



Happy New Year 2012

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JOKKO

The West Africa Newsletter
November/December 2011

Insight



Dear Colleagues,
Welcome to the second issue of Jokko. This November - December issue is putting a strong focus on the Cote d'Ivoire humanitarian programme and of

course on other interesting learning from the regional programme. Please see my message for this newsletter through the video link below :

<http://intranetmm.oxfam.org.uk/Members/Yaye-20Fatou-20Marone/videos/biteyeavi.flv/view>

Happy reading!

Mamadou

PROGRAMME LEARNING

Institutional capacity building for Water Sanitation and Hygiene Programme in Liberia

This is a long-term development programme implemented through Liberia Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) consortium. It aims at building the institutional capacity of WASH line ministries (Ministry of Health, Public work and land, mine and energy). Specifically it focuses on building the capacity of these institutions to be able to coordinate, supervise and monitor WASH activities at the local levels. Key elements of these three thematic areas of capacity building include: management training, basic logistics support, facilitating revitalization of defunct institutional structures at the local levels, water quality monitoring, community participation and gender mainstreaming, WASH policies and strategies development support, partners coordination and establishment of local WASH database.

Key achievements of the programme

Ownership of WASH facilities has improved and respective institutions are taking responsibility over WASH facilities constructed by various NGOs. At least now the Liberian government can tell how many water points are functional or not in every geographical area. Courtesy of country-wide water mapping exercise supported by the programme. The programme has influenced Ministry of Health and Ministry of public works to redeploy more technicians and re-established community-based WASH structures, community pump mechanics, committees and volunteer hygiene promoters which has been defunct but critical for increased access to water.

Bacterial water testing at the community level is ongoing while both chemical and bacterial testing facilities have been established at the national level and functional. Inclusion of WASH elements in essential package of basic health services which was never a priority for the Ministry of Health.

Through the programme, the government has been able to contain upsurge of endemic cholera in hotspot areas.

“ Women, children and men are the beneficiaries and the intervention has significantly contributed to the reduction of water born diseases, particularly acute watery diarrhoea /cholera in hotspot communities”

The programme is special in the sense that it targets the institutions and its structures thus influencing policies and practices which then enhance equitable access to water, ownership, responsibilities and significantly promoting the active participation of women in WASH activities. On the other hand the programme supports other NGOs activities by ensuring their access to government institutions, hence accelerating projects sustainability processes. Finally in this programme Oxfam is only a facilitator and not implementers. The implementation process is being done by the government institutions and other local partners.

Working with government institutions, particularly within their systems and influencing changes from within has been the key drive behind the programme successes. As strategic partners, government institutions see Oxfam interventions as their own projects and always encourage others to be like Oxfam. The programme spent a lot of time building the relationship with the government and winning their trust. This relationship has enabled the programme to embed its activities within the national strategic plans and thus implement through the existing government structures and frameworks. Besides the direct contribution to quality service delivery at the community level, relationship between the programme and the government institutions has benefited other WASH actors /NGOs who are having increased access to government machineries at the service delivery levels.



Training in water quality testing

Future/perspectives

So far the programme outcomes are being felt at the national level and within 8 counties out of 15. The programme plans and aims is to cover the entire 15 counties and that is the request from the government. Evidence as reported by various NGOs and the government shows that counties where the programme is being implemented performs better than the rest. While the interest is to expand institutional capacity building interventions to the uncovered counties, the programme will engage more on influencing policies and specifically facilitate the implementation of the policies which have been promulgated.

By Patrick Okoth, Public Health Programme Manager Liberia

The Looming Food Crisis in the Sahel



Women digging anthills to search for grains during the 2010 food crisis in Chad
Credit: Charles Bambara

While the Sahel has just come out from a food crisis that has affected over 10 million people in 2010, several countries in the West Africa region are still at risk of another serious crisis. These countries caught into the successive cycles of erratic rainfall resulting in significant reduction of food production and pasturelands, ponds that dry up faster than usual and the low rise of rivers, are receiving warning signs of food insecurity.

A looming food crisis is imminent and could hit at the same time Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Chad. These countries have already announced significant deficits in cereal production within a context of high food prices. Mauritania and Chad have over 50% deficits. The Niger declares a fodder deficit of 10 million tons. There is already early livestock movements to places that are not their traditional hosting areas and this will result in significant pressure on pasturelands and can be potential source of conflicts. People from Niger, Mali and Chad will be worst affected and have yet to recover from the 2010 crisis. In addition, countries like Senegal, the Gambia and Cape Verde are experiencing a deficit in cereal production according to the CILSS.

