



Complementing cash with productive inputs to improve food security and resilience among the extreme poor in Mali

KEY MESSAGES

Neither agriculture nor social protection alone can address all the constraints faced by poor rural households. Combined interventions are shown to have greater impacts than stand-alone interventions in assisting vulnerable populations to combat poverty and providing them with productive means to sustainably move out of poverty. The complementarity can also contribute to increasing the resilience of households in the face of external shocks, such as the one we are currently facing as a result of COVID-19.

Experience from the Mali Cash+ Project, which sought to address recurrent drought in the Nioro Circle demonstrates that the combination of cash transfer and agricultural productive inputs exerted stronger positive impacts on food security and household production than cash alone. However, the successful implementation of social and agricultural interventions requires a great deal of collaboration between relevant stakeholders of the two sectors.

The government of Mali expresses strong commitment and political will to develop both the social protection and agricultural sectors. However, there is still a lack of concerted action to achieve greater coherence between them. There are large numbers of existing mechanisms for coordinating the two sectors, but they are not sufficiently functional and do not explicitly include the issue of coherence and linkages between agriculture and social protection.

To raise awareness and political commitment for the issue of coherence between agriculture and social protection, stakeholders can make use of existing national food security and nutrition and agricultural policy processes to place coherence on the policy agenda.



Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) data for 2018 / Institut National de la Statistique du Mali (INSTAT) data for 2018

19
MILLION PEOPLE

57,6%
LIVES IN RURAL AREAS

43,8%
NATIONAL POVERTY

54,1%
RURAL POVERTY

24,6%
URBAN POVERTY

Productive safety nets as a tool to reinforce the resilience in the Sahel (Nioro Cash+ project)

- **Target population:** Poor and very poor households of the Nioro Circle in the Malian region of Kayes
- **Institution in charge:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- **Good and services provided:** Nioro Cash+ project has two modalities: Cash and Cash+. The good and services provided for each modality are:

Cash:

- Unconditional Cash Transfer - an amount of XOF 100.000, paid in two XOF 50.000 instalments three months apart
- Hygiene and nutritional knowledge

Cash+:

- Unconditional Cash Transfer - received a single transfer of XOF 20.000
- Hygiene and nutritional knowledge
- **Livestock inputs:** They consisted of one herd of three goats, two female and one male, and 50 kg of livestock feed, and three rounds of zootechnical support

RESULTS

Impact Evaluation

Food security and hygiene practices

The Cash+ beneficiaries were 7.1 per cent less likely to experience any level of food insecurity than if they had received Cash Only.

Beneficiaries of the programme washed their hands more often with disinfectant than the non-beneficiaries.



Farm and non-farm production

The assessment observed a significant increase in livestock production among the Cash+ beneficiaries.

The qualitative study reveals that the quantity of livestock feed given to the Cash+ beneficiaries (50 kg) was not enough for the duration of the project and led some people to buy more with their own money.



Aspirations and expectations

The quantitative study did not find any significant impacts of the programme on the respondents' expectations of better socioeconomic conditions in the future.

However, the study did observe positive and significant impacts of the programme on the aspirations for children's education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the lessons from the Niroo project to make the national safety system more shock-responsive with agricultural interventions. The practice of combining transfer of money and agricultural assets in the humanitarian context of the Cash+ project can be capitalized and applied to a larger scale in permanent public programmes such as the Jigisemejiri.



The government should mobilize and coordinate actions of all relevant ministerial departments to effectively finance and implement agricultural and social protection policies and programmes.



Coordination must be fostered across sectors, among central and local actors, and between initiatives to create synergy.



Improve financial and human resource capacities: skills training programmes on the issues of coherence between social protection and agriculture should be prepared and proposed to all high-level, regional, sub-regional officials, and field workers.



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Institutional Analysis

Niroo Cash+ Project

- Weak coordination of the project due to the absence of a formal mechanism involving concerned ministries at national and regional level.
- Developed certain synergies with the Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (PLIAM) and Jigisemejiri programmes.
- The project's targeting process only included households that are not beneficiaries of the Jigisemejiri programme. Thus, it happened to act as a complement to Jigisemejiri, as the latter could not serve all the population in need.



Quality of the enabling environment

- Despite the high political commitment the will to improve operational coherence between the two sectors exists but at a low level.
- Many arrangements already exist for the coordination between and within sectors at central and decentralised levels, but they do not actively promote coordination between the two sectors.
- No clear guidelines to coordination issues and none of the funding arrangements considers the possibility of pooling resources to enhance coherence.



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In collaboration with government agencies, extension services and local partners