

# Baseline assessment of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Part II: *Qualitative social and economic study*

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

### Organisations and states

EfD	Evidence for Development
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
IEDA	International Emergency and Development Aid (IEDA Relief)
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees; the UN Refugee Agency
VSF	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

### Other acronyms and abbreviations

AE	Adult equivalent
CSB	Corn-soya blend cereal
DI	Disposable income
DI/AE	Disposable income per adult equivalent
FCFA	West African CFA franc
HEA	The household economy approach
HH	Household
IHM	The individual household method
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SoLT	Standard of living threshold

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## Executive summary: Social and economic factors influencing Malian refugee livelihoods in Burkina Faso

No single research methodology can fully explain why some households prosper in new and challenging situations while others do not, and nor can a single method answer fundamental questions relating to the underlying drivers of change within communities. This report complements the baseline study of household economies of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso<sup>1</sup>, providing additional social and contextual information from Sag Nioniogo, Goudebou and Mentao refugee camps to support programming decisions. The report documents social and economic issues highlighted by the Malian refugees themselves, and so provides a further dimension to the analysis set out in the quantitative household economy study. This baseline assessment of the three official refugee camps will be complemented by a study of refugees residing in Bobo-Dioulasso, to be conducted in January 2015.

A cross-section of women and men of all ages, ethnicities and levels of wealth provided the information for this qualitative report in key informant and focus group discussions. The overall objective of this work, which was explained to participants in the research, is to understand ways in which economic self-reliance and well-being among the refugee population might be enhanced, and the risks of livelihood insecurity reduced<sup>2</sup>. The themes explored in this report include:

- Issues of gender and the impact of displacement on refugee women
- Ethnicity and diversity
- Problems facing young people
- Expenditure and access to food and other basic items
- Women's economic activities
- Factors limiting the growth and development of some of the main income-generating activities recorded in the IHM assessment. Case studies are used to illustrate these problems, with examples from livestock herders and artisans.

### Main findings

The main recommendations relating to issues of gender and diversity arising from these enquiries include:

- Improve access to credit for female traders.
- Support women from pastoralist communities in the Sahel camps to resume livestock-fattening and -processing activities, though loans and improved access to grazing.

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<sup>1</sup> Petty, C., Ellis, W., & Seaman, J. (2014) *Livelihood baseline assessment of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso: Quantitative analysis of household economies*, Evidence for Development & UNHCR. Available online at <http://www.efd.org/reports/Baseline-UNHCR-Burkina-Faso-livelihood-assessment-Malian-refugees-part-I/>

<sup>2</sup> Where the information provided by refugees suggests specific actions or recommendations, for ease of reference these responses to the issues raised have been included in the text (in bold type) at the end of each sub-section.

- Ensure that the UNHCR/VSF ‘Seeds for Solutions’ project targets single women and any elderly or disabled people who have the capacity to participate in the project.
- Explore with groups of women the feasibility of supporting collaborative enterprises, to allow economies of scale through activities such as restaurant businesses and sales of dried goods. Work with groups of single female artisans, possibly backed by one-off capital grants for replacement tools and materials to help their businesses grow.
- Consult with young people through enterprise workshops to identify the skills most relevant to short-term needs and longer-term prospects. Gender-biased assumptions should be avoided in exploring options and programmes.
- Work with groups of women to support households subject to domestic conflict, exploring the causes and, where possible, taking action to reduce these.

The main recommendations relating to the growth and development of economic self-reliance across the community as a whole were as follows:

- Improve access to capital and natural resources to allow refugees to rebuild and maintain livestock enterprises<sup>3</sup>.
- Facilitate access to credit for skilled artisans and support efforts to find new regional and international markets.
- Consider ways to help other small businesses, such as through bulk buying arrangements or other support.
- Explore opportunities for refugees to engage in skilled work outside the camps.

The Malian refugee population in Burkina Faso includes households of Tuareg, Arab, Songhai and Fulani ethnicity, each with distinctive livelihood traditions. Although the livelihoods of many of these refugees were based on pastoralism, every group represented in the camps has had to adapt to the new conditions, to invest in new enterprises and to explore new ways of earning money to supplement the food and cash distributions provided by WFP.

Malian refugees in Burkina Faso are faced with two overriding problems: access to capital and markets to develop their business enterprises, and, for pastoralists, access to rangeland to maintain and rebuild their herds. In addition to these difficulties that apply across the population, refugee women are faced with the additional problem of managing the domestic sphere with limited resources, in a new environment and with disrupted social networks. Specific problems facing women include loss of particular types of income (for example, women from pastoral households explained that they were no longer able to earn money by processing livestock products) and a

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<sup>3</sup> The ‘Seeds for Solutions’ project (including a ‘Sahel Milk’ strand), which benefits the host community as well as refugee households, is a good example of development for mutual advantage across the host and refugee communities. This may facilitate discussions with the local community regarding access to grazing land closer to the camps. For more details, see: ‘Milk Solutions for the Livelihoods and Self-Reliance of Malian Refugees and Host Communities in Burkina Faso’ (2014), UNHCR. Available online at <http://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/download.php?id=971>

reported increase in domestic conflict, particularly when household finances are stressed<sup>4</sup>.

