targeted vulnerable households' ability to fulfil their food requirements, as indicated by the research findings.

Specifically, the research findings show that 21% of households (with a breakdown of 23% female-headed households and 18% male-headed households) reported an improvement in meeting their food needs. However, 69% of respondents (comprising 68% female and 71% male respondents) stated that their ability to meet their food needs had decreased. This decline was not attributed to the cash injection but was a consequence of a poor agriculture season in 2021. The cash injection was not sufficient to bridge the gap caused by the agricultural challenges faced during that period. On the other hand, 10% of respondents (with 9% female and 11% male respondents) reported no change in their ability to meet their household's food needs as indicated in Figure 4.



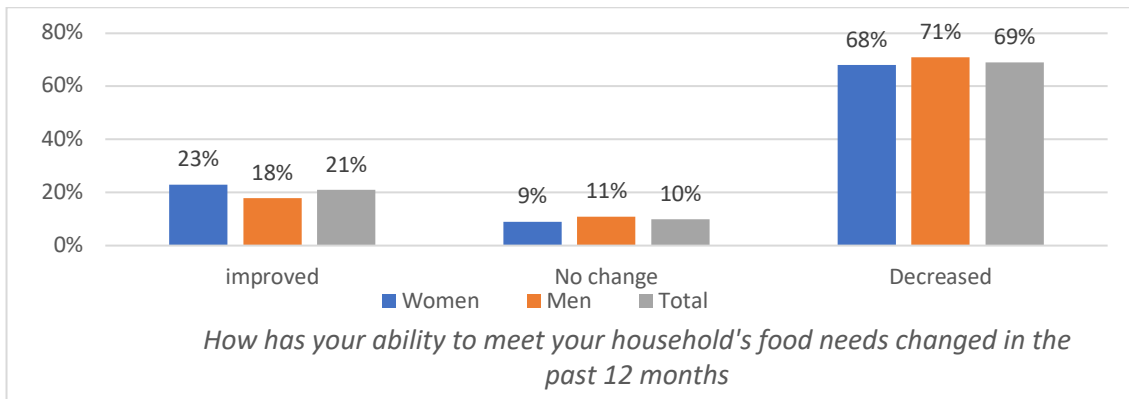


Figure 4: Assessment of changes in household capacity to meet their food needs by gender

Although 69% of respondents felt that their ability to meet their food needs had diminished as a result of the poor harvest season, they nevertheless acknowledged that aid had had an impact on their ability to do so. The data from Figure 5 illustrate the impact of cash transfers on households' ability to meet their food needs, distinguished by gender. A noteworthy trend emerged, indicating that a majority of both women and men (56% and 57%, respectively) were able to cover their household's food requirements with the provided cash transfers. However, a significant portion of respondents, comprising 58% of women and 65% of men, found the transfers helpful yet insufficient to fulfil their households' needs during the lean season. Notably, no respondents reported no impact, emphasizing that the cash transfers did affect all households surveyed to some extent. This data highlights the positive effect of cash transfers on enhancing food security, yet it underscores a critical gap between the assistance offered and the actual needs of many households, especially during challenging periods.

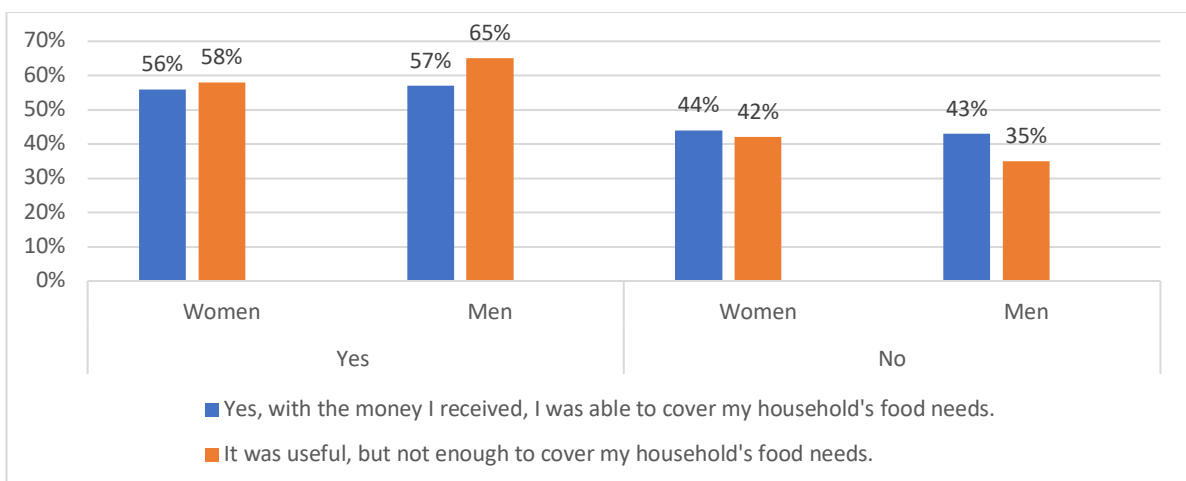


Figure 5: Impact of cash transfers on households' ability to meet their food needs

The findings emphasize the necessity for a more tailored and comprehensive approach to social assistance programs. While cash transfers positively influenced a majority of households (69%), a substantial number (58% women and 65% men respondents) still struggled to meet their food requirements entirely. This underscores the importance of re-evaluating the adequacy of the assistance provided, with a focus on bridging the gap between the cash transfers and the actual demands of the households. Policy adjustments, such as revising the amount of cash disbursed or supplementing cash transfers with targeted support measures, are crucial to ensuring the effectiveness of social assistance programs and improving the resilience of vulnerable households, particularly during lean seasons.