Households in these Sahel countries that are chronically vulnerable to the least economic or climate shock will exhaust their food reserves in 1 to 3 months and will be facing the lean season than expected especially in a region where incomes of thousands of people are reduced and where over 60% of households buy their food on the market. Conflicts in Libya and Cote d'Ivoire have pushed most workers from the Sahel countries to flee. Thousands of households dependent on remittances from these migrants have lost their main survival strategy to food crisis.

only will it be too late to save lives and livelihoods, but also a humanitarian intervention would be even more costly. The alarm is sounded, and we have to act in order to address but also prevent that a future crisis destroys again the livelihoods restoration efforts of people and development agencies.

Oxfam has long-term development programmes in affected countries, and is currently developing plans for humanitarian responses to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis. Oxfam also calls on governments and donors to use this food crisis threat as a priority by mobilizing financial resources to provide adequate responses.

We must go beyond the humanitarian response and recognize that the Sahel region is experiencing a silent food crisis. Therefore, it's important to invest in disaster risk reduction, to strengthen the resilience of the poor and increase their income by investing in agriculture, food reserves and safety nets such as cash transfers for instance.

Al Hassan Cissé, Oxfam International Food Security and Advocacy Coordinator



HUMANITARIAN NEWS

Cote d'Ivoire in the spotlight

Oxfam has implemented a humanitarian programme in Cote d'Ivoire during the electoral crisis in this country. This programme started in June 2011 and came to an end in November 2011. Oxfam carried out several activities including Food Security and Livelihoods, Water Sanitation and Hygiene and Advocacy/ protection. In this issue of the newsletter, we have three contributions about the Cote d'Ivoire crisis. In addition below is a link on Flickr showing many of Oxfam activities in the different intervention sites during the crisis :

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65224442@N07/sets/72157628441737291/show/>

Cote d'Ivoire Humanitarian Programme

The humanitarian programme in Cote d'Ivoire has just ended. Adolphe Bushiri, the Programme Manager has accepted to answer our questions, while preparing his next deployment to Mauritania.

Jokko: Which activities did Oxfam implement during the emergency programme in Cote d'Ivoire?

Adolphe Bushiri: The programme was implemented in the Dix-Huit Montagnes and Moyen-Cavally regions. We conducted activities related to food security and livelihoods (EFSL), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), as well as protection/advocacy actions. We distributed food vouchers in the displaced sites and host villages to ensure the nutrition of displaced and highly vulnerable 3,317 households.

In the return villages for displaced persons and refugees, we restarted farming of maize for 1,000 households, and set up 25 village cereal crop committees. Other activities include supporting 500 women in small-scale vegetable production, the distribution of seeds (cereals, maize and pyrotechnic soil treatments), cash to facilitate the recovery of income-generating activities for 2,000 households, protection of livelihoods for 500 households and the distribution of kitchen utensils to 5,873 households (joint activity with WASH).

As regards WASH activities, we have built or rehabilitated facilities (showers, latrines, laundry tables, hand washing points, wash houses, areas for solid waste, etc...). We also carried out operations for water supply, distribution of non-food items and hygiene kits for the hygiene promotion. We worked on malaria prevention and trained volunteers on sites, with the INHP (National Institute of Hygiene): we ensured the implementation of a national policy of environmental sanitation and hygiene in general, prevention and control of bacterial, viral and parasitic infections and epidemics, technical support and implementation of a vaccination programme and research/ development in the affected area.

Finally, the staff has been trained in Wash & EFSL aspects of protection and advocacy, in "Do No Harm" programme as well as risk analysis, internal coordination of protection, focus groups with displaced and vulnerable persons, and assessment of protection/advocacy needs regarding the exit strategy of the mission.



Jokko: How many do you estimate the beneficiaries number for the entire Oxfam intervention in Cote d'Ivoire?

Adolphe: The number of beneficiaries for the entire intervention of Oxfam GB in Cote d'Ivoire is estimated at 20,560 households or 102,800 individual beneficiaries. This represents 65,950 people for the EFSL programme and 36,850 people for WASH activities.