It is generally not considered acceptable for married women to work outside the camps, so for many this restricts their income-generating options to petty trade or domestic labour within the camp. Lack of investment capital was identified by women in all three camps as a major constraint on their economic independence. Married women from artisan households work within the family enterprise as they did in Mali and widowed artisans are able to continue to work independently, but their turnover is generally low and they have additional difficulty marketing their goods outside the camp. Typically, these women sell their goods through middlemen at lower profits.

Respondents noted that orphans, disabled and elderly people were at risk as many of the social networks that had supported them were no longer available, either due to displacement or to poverty among extended family members.

The situation of adolescents and young people – as described by young people themselves, as well as by adults – is also highly problematic: their transition to adulthood is made with no clear perspective on the future, and limited opportunities for post-primary education. This affects all sections of the population and ethnic groups.

### Note on methodology

Information was collected through focus group discussions and individual key informant interviews. A semi-structured interview framework was developed by the survey team for each theme (issues of gender and diversity, women's economic activities, questions relating to youth, etc.) and discussed with local translators to ensure that potentially sensitive issues were addressed in appropriate ways. The groups were convened according to the subject under discussion, and care was taken to ensure that people of relevant gender, age and ethnic groups were included. Notes were taken by the interviewer and other team members during interviews and reviewed with the translators on return from the field.

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<sup>4</sup> The involvement of women as 'processors' in the Seeds for Solutions project could help to reduce this problem.

## Issues of gender: the impact of displacement on the lives of refugee women and men

### *Key points:*

- Traditional roles remain unchanged in the domestic sphere, although women have fewer opportunities to generate income from livestock products than they had in Mali.
- More women are working outside the home as a consequence, mainly in camp-based petty trade and small businesses.
- Increased levels of domestic conflict linked to financial stress were noted in all sites.
- A lack of opportunities for men to earn income – particularly in Goudebou – has sometimes resulted in long-term migration to neighbouring countries, leaving many women without the support of their husbands.

### Changes in activities and disruption of family networks

The division of domestic labour remains largely unchanged within the refugee community, with women continuing to be responsible for all domestic tasks and men continuing to control the household's affairs. However, the loss of household revenue due to displacement and the lack of alternative work for men (there is little demand for day labour in and around all three camps) has meant that women from all social groups often now play more prominent roles in generating income through activities such as paid domestic work,<sup>5</sup> petty trade, selling cooked food, selling firewood, and dyeing and selling clothes. In artisan households, women continue (as before) to work within the family enterprise. In pastoralist households, however, the opportunities for maintaining former activities such as processing livestock products and fattening animals are much reduced. Although some refugee women in the focus groups had higher-level skills – with degrees, diplomas and certificates – many could not use these skills in the camp. Others who had run shops and businesses such as hairdressing were not able to take up their previous occupations due to lack of capital and low levels of demand among the refugee population as a whole. These difficulties meant that despite the continuing insecurity, many women would prefer to return to Mali rather than continue under present economic conditions in the camps.

Women in all three sites referred to problems of lack of work and increased tension within the home, which they attributed to financial pressures. In addition to the economic challenges, problems of family dispersal and separation were also raised in the focus groups. For example, one woman in Sag Nioniogo described how she had lost contact with some of her children during the process of leaving Mali and believes that they are now in Algeria, Niger and camps in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso. The loss and disruption of family networks of this kind can have severe

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<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, only women from 'non-noble' social groups would undertake domestic work – and this continues to be the norm in the camps.

economic consequences for women who are left behind, as well as causing distress and anxiety.

**Responses: Identify households with the weakest social networks.** These households are likely to experience hardship when rations run out, as their access to informal credit, reported by all households to be more difficult than in Mali, is especially weak. The aim of livelihood support for the poorest groups should be to help households at risk of falling into debt to ‘even-out’ their expenditure and reduce the need for credit. Further enquiries (drawing on the expertise of the social anthropologist in the team) could be conducted with the poorest households identified in the IHM income survey to understand why they are in difficulty. Analysis of the household characteristics of the poorest showed that there was no single indicator that could be used for targeting purposes. However, community key informants are always likely to be able to identify extreme cases – such as a blind older man with a sick wife, who was interviewed in the household economy study.

For separated families, liaise with protection services to initiate family tracing and reunification processes. This may also reduce hardship through cash remittances from relatives possibly in stronger economic positions in other countries of refuge.

## Migration and domestic relations

In many cases, particularly among the Goudebou population, men migrate in order to find work, mainly in Ivory Coast, Niger and across the border in Mali. Men who migrate to Niger or Ivory Coast on a temporary basis generally stay away for around 4 months. However, it was reported that while they are away their wives are often unable to earn enough to support their children and elderly dependents. A proportion of wives have lost contact with their migrant husbands and fear that they may have been killed, or that they have abandoned their families, and apparently some men who migrated for work have indeed married second wives and do not provide any assistance. High levels of poverty among both unsupported women and the wider population was said to be forcing young women into unplanned and early marriages, when their families were no longer able to provide for them. This is seen as their only option in the difficult conditions of the camp, where poverty, social exclusion, limited social services and limited influence over decision-making led some women to speak of feelings of abandonment and hopelessness.

Women in Goudebou described their position within the household as being the same as it had been in Mali: their husbands had the dominant position, and they were “always under their husbands”. However, in the camp women felt that there were higher levels of abuse than in Mali and they had to spend more time doing household work. They linked the abuse to situations where women had fewer opportunities to contribute to household income and this lowered their status: “they are being belittled and men think they are less important”. In all households women continued to take care of their children and husbands, to carry out domestic work, and if they had animals, to tend to the offspring.