Financial Assistance Impact on Beneficiary Status and Project Objectives

Following a qualitative analysis of the results from individual and focused interviews (interviews with project staff, and village-level agricultural cooperative leaders), the research found that, in addition to extending the duration of household food consumption, emergency aid led to a change in behaviour in household food habits, particularly in terms of reducing waste (producers now have the capacity to estimate their household's food needs).

Furthermore, the teaching of new food self-sufficiency techniques and the introduction of new seed varieties (early varieties) such as "*sotuba*," "*gambiaca*," and peanut seeds were successful. Based on the results of the focus group discussions (FGD), 74% of participants indicated that aid played a crucial role in improving food security within the project area. Furthermore, it guaranteed the presence of capable individuals for cereal and vegetable production tasks. As stated by Mr. Coulibaly, "*Without the aid, the exodus of able-bodied individuals would be much higher than we can imagine today.*"

The results of the focus group discussions revealed the following impacts related to the project objectives that resulted from the cash injection. Firstly, the financial support has effectively mitigated substantial rural migration, retaining skilled individuals within their communities. This has addressed the challenge of talent drain, contributing to the positive development of local economies and communities. Moreover, the transformation from informal groups to cooperative societies indicates a strengthened sense of community and purpose, fostering better collaboration and active participation among members, ultimately promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Secondly, the financial assistance has induced a positive shift in the mindset of OPAs, marked by internal mobilization and increased equity. This change has fostered a more inclusive environment, encouraging diverse participation and empowering marginalized voices. As a result, there is a more equitable distribution of resources and benefits within the



cooperatives. Additionally, the swift adoption of eco-friendly practices, establishment of support networks, and promotion of gardening activities among women underscore the project's focus on gender equality, community engagement and environmental preservation. These multifaceted impacts highlight the transformative influence of targeted financial support on community development, social dynamics, education and sustainable farming methods in the Kita circle of Mali.

Community Members' Project Engagement

The analysis of the results from various focus group discussions indicates that the funds transfer has created strong motivation and willingness to participate in agriculture cooperatives project funded by Caritas Suisse. As mentioned earlier, this satisfactory outcome is evident through the increased membership in Agricultural Cooperative Organizations (OPAs). The availability and commitment of communities to the project are described through a few testimonies below: *"Thanks to the positive feedback about the project's activities in the area, we have established a savings group (tontine) to better organize ourselves in anticipation of potential Caritas interventions in our community"*.

Another respondent said: In our village, there has been a notable rise in the participation of women in agricultural cooperatives. Initially, there were 75 members, and now we have 140 members, all thanks to the Cash injection. Another respondent shared, *"We began with 203 members, and now we have 327 dedicated participants in the project"*. This increase can be attributed to two primary factors: Firstly, women have joined the cooperatives because it offers support to sustain their activities during the lean season. Secondly, some women have joined the cooperatives primarily to access the cash provided by the project without a strong commitment to the cooperative's values and principles.

All respondents of the study as per table three unanimously supported the notion that the inclusion of humanitarian injection within the development initiative effectively upheld the well-being of the recipients and safeguarded the accomplishments of the project goals. The intervention demonstrated a positive influence on the motivation and dedication of both the intended beneficiaries and non-targeted individuals or groups. Moreover, the strategic integration of humanitarian and development efforts through the nexus approach proved instrumental in mitigating failures and maximizing the positive outcomes and impacts of sustainable development programs.



Cash Injection Impact on Project Kita III's Sustainability

An analysis of the emergency Cash injection to assess its contribution to the sustainability of the Kita III project reveals several important points. Firstly, this assistance has had a positive impact by strengthening the organisational capacity of producers, promoting greater adoption of agro-ecological practices and functional literacy. This has helped to create momentum within the communities and mobilise them to achieve the project's objectives. In addition, many informal organisations have been transformed into cooperatives thanks to the emergency assistance. Furthermore, emergency Cash injection has provided real motivation to communities to engage in achieving the goals of Project Kita III. It has contributed to strengthening community resilience and preserving the project's accomplishments, which is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of its impacts.

However, it is important to note that despite these successes, the sustainability of the gains could be threatened due to the limited mobilization of internal resources within the newly formed cooperatives. To ensure the longevity of these achievements, it may be necessary to work on enhancing the cooperatives' capacity to generate financial resources autonomously.