Jokko: According to you what impact did the programme have on people?

The intervention enabled quantitative and qualitative coverage of the food needs for displaced and vulnerable people. The recovery in cereal and small scale vegetable production has been boosted, as well as household access to income in order to improve food security conditions and livelihoods, and improve cooking and hygiene rules in the villages of those returning. In addition, we also implemented a national policy of environmental sanitation and hygiene in general, prevention and control of bacterial, viral, and parasitic infections, and epidemics, along with technical support and implementation of a research/ development programme in the affected area. We have invested over £1,950,000 with the support of donors such as: ECHO, SIDA, AECID and Oxfam Germany in addition to the contribution of the CATFUND.

Jokko: Are there any remaining actions or activities now that the programme has ended?

Adolphe: Yes, activities relating to water, hygiene and sanitation in our various areas of intervention have been handed to IOM in coordination with UNICEF. Regarding the EFSL, ANADER (Technical Support Agency for Rural Development) will continue with agricultural activities; while income generating activities will be managed by savings and credit unions.

Interview by Yaye Fatou Marone

Cash transfer - my experience in Guiglo/Cote d'Ivoire

I have been deployed in Ivory Coast for 12 weeks, as part of the humanitarian response and to support the programme in implementing cash transfer project. It was also an opportunity to build my capacity in this activity.

The cash transfer was chosen as a component of the programme for two main reasons: the first is to get funds available to restart income-generating activities for heads of households who were doing this activity before the crisis and who, because of the crisis were not able to recover their capital to restart their activities. The second reason is to help the most vulnerable households to restore their livelihoods.



Aichetou and the EFSL team at the end of a training session

I was based in Guiglo and my responsibilities included leading the process of targeting beneficiaries by involving various stakeholders, identifying micro-finance institutions and negotiating with them the opportunity to use their services to facilitate the transfer of cash to the beneficiaries and support internal and external coordination of this activity within Oxfam GB.

We did the beneficiaries targeting in a transparent and participatory way, in accordance with Oxfam's procedures. Regarding the economic recovery activities, we targeted 1,000 beneficiary households in 10 districts of Guiglo and the surrounding villages, specifically Goya1, Goya2 and Yaoude, and a further 250 households for the livelihoods recovery in five villages between

Guiglo and Blolequin. We carried out this targeting activity with the local authorities and leaders of Guiglo villages / districts (heads of villages / districts, representatives of youth, women, different ethnic groups, the peace and reconciliation committee etc.).

My training in partnership and my experience with Oxfam as part of my current job in Niger helped me a lot during the partnership identification process. This work has led to the draft partnership agreement that was amended and signed between Oxfam GB and Coopec (Savings and Credit Cooperative) of Guiglo.

The contracting process has taken more time than expected in Oxfam, and this did not give me the opportunity to be there to produce the monitoring report after the cash transfer activity.

However, I was able to ensure that all activities preceding the cash transfer to beneficiaries were done. These included monitoring the contract and developing tools for data collection (lists of beneficiaries, payment cards, monitoring questionnaires) and so on.

This deployment has given me an experience on cash transfer that I never had before: I mean transfer through savings accounts. This method will allow beneficiaries who wish to continue working with the institution and have more opportunities to benefit from loans in the future to develop income-generating activities.

I can remember the joy Oxfam has brought to these households. I still keep in mind the women jumping for joy, carefully keeping their vouchers received from Oxfam staff and hoping to exchange them against 45,000 FCFA at the Coopec office in the next few days.

We could also see the happy faces of the heads of villages and neighbourhoods every time we visited the sites. "This is exactly the type of support we need" said the vice mayor of Guiglo.

I realized that I could be an expert in cash transfer with the support received from Moussa Coulibaly, Adolphe Bushiri and Mado ...

By Aichetou Aoula, Livelihoods and Food Security Officer, Niger



A stop-over in Man

Located in the west of the Ivory Coast, in the Dix-Huit Montagnes region, Man is a cosmopolitan city which unfortunately suffered the terrible effects of the war in 2002. I visited Man in October 2011 as part of a mission to prepare for closing the programme. I arrived after a one and a half hour flight from Abidjan. Even from the plane I was able to admire the lush vegetation and towering mountains. The view was superb! The Oxfam office is located in the Thérèse district. Inside the office, there is a good atmosphere, people are called by nicknames based on their jobs: "délégué, Olivier le bon, Coordo, c'est propre, pépère etc. ." **cont**
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I learned with Moussa, the EFSL manager, that Oxfam has implemented a humanitarian programme focused on the prevention of epidemics and the promotion of access to water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, agricultural and economic recovery and support for livelihoods.