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**Responses:** While the scope to change deeply-entrenched social attitudes within a short timeframe is limited and outside the brief of this report, agencies working in the camps might join with women’s groups and others to identify when problems of abuse are most likely to arise and how the risk of violence linked to financial hardship might be mitigated (for example through special loan arrangements, assistance in finding work for households with poor social networks, etc.).

## Employment opportunities

Goudebou camp is located in an isolated, remote area which makes it difficult for women to transport their products to Dori and other big markets and adds to the problems facing single women and female-headed households in the camp. Although the situation does appear to have been worst in this camp, there was a consensus across all three sites that in general men have better access to employment opportunities than women. Gaining access to skilled and professional work (such as teaching) is difficult for all refugees, both male and female.

**Response:** Agencies might explore opportunities for skilled refugees, both male and female, with local employers.

## Ethnicity and diversity

### Key points:

- Complex historic social divisions within the Tuareg community are now mainly reflected in the range of economic activities undertaken by the different groups. Broadly speaking, *Touareg noir* households are involved in more varied types of work than *Touareg clair* households.
- Tuaregs from the *forgeron* social class are able to earn income from artisan work, but demand for this in the Sahel camps is very low.
- There are no significant differences in access to camp-based employment among the various ethnic groups. Individuals with French language skills are most likely to gain better-paid work.
- Men and women from the mainly pastoral Fulani community undertake all types of manual, unskilled work as well as continuing (where they can) to keep livestock.
- The main social differentiation was described as between ‘high-class’ and ‘low-class’ people. This appears to reflect economic status in the community rather than ethnic divisions, many of which are complex and do not appear to be linked to any particular income levels within the camps.
- The elderly and people with disabilities do not receive the assistance through family and community networks from which they would benefit in Mali. Focus groups appealed for help on their behalf.

In all three camps, ethnicity – as well as gender – factors influenced economic activities and the opportunities available to individual refugees. The following section explores some of these differences in the experiences of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso.

***Touaregs clairs and Touaregs noirs:*** Historically, some people of *Touareg noir* origin (also referred to, sometimes pejoratively, as ‘*Bella*’) were a slave class, owned by those of *Touareg clair*<sup>6</sup> origin (also known as *Touareg blanc* or *Touareg rouge*), although other *Touaregs noirs* were (and continue to be) high-status nobles. Over the past century, social and economic status within the Tuareg population has become more equal, and now the main economic differences between the two groups are that the *Touaregs clairs* are usually involved in trade and livestock-rearing, whereas *Touaregs noirs* do all types of work – including herding, cultivating, trading, and all other physical or skills-based work.

Among the *Touaregs noirs* both men and women work outside the home to generate income, while among *Touaregs clairs* it is generally only the men who work outside the home. Women of *Touareg noire* origin do domestic work and other casual work where this is available. Some (from the

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<sup>6</sup> Tuaregs from the formerly dominant, higher-ranking social group, often identified by lighter skin.

*forgeron* group) are also involved in jewellery-making and other artisan or craft activities involving wood, metal, skins and clay, selling skins and hides, selling milk and meat, fattening livestock or selling clothes. The limited range of occupations taken up by the *Touareg clair* group means that they are more likely to be unemployed if they are not involved in trade or livestock-rearing. By contrast, the focus groups reported that *Touaregs noirs* were more likely to look for other activities if they were unable to follow their previous occupations.

Focus groups indicated that in Mali, the *Touaregs clairs* were often better-off than other Tuaregs, as they generally had larger herds. However, in the camps, where most refugees have lost a large proportion of their livestock and there are fewer trading opportunities, levels of wealth are similar. There are no differences between the two groups in access to skilled employment in the camps (such as work in healthcare or for NGOs). Relatively few members of either social group speak French and so they are equally disadvantaged here, as any professional training provided in the camps is usually carried out in French. It was noted that the camp brings all ethnic groups into far closer proximity than in their home areas of Mali, but the focus groups reported that few discriminatory attitudes remain.

**Peuls/Fulani:** As nomadic herders (*bergers*), people of Fulani or Peul origin are most likely to tend animals and are much less likely to be engaged in commerce or agriculture than other groups. Their nomadic, livestock-based lifestyle also has consequences for levels of formal education achieved and access to skilled employment: for example, children from Fulani communities rarely attend school, often being responsible for herding, and as a result there are few Fulani teachers. Fulani teachers mainly come from the *Peuls sédentaires*, a sub-group who reside in villages, are involved in cultivation and do send their children to school.

In the camps, Fulani women sell cooked foods and snacks, and are involved in handicrafts such as knitting. Domestic work and laundry are common activities among women from this group, who also work on large farms and gardens. They fatten livestock and sell fodder, grass and wood for tents, and are involved in activities such as constructing tents and other shelters, selling firewood and charcoal, cooking for children and the elderly in camp day-care centres, and selling clothes. Fulani women in the focus groups explained that although there was demand for their work in the camp and local community (particularly for non-farm activities), these activities were associated with low wages.

**(Similarities and other influences):** The women in the focus group agreed that despite the differences in their social groups and income levels, livelihood activities undertaken by all social groups were still controlled by men.

The focus group agreed that a person's socio-economic group most determined the type of activity they could carry out. There were better-off and poorer households in all social groups. However, within any socio-economic group the quality of the products they were able to make varied significantly according to the household's wealth; rich women could afford to buy high-quality,

imported skins and woods, and were thus able to make higher profits from their artisan work. Poor women had to buy inferior inputs in local markets – sometimes on credit – and thus made less money from their work.