Lessons learned

The research underscores the efficacy of cash injection within a humanitarian-development nexus in mitigating harmful survival strategies during agricultural lean periods. This approach, observed in the Kita III Project in Mali, not only reduced the adoption of detrimental practices like selling productive assets or rural migration among beneficiaries but also fostered resilience to shocks within communities. The cash injection strategy played a crucial role in preventing the erosion of achievements made by the project, contributing to increased resilience, diminished use of harmful adaptation strategies, and the establishment of conditions conducive to meeting development objectives.

Moreover, the study highlights that well-understood humanitarian action objectives, particularly emphasizing the limited duration of aid and its role in creating conditions for achieving development goals, prevent the creation of dependency or idleness in communities. This awareness ensures that communities do not wait for financial assistance but view it as a time-limited, punctual response that does not undermine ongoing development efforts. Overall, the research asserts that cash injections, when strategically implemented, prove to be relevant, effective and complementary in addressing shocks, preserving gains from development actions and preparing communities to tackle future development challenges.



CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The study conducted in the Kita area under Project Kita III, evaluating the impact of emergency cash injections during the poor agricultural season of 2021, provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of humanitarian-development nexus approaches. The findings indicate a favourable impact of humanitarian aid on development across various intervention areas. A significant 80% of the study population acknowledged the presence of positive correlations between humanitarian aid and development.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the emergency cash injections significantly mitigated the adverse effects of the agricultural crisis, reducing harmful survival strategies, enhancing community resilience, and fostering sustainable development within the project area. The cash injections not only alleviated immediate food scarcity but also empowered vulnerable households, particularly women, to engage in income-generating activities and agricultural initiatives. Furthermore, the research highlights the relevance, effectiveness and positive impact of cash injections when integrated strategically into development projects.

The experience in the Kita circle highlights several key recommendations for enhancing agricultural cooperatives' resilience to food insecurity through cash injection. Firstly, there is a need to continue and expand the use of cash injections in future projects, with a focus on tailoring them to the specific needs of communities, especially vulnerable households dependent on subsistence agriculture. Additionally, promoting financial literacy, particularly among beneficiaries, is crucial to ensuring responsible financial management, preventing overreliance, and fostering self-sufficiency. Special attention should be given to addressing the unique challenges faced by women in agriculture, offering targeted support and resources to empower them economically.

Furthermore, it is essential to encourage income source diversification through sustainable agricultural practices, small businesses, and vocational training to reduce dependency on specific sectors. Strengthening the capacity of newly formed cooperatives is vital, involving training and mentorship in financial management, value addition, and marketing to enhance economic sustainability. To foster community engagement and ownership, local communities should actively participate in the design, planning, and implementation of development projects. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is necessary for tracking the impact of interventions over time, providing valuable data for adaptive programming to respond dynamically to changing community needs. Lastly, facilitating knowledge sharing among development organizations, practitioners and



policymakers will leverage expertise and resources for more impactful interventions.



Table 1: Assessment of the action's overall relevance

Criteria ¹	A	B	C	D
Relevance	A			
Were the objectives and design of the intervention adapted to the context and needs of the beneficiaries?	X			
Did the action meet the community's most important needs identified during the design phase prior to its launch?	X			
Is the action coherent in terms of complementarity with other Caritas projects?	X			
Is the Cash injection approach deemed relevant to this experience?	X			

Table 2: Assessment of Overall Effectiveness

CRITERIA	A	B	C	D
Overall efficiency	A			
Have all the planned project results and achievements been attained? What is the level of execution of the planned activities?	X			
The distribution of emergency Cash injection to the most vulnerable households.	X			
Diversification of household income through vegetable gardening via the construction of market gardening areas [périmètres maraîchers].	X			
Reduction of harmful survival strategies.		X		

¹ **A rating.** The situation is deemed highly satisfactory, well above average and potentially a benchmark for good practice. The recommendations emphasize the need to capitalize on these good practices for future interventions. **B rating.** The situation is deemed satisfactory, but there is still room for improvement. The re-recommendations are useful, but not vital to the functioning of the organization for future interventions. **C grade.** Some problems need to be addressed, otherwise, the overall performance of such an intervention is likely to be adversely affected. However, the improvements required do not necessitate major revisions to the intervention strategy. **D rating.** The deficiencies identified are so serious that, if left unaddressed, they are likely to result in the failure of future interventions. Major adjustments and a revision of the intervention strategy are necessary for the future

Table 3: Overall effect and impact of the humanitarian aid

Criteria	A	B	C	D
Overall effect/impact:	A			
Has the humanitarian injection as part of the development activity helped to maintain the status quo of the beneficiaries and preserve the achievements of the project's objectives?	X			
Does the intervention have a positive impact on the motivation and commitment of target beneficiaries or non-target individuals or groups?	X			
Does the humanitarian and development nexus strategy make it possible to reduce the failure and/or maximise the positive effects/impacts of sustainable development programmes?	X			

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