Oxfam has distributed food rations to assist over 16,000 displaced persons and host families to help them cope with the risks of food insecurity due to the displacement and lack of operation of markets and the supply chain. A total of 1,500 households received seeds for cereal (maize) and small-scale vegetable cultivation and a tool kit.

The people of Béoué were among the 25,000 people who received a hygiene kit (buckets, soap, cloths), a mosquito net and a kitchen set (plates, a ladle, spoons, pots, a bucket, cups, a tray).

Public health teams are also working very hard to restore contaminated wells and promote access to safe drinking water for displaced peoples and returnees.

In addition, Oxfam is providing a supply of water and sanitation for displaced people who settled in the Church of Nazareth, the Assembly of God and the Heavenly Church in Guiglo.

Ensuring that the voice of the most vulnerable is heard and promoting changes in policies and practices to improve the protection of civilian populations including the promotion of sustainable solutions for displaced persons is the third key aim of the work carried out by Oxfam teams.

Going back to Man, I have to say that the atmosphere there is calm but it is important not to talk politics. The words peace and reconciliation are in every heart. This peace with no doubt, would guarantee the establishment of a better life for those communities that have suffered so much from the conflict.

By Elisabeth Dia, Regional Procurement and Supply Officer.



Rights in Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire Humanitarian Programme

November saw the mission in Cote d'Ivoire close and with it the advocacy work that had been undertaken in the country since June of this year. From increasing media and political attention to influencing key policies shaping the humanitarian response, a lot has been achieved over the last year there and in neighbouring Liberia, and an evaluation is currently ongoing to see how we respond more effectively in the future.



Accountability was part of the Cote d'Ivoire humanitarian programme. The picture below shows a suggestions box that is used by the beneficiaries to share their views about the Oxfam programme



West Africa Humanitarian Learning Event

The West Africa region organised a two-day humanitarian learning event in Dakar on December 8-9th, 2011. There were 48 participants from Niger, Mali, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, the Regional Centre and the Humanitarian Department in Oxford to attend.

The event's objectives were:

- To capitalise, analyse and build on existing learning and evaluation exercises that have taken place at country level during the 2010-2011 humanitarian responses
- To explore other areas which will impact on the regional humanitarian strategy for Oxfam GB, and to identify key areas for investment of resources
- To draw key recommendations to enhance preparedness and capacity building activities both at country and regional levels
- To enhance/foster inter-country learning and exchange

We reflected on and shared learning across the West Africa countries with Oxfam GB humanitarian presence and between staff at country, regional and global level. We also developed recommendations and actions plans to apply lessons learned from our different humanitarian interventions in the region.

Over the last 2 years Oxfam GB has:

- Responded to TWO Category 2 crisis: the Sahel Food Crisis in 2010/2011 and the Côte d'Ivoire crisis in 2011 and many Category 3 or non-categorized crisis in Chad, Mali and Niger.
- Responded in 6 countries in the region (Mali, Niger, Chad, Liberia, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire), including one country with no former Oxfam presence.
- Raised and spent almost £21m in responses (average of £10m per year) with more than 35 donor's contracts.
- Reached & helped more than 1,200,000 people.

Despite these huge investments, the humanitarian challenges continue to be a big concern in the region where different crisis have recently reminded all stakeholders the need to be better prepared. For Oxfam GB, who took a front seat in different responses to several category 2 multi-country responses in the last 18 months, it was now a good time to reflect on the lessons to be learnt as well as the way forward. In addition, other changes including the impact of Single Management Structure on humanitarian programmes, the recent restructuring of the regional centre, and the emphasis on regional and country resources for managing category 2 and 3 responses, mean that it is a useful time to review the humanitarian strategy and capacity building plans.

Discussions have been frank and fruitful. We stressed successes but mainly did a thorough analysis of the main issues we face during the humanitarian responses and engaged a reflection on how we could do better to get our responses more efficient and sustainable. The report is being produced and will be soon shared with the teams. Recommendations that came out from this event will be taken into account in the regional capacity building plan and the revised OGB Regional Humanitarian strategy.