**Responses:** Assistance in the form of credit could be targeted at skilled craftspeople currently unable to purchase high-quality inputs, to enable them to improve their profit margins. However, preliminary market research would be required to ensure that sales of more expensive items could be secured and input loans repaid.

## Social groups and power, both genders

Women in Goudebou felt strongly that power in the camp was held by ‘higher-class’ individuals, and that a household’s ability to improve its livelihood depended on its position as higher-class or lower-class. Higher-class individuals were also able to determine access to opportunities presented by agencies working in the camps. The only way of avoiding this was for the agencies to work directly with individual households, rather than going through more influential community members.

There was some concern that the ‘politically-empowered’ (including camp leaders and committee members) had better access to resources than other households, including better access to tents, mats, soap and cash relief. Women described as belonging to ‘high-class families’ were considered to have few interactions with ‘lower-class’ women (for example, they did not buy their arts, crafts or livestock, or support other forms of trading). ‘Lower-class’ women commented that their access to camp facilities (water and latrines) was being restricted or denied by ‘higher-class’ families, but they had nowhere to voice their feelings of resentment and anger in the face of these abuses. In response, some refugees have moved their tents from the officially-designated site or block to live alongside others of the same social class<sup>7</sup>.

Finally, focus groups felt that widows and orphans, people with disabilities, and elderly people were not being assisted sufficiently. It was not possible to fully explore the reason for the breakdowns (or reduced efficacy) of informal support networks, but this could be explored further by social anthropologists in the team.

**Responses:** Again, the scope to change deeply entrenched social attitudes within a short timeframe is limited and outside the brief of this report. However, agencies might review the ways in which they select refugees for employment and the ways in which access to facilities is controlled. Both have implications for livelihoods and social and economic well-being. Agencies should also identify specific social and economic needs of widows, orphans, people with disabilities and elderly people and design interventions in the light of this research.

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<sup>7</sup> When these concerns were later raised with camp staff, they noted that some restrictions on water facilities had apparently been necessary to preserve relatively scarce resources, for example preventing taps from being left running while unattended for long periods of time.

## Youth: a marginalised group

### Key points:

- The main problem facing refugee youth is unemployment.
- Access to vocational training and higher education is limited.
- Many of the jobs available for young people in the camp are unpaid.
- The main barrier to camp-based employment is lack of French language skills.
- Young people in artisan households are among the few sections of the refugee community that can follow their normal transition to adult roles, through participation in family-based workshops.
- Young people's priorities are realistic; it is important that they are consulted by agencies planning interventions.

Focus groups were held with groups of young people and adolescents of both sexes in all three sites. Topics included work and livelihood opportunities, education, and day-to-day life in the camp. Whereas in Mali the experiences of youths from different social and economic backgrounds were very different, all groups had similar experiences in the camp. Like other young people in Burkina Faso and Mali, young people in the camps faced great difficulty in finding employment – and a higher level of education does not guarantee a job. In Goudebou, young people explained that they lack the capital to start businesses, and in the absence of work, they and their peers can lose focus and start to drift. For example, one young person in the group had a university degree in geography and development but he is still unemployed in the camp, despite looking for opportunities at any level.

Without access to capital for investment and with few opportunities to accumulate cash through casual work, many young people who have left school have no employment options. For those who can find work, activities in the Sahel camps included trade/commerce, livestock-rearing, manual labour, and work with NGOs. The group in Goudebou estimated that possibly 2% of young people were employed by NGOs in community roles. However, much of the work available for them in the camp was unpaid, which was discouraging. Two members of the focus group had been community teachers (*enseignants communautaires*) in the camp for the past two years and were paid 75,000 FCFA<sup>8</sup> per month, but still had no certificates, papers or contracts that would document their work and enable them to use their experience gained in the camp to continue teaching when they return to Mali.

There are apparently no differences in the proportions of people from different ethnic groups with NGO and other community jobs, although the Arab population is sometimes disadvantaged by activities taking place in French (in which they are generally less fluent), and UNHCR schools

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<sup>8</sup> FCFA = West African CFA franc.

apparently prioritise young women. NGO, teaching and healthcare work require oral tests or interviews. Past experience is usually required, but people who can otherwise prove they have the right skills are sometimes appointed.

Assistance programmes from the government of Burkina Faso help children in Goudebou to attend secondary school, but there is no assistance for further education. The secondary education programme pays 35,000 FCFA per child to cover school fees, 5,000 FCFA for rent in Dori, and 20,000 FCFA towards other living costs. Other expenses are not covered.

*Independent livelihoods:* Some parents help their children to start in commerce if they have the means, by giving them animals, cereals, etc. to trade, but generally this is rare. Although WFP rations (including money) are determined by the number of people within a household, these are almost always controlled by the household head. Consequently, few young people leave their parents' households within the camp, even if they have a livelihood of their own – and without a livelihood of their own, it would be very difficult for them to leave. However, when young people do stay in the household, as the money they earn increases, so too does their influence and status.

Artisanal work mainly takes place as part of a family workshop, with money going to the household in general, although some young people also do artisanal work independently of their parents while remaining part of the household.

*Training:* Young people would be keen to take up training opportunities in trades such as tailoring, dyeing, mechanics and construction if they were available. Depending on the economy in their home areas, these skills could also be useful on their return to Mali. However, in current circumstances demand for these skills in the immediate locality is low and an external boost to the economy would be required to support additional enterprises.

From November 2013 – February 2014, Save the Children offered all young people in Goudebou between 15 to 18 years the opportunity to train in tailoring. Participation was voluntary, and a test after the training determined who would receive materials to help them get started as tailors. Some of the trainees have returned to Mali and are continuing with the trade; some are working in the camp. It is estimated that estimated 20% of 15 to 18-year-olds in the camp are now tailors, and can make up to 2,000 – 3,000 FCFA in profit per day when demand is high, especially in the run-up to religious festivals. These profits would typically come from investments of 1,000 FCFA in materials.

**Responses:** While the tailoring project does appear to have provided new opportunities, demand for other trades (dyeing, mechanics, construction, etc.) appears to be low within the camps, reflected in the fact that existing tradespeople only occasionally take on apprentices. A boost to the economy – possibly from the livestock and dairy project – could potentially generate more demand for these skills.

A similar picture emerged in Sag Nioniogo, where there are many adolescents who are effectively

unemployed for much of the time in the camps. In contrast to non-artisan youth, boys and girls in artisan households are able to follow a relatively ‘normal’ pathway, acquiring skills in metal work, jewellery-making and leather work that will enable them to contribute to their family’s main economic activity.

***Responses:* Discussions indicated the need for consultation with adults and youths on skills gaps and learning opportunities that have been lost due to conflict. Agencies might identify potential local employment opportunities where relevant skills could be acquired, alongside young people from host communities.**

Rather than focusing on trades, the group in Goudebou identified training of young people for NGO employment, livestock-rearing, agriculture, healthcare work and teaching as the most useful intervention in the camp. This seems both realistic and relevant. The lack of educational opportunities close to places of origin in Mali was also identified as a concern among young people. They believed that, if it were possible, UNHCR support for education in their home areas would facilitate and encourage their return.

***Response:* Agencies planning interventions should consult with young people to help identify appropriate activities.**

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## Impacts of humanitarian assistance on investment

*Key points:*

- Humanitarian assistance provides refugees with the basic necessities, and is valued highly by refugees.
- Some households have been able to invest in small businesses using cash transfer money, or are reselling (to the host community) foods such as beans or CSB that are not part of their normal diet.

All focus groups emphasised the importance of food aid and cash distributions provided by WFP, UNHCR and partners. These have enabled women in particular to save their earnings from other activities and invest in livestock and items such as clothes, while still meeting their family's basic needs. For some women, including those who were already widowed or divorced before the conflict, the humanitarian assistance has not only improved their situation, but also given them slightly more control over their livelihoods.

No negative effects of humanitarian aid were reported. It was seen as a highly-valued resource that could, if necessary, be used flexibly to support other livelihood activities. For example, some households preferred to use CSB<sup>9</sup> and yellow split peas to fatten livestock; some exchanged beans for rice in town.

***Response:* Any decision to reduce food aid or cash transfers should consider the potential impacts on living standards, including the abilities of households to invest in commercial activities and livestock.**

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<sup>9</sup> Corn-soya blend cereal.

## Expenditure on food and other essential items

### Key points:

- The cost of basic necessities was highest in Goudebou, followed by Mentao and Sag Nioniogo.
- In addition to clothes, soap and fuel, other items considered essential to meet social norms included tea and sugar.
- Condiments (groceries and seasonings) add variety to the diet and are bought by all wealth groups.
- Milk purchases were prioritised by households in all sites, but high prices mean only middle-income and better-off households can afford to buy milk regularly.
- Poorer households buy millet when their rations run out; better-off households buy rice.

The teams collected data in each camp on the main items of food and non-food expenditure. Costs were based on the ‘minimum required for social inclusion’ (see the ‘Standard of living threshold’ section of the household economy baseline report<sup>10</sup>, particularly Table 5). The items were identified in consultation with ‘poorer’ households and included clothes, soap, body lotion, batteries, firewood, matches, milk, sugar, tea, *condiments* (groceries and seasonings), salt and transport to nearby markets. The highest basic expenditure costs were reported in Goudebou; this was due to the lack of firewood in surrounding areas and the consequent need to purchase fuel throughout the year. Clothes were more expensive in both Sahel sites than in Sag Nioniogo. There was consensus among the focus groups that poor refugee households did not need to pay for mobile phone usage to stay in contact with relatives elsewhere, as they were generally able to borrow the phones of better-off neighbours, while primary education and basic healthcare are free to Malian refugees in Burkina Faso and so do not impact on households’ abilities to meet the locally-defined basic needs.

Data on the ability of different groups across the income distribution to access these items is shown Table 6 of the household economy baseline report<sup>11</sup>.

Focus groups at all three sites reported that household rations lasted for 14 days, on average. In some cases poorer households did not have sufficient income to purchase enough additional food for the remaining two weeks and so reduced their food intake, consuming the rations over 21 days.