By Bernadette Sadio, Regional Humanitarian Officer



Workshop participants

COUNTRY UPDATES

Chad: Discovering Oxfam in Bahr el Gazal

After several years of interventions primarily targeting refugees and displaced persons in eastern Chad, Oxfam GB's humanitarian strategy has extended its focus towards the west of the country, particularly to the Sahelian part. Because of the increasing needs and the lack of stakeholders intervening in this area, Oxfam GB has opted for the implementation of an integrated food security/water and sanitation programme to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable pastoralist and agropastoralist communities in the region of Bahr el Gazal. Bahr el Gazal, like all regions of the Sahel (from Lake Chad to Wadi Fira), is facing a chronic food security crisis with extremely high malnutrition rates. This programme has been running for 1 year and is expected to continue for a period of 3 years. In addition, Oxfam GB is currently conducting an emergency response to the cholera epidemic in N'Djamena. Following on from the emergency response, Oxfam wants to set up an urban WASH programme in the



Training communities in water pump repairing

capital to help prevent the onset of diarrhoea and to change the behaviour of target populations in a sustainable manner. Finally, in the context of the implementation of the Single Management Structure in Chad, Oxfam GB will resume the "Gender/Women's Rights" component of its programme previously implemented by Oxfam Intermon. Currently, all Oxfam GB programmes in Chad aim to address this as a cross-cutting issue.

Geographic information about Bahr el Gazal

Centrally located in western Chad, Bahr el Gazal was created in 2008 following the division of Kanem. The region is divided into two departments: South and North. Oxfam is present in the north where nearly half the population are nomadic and transhumant livestock farmers (49%), with the other half (51%) consisting of settled and agro-pastoralist communities. The forgotten northern department of Bahr el Gazal is characterized by environmentally extreme conditions (low rainfall, poor soil, desertification, shortage of water, etc.); and a lack of technical government departments (livestock farming, agriculture...). This combination of factors has contributed to the vulnerability of populations in this area.



Liberia : The World Toilet Day 2011 – Shit Kills, Make Some Noise !

19th November marks the international day where people across the world make noise about toilets, about how shit kills, about the need for government across the world to step up and recognise that investing in sanitation is investing in their nation's health, education and economic growth. That ignoring sanitation is not only morally wrong (access to sanitation is a human right) but is also an economic imperative (US\$1 invested in WASH can bring about US\$9 return to a country's economy).

In Liberia over 80% of people do not have a hygienic, dignified place to go to the toilet (JMP 2010), and diarrhoea is one of the leading causes of death in the country (WHO, 2008). Faced with these dire facts and the devastating effects on health, education and the economy, over 700 people took to the streets of Monrovia on 19th November, to demand that more be done, and urgently, by the Government of Liberia, Development Partners, Civil Society and Communities themselves in turning around the situation.

Basking in the capital's sunshine, marchers strode with purpose to the rhythm of drums and trumpets as they sang and brandished placards with messages of "Sanitation is a human right", "More Money for Sanitation", and "Increase budgetary support for Sanitation and Toilets". The parade of campaigners, all wearing t-shirts with the slogan "Our health is in your hands", were greeted on their way by scores of people, many of which suffer daily from the lack of access to a safe, dignified place to go to the toilet. It was for these people and for the thousands of others who are deprived of these basic services that we were marching for. **Cont page 9**

The march culminated in the heart of Monrovia, where the crowd listened to a series of speeches (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Liberia CSO WASH Working Group, Liberia WASH Consortium, Representative of the Mayor of Monrovia, and WaterAid among others), highlighting both the current sanitation challenges faced by Liberia and key recommendations on the joint efforts needed to transform the sector.

Liberia's commitment to the WASH sector has been growing this past year and was further bolstered by a recorded message from Africa's Goodwill Ambassador for WASH in Africa, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia. "We can invest in text books and teachers, but if we do not value pupils enough to provide them with adequate sanitation, how can we expect them to value education?" she declared. The message was loud and clear, water, sanitation and hygiene education underpin all development efforts. Leaving them behind undermines the whole country's economic, social and environmental growth.

As the President embarks on a new 6-year term, she intends to make WASH one of her top five priorities. The policies are in place, co-ordination of WASH actors is improving day by day. Now is the time to see the rhetoric back-up with quality investments in water, sanitation and hygiene, targeting the most vulnerable communities, with funds not only injecting money into infrastructure but building and strengthening the capacity of government, civil society organizations and community members to sustain these over time.