The focus groups emphasised that in the normal diet consumed in Mali, milk contributed a high proportion of daily food intake. However, access to milk from the household’s own livestock was difficult in the camps (due to restricted access to pasture and lack of fodder for goats), and milk was

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<sup>10</sup> Petty, C., Ellis, W., & Seaman, J. (2014) *Livelihood baseline assessment of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso: Quantitative analysis of household economies*, Evidence for Development & UNHCR. Available online at

<http://www.efd.org/reports/Baseline-UNHCR-Burkina-Faso-livelihood-assessment-Malian-refugees-part-I/>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

only available for purchase at inflated prices. For example, in Goudebou the cost is 1,000 – 1,500 FCFA per litre for good quality non-diluted milk, and 540 FCFA per litre for diluted milk. This has meant that poor households have had to adapt their diet and currently consume very little milk or meat, with inevitable consequences for dietary quality.

## Food expenditure and monthly variation: example based on Goudebou focus groups

Table 1 gives an indication of the diets consumed by poorer, middle income and better-off refugees in Goudebou. Similar patterns were found in the other sites. Poorer households have had to make the greatest changes in their diets; in their home areas, these would be based on millet or sorghum, together with milk from any suitable livestock that they owned. The middle income and better-off refugee households are still able to purchase milk, so their diet is closer to that of their places of origin.

**Table 1: Monthly diets reported by focus groups of refugees in Goudebou**

First two weeks of monthly food distribution (among poor group)		Last two weeks after monthly food distribution (among poor group)	First two weeks of monthly food distribution during rainy season (among middle and better-off group)	Last two weeks after monthly food distribution during rainy season (among middle and better-off group)
Rice = 65%	Rice = 70%	Millet = 85%	Rice = 60%	Millet = 70%
Beans = 15%	Beans = 15%	Baobab leaves = 7.5%	Cooking oil = 10%	Milk = 30%
Cooking oil = 10%	Cooking oil = 15%	Cooking oil / groundnuts = 7.5%	CSB = 10%	
CSB = 10% (breakfast)			Milk = 20%	

When their rations run out, most households buy millet rather than rice. At the time of the assessment, the local market price of millet was 250 FCFA per kg, compared with a rice price of 375 FCFA per kg. The cost of baobab leaves, consumed by poorer households in the Sahel camps, is 250 FCFA per kg.

The absence of milk in the diet was seen as impacting negatively on children, who were described by their mothers as looking “unhealthy and impoverished”. This problem also affects the elderly, who were described as becoming “skinny due to poor diets”. Many elderly people had difficulty eating food such as beans and biscuits, which are provided by WFP.

The relocation of refugees to Goudebou from sites on the border where they were able to keep livestock and benefit from livestock products such as milk, meat and skins appears to have resulted in greater hardship for many households. Women noted how the most important immediate problem – which may require assistance from UNHCR and other authorities – was to find a way of accessing pasture in Goudebou without causing conflict with the host community. If this could be resolved, they felt that problems of poverty and food insecurity would be significantly reduced.

**Responses:** The ‘Seeds for Solutions’ milk and dairy project will be providing milk to feeding centres in the camps. If this has not already been considered, marketing milk produced by project dairies to the general population of the camps should also be reviewed. The impacts on the milk prices paid in the camps by refugee households for their own consumption should be carefully monitored throughout the project period.

All groups described the problem of the high price of the local foods they had to buy when the monthly ration was consumed. In Sag Nioniogo rice, oil, spices, vegetables, tea, sugar, meat, milk, salt, millet and oats are purchased locally – the items bought and the quantities consumed vary according to wealth status. Essentials including clothes, soap and charcoal were also bought locally. A similar range of items was purchased by households in the Sahel camps. In all areas, only people who had to travel to their nearest main town (Ouagadougou, Dori and Djibo, respectively) to sell artisanal products or other goods used the larger markets for essential purchases.

**Responses:** Agencies might consider ways of working with refugees to reduce the cost of food items, for example through bulk buying. The mechanism would require careful consideration. However, by reducing local food purchase costs, for example by bringing bulk traders closer to refugees, the impact of any reduction in relief aid might be partly mitigated.

## Access to credit

### *Key points:*

- Credit and loans play an essential role in the household economies of many refugees in all the camps in Burkina Faso.
- Poor households rely on credit from shops or loans from neighbours for consumption purposes – for example, when they run out of food and cash between distributions – rather than for business purposes.
- Most loans are for small amounts (usually up to 50,000 FCFA each time) and are repaid without interest. They rely on people’s reputations and social networks.
- Larger traders and artisans describe difficulties in accessing credit as a major limitation on the development of their businesses.

Credit and loans (and access to these) play vital parts in the household economies of refugees in all three official camps. The focus group in Goudebou explained that at some point almost everyone in the camp needed a loan or credit. However, the need was particularly great among people who had no means of subsistence beyond their aid rations. Credit and loans were given on the basis of the borrower’s capacity to repay, which in some cases could take up to two years. Loans for the less well-off were generally no greater than 50,000 FCFA; the better-off were able to access larger amounts. In some cases, an individual would take out loans with multiple providers, but if this became known, further credit would usually be denied. Lenders often asked to see (for example) a potential client’s small business accounts.

Credit and loans rely to some degree on personal connections. For example, people are more likely to lend to others from the same region in Mali, as this provides some insurance that any outstanding debts will be repaid when they return.

Loans may be repaid in the form of livestock held in Mali, as well as in cash. For lenders, this is a form of investment and speculation that partly explains their willingness to lend even though generally no interest is charged. If the borrower defaults, there is an obligation on the family, friends and neighbours of a borrower to repay the loan. This obligation applies to all people, regardless of kinship links, if the debtor is in genuine need.

Respondents in Mentao described similar systems, and they elaborated on the types of loans available. These include an ‘internal’ loan system based on social and kinship ties, with minimal conditions. The maximum loan is around 50,000 FCFA and if the borrower is unable to repay, the only ‘penalty’ is likely to be difficulty in securing future loans. The second system involves ‘external’ lending. This system mainly operates through Malian traders who are based in Djibo town. Generally, items provided on credit include rice, cooking oil, tea, sugar, milk, shoes and clothes, although cash loans may also be given. This system is built on customer relationships, with some

dating back to earlier links in Mali. Most of these loans do not involve interest and are paid with income from remittances sent from Mali, livestock sales within the camp, and especially cash provided during monthly aid distributions. Repayment is largely flexible and can be rescheduled if households are unable to pay at the end of the month. Few commercial loans are available.

Residents in Sag Nioniogo explained that they mainly repaid their loans in cash, but sometimes exchanged their rations – for example, swapping rice or millet for milk. Milk, sugar and tea are seen as essential, so refugees will exchange some of their cereal ration for these if they have no cash available. This focus group emphasised the shortage of cash to invest in commerce, which was needed to improve their livelihoods and meet basic needs.

***Response:* Better access to credit for business development would assist many refugees. However, it is important that credit is provided responsibly and refugees do not burden themselves with debts that cannot be repaid.**

## Women's economic activities

Focus groups explained how when it became clear during 2012-13 that return to Mali would not be possible in the short-term due to the continuing conflict, the process of adaptation started in all camps and people began to find ways of supplementing their incomes in order to pay for items not covered by humanitarian assistance. This meant using their existing knowledge and skills to set up new enterprises in Burkina Faso, or – if they had the necessary capital – investing in new types of business in the camps such as restaurants or video cinemas.

The focus of this section is on how women's economic activities have been affected, building on the previous descriptions of socio-economic conditions<sup>12</sup> with more specific details of the economic challenges facing refugee women from pastoral households (adapting to constraints on livestock businesses) and women engaged in other activities such as petty trade and artisan work. Some of the aspects covered here also affect men working in these areas; the section that follows this also contains information on livestock and artisan work, but with more of a focus on external market dimensions outside of the camps.

### Women from pastoral households

#### *Key points:*

Priorities for women from pastoral households in the Sahel include:

- Access to credit to purchase animals for fattening.
- Access to pasture closer to the camps so women can tend to livestock.

Having lost their livestock when they fled from Mali, the most radical livelihood changes have been experienced by pastoral households, where both men and women have had to find new ways of generating income to buy household necessities and to invest in new enterprises. In Sag Nioniogo, this has mainly led to involvement in petty trade and commercial activity or, for those with higher levels of skill or education, employment in camp-related work. In the Sahel camps (Goudebou and Mentaou), where the possibilities for livestock production are greater (particularly in Mentaou), some women and children from pastoral households are still able to engage in livestock fattening – generally of sheep or goats, which in Mali were sold on along the Niger River. However, women in the focus groups described the main constraint as a shortage of animals – they lack the money to invest in goats – as well as lack of access to local pasture and high input costs. These are documented in the following example.

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<sup>12</sup> See the 'Issues of gender: the impact of displacement on the lives of refugee women and men' section, starting on page 10.

A young goat can be bought from local markets or the neighbouring community at 8,000 FCFA to 12,000 FCFA. Fattening takes four to eight months, with the timing of sales determined by household needs. Sale prices range from 20,000 FCFA to 30,000 FCFA. Input costs only include fodder, at 1,500 FCFA to 3,500 FCFA per month depending on the time of year. Veterinary services are free for goats and sheep. In the dry season fodder is bought, while in the rainy season fodder is locally available. Children generally herd livestock, providing free family labour.

In their new environment, further activities (in addition to livestock fattening) that are no longer possible for many women in this group include painting and tinting skins, selling wild fruits and leaves, and farm activities including crop cultivation.

Women in Mentao explained that their situation would be much improved if livestock could be kept close to the camp, allowing men who were in Mali or staying close to the border to return to their families. Better access to pasture around the camp would also reduce the financial insecurity that women who had lost their husbands were experiencing.

Finally, agro-pastoralist households highlighted the need to access land for cultivation around the camp to allow them to engage in crop and livestock production; this would diversify their livelihoods, improve their income and increase the availability of a wider range of food and livestock products in the camp.

**Responses:** Agencies should continue to engage with the host population regarding access to land for grazing and for cultivation. Benefits to the local population that are likely to arise from the livestock and dairy project (Seeds for Solutions) might provide an entry point.

## Women's enterprises, petty trade and employment

### Key points:

- Profits of small traders might be increased by bulk buying, but this would require organisation, local contacts and capital.
- Returns on investment in women's petty trading activities are likely to remain low, due to the lack of spending power across the refugee community and the cultural constraints on women working outside the camps.

*Small businesses:* Women's small-business activities include selling clothes, selling groceries, selling animal feed, and selling wild foods such as baobab leaves. The type of small business activity a woman adopts is generally linked to her social group. For instance, the *Touaregs noires* are involved in selling dyed clothes, tea and small beads used to make wrist bracelets. Songhai and Fulani women sell groceries and condiments more often than *Touaregs claires*. Women of all groups sell salt, tea, spices and baobab leaves. Soap is sometimes locally made. The returns from these businesses are usually small.