Olivier Germain, WASH Consortium Advocacy and Communication Manager



Civil Society working group and partners marching in the streets of Monrovia to celebrate the World Toilet Day 2011

Climate Change is a Reality in Mali

Oxfam (Great Britain and Germany) initiated a media trip on climate change in Mali in November 2011. This was mainly to allow journalists from Germany and Mali to see and document the impact of climate change on rural communities in Mali. From during two days, from village to village, journalists from the German public television, newspapers and Malian radio were able to meet with farmers for interviews, filming, taking pictures and visiting agricultural infrastructures and community (micro dam, gardens, experimental fields etc.).

Located 177 km from Bamako in the region of Kayes, Kita has 33 rural communities with 404,158 inhabitants among which 42,407 people for the city of Kita. Kita, a predominantly agricultural and pastoral area, earned its famous reputation thanks to groundnut and cotton farming. Currently, Kita like other agro-ecological zones of Mali, is living the consequences of climate change on people and their livelihoods. This was visible when the media people visited four villages of Kita in this pre-harvest period to appreciate and document the findings.

All populations we met are directly experiencing the consequences of climate change on their livelihoods. On the way to the village of Balandougou located 40 km northwest of Kita, journalists were able to meet with Modibo Keita, a 37 years old farmer and main producing force for an 80 people family farm. Modibo has no more hope for his sorghum field. The 7 / 8 tons of grain harvested in 2010-2011 are more than a memory, he only hope to harvest 2 tons of grains for the 2011-2012 current campaign, which will be far than sufficient for the needs of his family due to the lack of rainfall and late onset of rains.



Modibo Keita in his field

Modibo's desperate situation is different from that of people in Balandougou village where the journalists were welcomed with the sound of the drums. After the usual greetings and exchanges with the city authorities, the group went to see the water dam that is a pride for the village. It was built by the NGO Stop Sahel with financial support from Oxfam Germany. This facility allows these communities to have water all year round and allows women to do carry out gardening activities. This joy was not visible on the face of young Moussa Traore, aged 18 years and tempted by migration. Low rainfalls combined with crop failure are the reasons given by Moussa to explain his choice for migrating to urban centres or Europe.

The hundreds of women met in the gardens in Bassibougou and Koussama expressed their satisfaction in their production of shallots, cabbage, papaya that they sell to face the lean season.

The meetings with the village authorities, the Water and Forests service, Agriculture, the Advocacy / lobbying network in Kita, the exchanges with the technical managers of the Agency for the Environment and Sustainable Development (Aedd) of Global Alliance on Climate Change (AGCC) was an opportunity to discuss the impact of climate change and its on agriculture, livestock, water resources and vegetation cover.

By Omar Sango
Climate Change Officer Mali

STAFF NEWS

In Memoriam – Marvin you will be with us forever!

Our dearest colleague Marvin Mamba passed away in November in Liberia. Marvin was the Liberia programme Logistics Officer. Some colleagues who worked with him are paying a tribute to Marvin through the following lines.



Marvin giving a certificate to one student graduating from his community school that he sponsored with his wife.

Marvin had the maturity required in a team, a moderator, cool when it is stormy. Realisation that he could be a future leader I always encouraged him to build his capacity by studying more. He was strong on security, as a trainer and I had started to allocate him more duties on partner capacity building. I was really touched by his love for his family, country and people especially on his sponsoring a school, with his limited salary, I feel that this is love beyond measure.

As his manager I lost a strong team player, and as a friend I lost somebody I really wanted to see grow and succeed in Life. I remain with positive memories of Marvin, May his soul rest in eternal peace.

**Norman Mungwena,
current Liberia Logistic
& Admin Manager**



On the morning of July 29 this year, I was woken up by a long distance call. As I struggled to say hello, it did not take me long to recognise the voice on this other side. Marvin had called to wish me happy birthday. It was such a pleasant surprise, and we went on to talk for another half hour or so as we caught up on each other's lives since we parted earlier in the year. We were both

excited about how far he had come and laughingly remembered the challenges we had encountered on the journey. Marvin's story is one of sheer determination - I admired how he had grown through various positions in the organisation and was committed to helping him further his career development. I believed he had such great potential, not just for his immediate job but also playing a major role in the development of his country. He was such a peaceful person, as was evidenced in the many times he got involved in resolving conflicts to attain harmony between people. Marvin was also tech-savvy - I remember a time we did not have an IT officer for almost a month and he willingly stepped in and covered for the position until it was filled. Such was his flexibility!

I was privileged to know his family and spend some time with them too. He was such a loving husband and doting father. I deeply admired his relationship with his wife and children. And their commitment to help other less-privileged children in their community through education was moving. To this end, he was my hero! May the Lord rest his soul in eternal peace; and may He comfort and strengthen the family to move on.

Alice Shivairo, former Logistic & Admin Manager - Liberia



I worked with Marvin twice. First in 2007 when he was store keeper and promoted him Logistics Officer as I found him so honest and hard working. I worked again with Marvin recently in March-June 2011 during the Ivorian refugees' response in Liberia. When I left Liberia, he moved to Harper as the Logistics Officer to support the team there.

Life is short and we all are in the waiting list although we do not know when and how. May Allah bless Marvin's soul and rest in peace.

Mohamed Ali (HSP Logistician)



My memories go back to November 2004, when I interviewed and selected Marvin for the position of a driver. It was during those relatively long drives from the office to the warehouse that I realised that he deserved much more than being a driver within Logistics team. His good English was due to the fact that he used to be an editor for English daily in Monrovia. When I discovered his potential, it did not take me much time to offer him the position of Assistant Warehouse Keeper. When the Warehouse Keeper lost his job, Marvin was the natural choice to be made for the job.

I have fond memories of him as a person who would be always interested in knowing and discussing various issues.... And of course, his sense of humour. May his soul rest in peace.

William Parmar - (HSP Logistician)

Meeting Margherita Maffii, Regional Gender Change Manager West Africa

Margherita who's recently joined the West Africa region has kindly accepted to share with Jokko her gender perspectives through this interview.

Can you please introduce yourself?

My name is Margherita and I'm Italian, with Cambodian and Asian roots, ready to acquire and integrate a West Africa component. I have spent the last years trying to understand what is not fair in gender relationships, and how it can be redressed, under different perspectives: among rural communities, urban migrants, ethnic minorities; under the pressure of globalization, crises or societal changes; by promoting political participation, access to resources, or leadership building; without giving up identities and diversity, or getting lost in global models.

How do you appreciate the gender context in West Africa?

I guess the right word is humbleness. It is a very diverse Region; each country has its own specificities, and history, including an Oxfam history of programmes and interventions. A lot of work has been done already; I will put together the mosaic of these experiences with the countries and programme teams, in order to build a common basis of knowledge. For sure it is not going to be boring!

What are your plans to achieve our gender objectives in the region?

I'm a gender change manager, therefore I should make sure that in the Region gender change becomes a shared objectives and a collective achievement. Working at gender justice, empowering women and tackling gender based violence are tasks requiring cross-cutting expertise, a lot of creativity and willingness to explore new fields and new practices. Working with a gender lens is about questioning, first of all ourselves, and our certitudes. It is not a one woman task; it is setting sails together for an adventurous journey.

What do you expect from country programmes and staff?

I hope that the teams will exploit this opportunity in order to dare new approaches and new ways of doing things. I will work at making available to them the inputs and support they may need, all along the process of engendering the programmes and achieve Oxfam aim of gender justice. Change is keeping us alive, and gender change is going to keep us alive together.

Interview by Yaye Fatou Marone



Allatoide, an inspiring driller in Liberia

Allatoide Djassira started working for Oxfam in Goz Beida - Chad in 2004 when he was just 20. He is the first national staff of Oxfam in the Abeche

area. "My proudest moment in Oxfam was when my application to the Staff Development Fund was accepted in 2009. I was very fortunate to be trained in rural water and sanitation for 3 months with Bioforce Institute in Burkina Faso. This is how I got a Watsan technician certificate" – says Allatoide - "This training enabled me to get the right skills that I'm using now in my job to contribute to Oxfam's life-saving mission. Sometimes drilling to find water can be a tough job, but witnessing the scene of people living in the camps using the water, product of our efforts is most rewarding and keeps my motivation at its height."

This smart and passionate humanitarian staff has several ropes in his bow. In addition to his drilling skills, Allatoide is also experienced in water quality testing, hydraulic pumping, building water towers..... and cooking! "I'm the best cook ever!" he says.

His quest for excellence and quality in his job earned him to become a global staff in the region.

According to Allatoide, adapting to the local context is key in his work. He is currently 28 yrs and is the drilling team leader in Zwedru and Harper in Liberia. Far from his home country of Chad and thinking of her wife Prudence and little girl Françoise, his major satisfaction for now remains that of the thousands of people in the refugees' camps he is currently serving.

By Yaye Fatou Marone



Allatoide (Orange shirt) trying to pump water from an existing water point in Harper

Resources

Welcome to the latest Right to Be Heard Update!

This electronic newsletter is produced a couple of times a year - giving you updates on global, regional and country initiatives, and resources that you might find helpful.

You can also read the Update (and past issues) on the intranet at:

http://intranet.oxfam.org.uk/programme/heard/overview/general_resources

If you have news from your programme to share in the next issue, please contact Adrienne Hopkins Programme Resource Officer - Gender Equality and the Right to Be Heard

Programme Resource Centre at ahopkins@oxfam.org.uk

The new Oxfam Policy and practice website

This is aimed at humanitarian and development practitioners. Its primary objective is to share Oxfam's policy, research and programme learning, particularly by making our entire backlist of publications free to download from the site.

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policyandpractice>

Please share with partners and within your network



The SMS induction pack is available in English and French

Check it out now on the intranet: http://intranet.oxfam.org.uk/about_oxfam/sms/overview.html

or SUMUS: <https://sumus.oxfam.org/single-management-structure-sms/documents/folders/sms-induction-pack>



News publications

Small farmers Big Change

Support for smallholder agriculture is increasingly important, both to boost productivity during food crises and to raise the incomes of rural poor people. However, in order to maximize the potential of agricultural investment, NGOs and other development organizations need to act as facilitators of multistakeholder processes that establish new types of farmer organization; to create alliances to influence policy and investment; to propose new business models; and to develop innovative ways of delivering market services. You can download a pdf copy through the link below:

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/small-farmers-big-change-scaling-up-impact-in-smallholder-agriculture-144211>

Gender, faith and Development

Faith-based organizations have long been involved in charitable and development activities. However, the emerging openness to thinking about and engaging with religion in development raises some important questions. Does religious engagement in development policy and practice risk harming already fragile gender relations? What are the challenges and opportunities in negotiating the relationships between religion, gender, and development?

Read more or download a pdf copy through :

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/gender-faith-and-development-144042>



General Donor Contract Management (online) - 12th - 23rd January 2012

The next Donor Contract Management course will be run by our Oxford colleagues from 12th to 23rd January, from 8 to 10 am (Dakar time) through Elluminate. Training is in English and is free of charge.

This course is crucial for all of those new to donor contract management or needing a refresher on Crimson and other aspects of Contract Management. For more information please go to:

http://intranet.oxfam.org.uk/support/is/business_apps/crimson/courseinfo#documentContent

Proposal Development (on line) - 25th January

Please save the date for this HECA / WAF joint funding skills webinar on Wednesday 25 Jan 2012 from 10 to 12.

We will be going through the key points in the proposal development process, from how to decide whether to apply, all the way to obtaining final signoff.

The key audience for this session is both Funding Coordinators, Programme/Project Managers and Finance Coordinators. Training will be in English and a French version will follow shortly after. FCs will be able to use the training materials for live sessions in their countries if connectivity is a problem.

To register please contact bguimaraes@oxfam.org.uk

This sharing and learning newsletter is published on a bi-monthly basis. We rely on your contributions to make it more regular.

Contributors to this issue :

Aichetou Aoula, Adolphe Bushiri, Al Hassan Cissé, Bernadette Sadio, Elisabeth Dia, Margherita Maffii, Patrick Okoth, The Chad Team, Olivier Germain, Mamadou Bitèye, Omar Sango, Norman Mungwena, Alice Shivairo, Mohamed Ali, William Parmar, Laurent Ploquin, Allatoide Djassira, Beatriz Guimaraes,

Please send your comments and contributions to : ymarone@oxfam.org.uk

Editing team : Yaye Fatou Marone, Charles Bambara, Zeynab Cissé

Editor: Yaye Fatou Marone

Design : Zeynab Cissé