***Examples of returns on petty trade and small businesses in Goudebou and Mentao***

Dyed cloth was one of the more profitable businesses in Mali, but now in Goudebou this gives a profit of only 500 FCFA per 5m of cloth. Sales are also low, typically two cloths in a month. Spices and leaves similarly only yield low returns – for example, 1 kg of spice bought at 550 FCFA is sold at 600 to 800 FCFA – and returns on the sale of beans, milk powder and groceries are also low, with net profits not exceeding 8,000 FCFA per week. However, returns on *condiment* sales could be even less profitable in Mali. One woman reported profits of around 15,000 FCFA in Burkina Faso, whereas her business in Mali only made a profit of 10,000 FCFA.

Women in Mentao were engaged in a similar range of commercial and petty trade activities as in Goudebou, with slightly more tanning and dyeing taking place here. Returns are low for most enterprises: a small business investment of 50,000 FCFA per month brings in average profits of around 13,750 FCFA.

Higher returns from the sale of consumer items such as dyed cloth partly depend on an increase in disposable income among the wider population. Improvement in the profits of cloth-sellers, jewellers and other artisans might be expected if, for example, the Seeds for Solutions milk and dairy project leads to higher incomes among beneficiary households.

***Responses:*** Returns on businesses where traders can only buy in small quantities are unlikely to improve unless bulk buying arrangements can be organised. Agencies working with refugees should consider the feasibility of supporting this approach, which should be accompanied by market research to assess demand.

*Selling cooked food:* Restaurants and other cooked-food sales do well during the period between households receiving their cash transfers and food ration distributions. However, the number of women entrepreneurs with their own restaurant business is low, due to the high capital costs.

The average monthly input costs for a restaurant business is 58,000 FCFA, with daily profits ranging from 2,000 FCFA to 15,000 FCFA on market and food distribution days. Average monthly profits are around 35,000 FCFA. A woman running a small restaurant business reported average monthly input costs of 24,000 FCFA to 35,000 FCFA, with a weekly profit of around 4,500 FCFA per week.

Most women selling cooked food work at a smaller scale, and only operate on market days and during festivals.

***Responses:*** A specific request from women was that there should be greater consultation by agencies before introducing projects, and a stronger focus on promoting existing businesses. Based on this observation, there may be opportunities to support women with loans to invest in restaurant businesses and other types of food trade in the camps. Women raised the problem that organisations aiming to help women did not go to them directly but often worked through men.

**Discussions should be held with NGOs regarding their approach to targeting, highlighting the importance of direct dialogue with refugee women in the design of projects.**

*Selling firewood and livestock fodder, and domestic work:* The lowest rates of return from ‘self-employment’ came from selling firewood and leaves (used for fodder), and from domestic work – both of which are traditionally seen as women’s work. In Goudebou, poor women sell firewood to households within and outside the camp. Some women also buy wild leaves and sell them on in the camp, while children and a small number of women harvest livestock fodder to sell to pastoral households. Profits made from these are small, ranging from 1,000 FCFA to 4,000 FCFA per month.

Traditionally, domestic work was carried out by women from the *Touareg noire* social group, and it remains the case that *Touaregs claires* do not undertake work of this kind. Domestic work includes laundry, collecting firewood for the households, and taking care of small children. However, demand for domestic work is low due to lack of money in households that would formerly provide employment.

On average, women doing domestic work are paid 3,000 FCFA to 7,000 FCFA per month, depending on the relationship with the household and individual agreements. Domestic work is not carried out on a daily basis – instead, the worker and employee agree on the number of days or hours to be worked in a week or month.

*Women engaged in artisanal work:* Most artisan work is carried out as a family activity, with tasks divided between men, women and adolescent girls and boys. However, female artisans who lost their husbands in the conflict are able to work independently in the camps. The IHM assessment shows that households headed by women artisans can earn average incomes, but the range of products they produce is more limited than their male counterparts (for example, women do not traditionally work in metal). This prevents them from achieving higher returns, and limits the capital available for investment in materials and new tools.

**Responses: Target women-headed households for projects adding value to products that they can produce without the use of metal. Consider introducing women artisans to metal working if socially acceptable, and target women for assistance in renewing tools (for example, loans with repayment on favourable terms).**

Despite the efforts of many artisans to diversify and adapt to new market conditions, returns on artisan work away from the main markets in Ouagadougou are low. For example, in Goudebou average profits are only 10,000 – 40,000 FCFA per month. This is not considered sufficient to provide a sustainable livelihood. Producers complain that buyers are offering just half the price of their input costs. Among the women interviewed, it was only the jewellery-makers who were able to maintain a reasonably high turnover, as demand remained steady. However, profits were not high, with most income used for day-to-day consumption.

Women artisans were acutely aware of the consequences of poor access to markets and low levels of return. They feared (with good reason) that this lack of demand would lead in the longer term to a loss of skills and an inability to diversify their livelihoods.

A woman selling traditional leather mats in Mali would sell on average three per year at 100,000 FCFA per mat. However, the cost is beyond the means of refugee households, and in the local market in Dori, buyers were only willing to pay 20,000 FCFA – insufficient to cover the costs of production. Alternative, cheaper products are now being produced by women who previously made high-value artisan goods. For example, the maker of leather mats is now producing knitted baskets for 10,000 FCFA. Her input costs for three baskets (all recently sold) were 15,000 FCFA in cash and 8kg of CSB (corn-soya blend cereal) that she exchanged for threads.

In Mali, women potters were able to sell to traders, shop owners, tourists, and locally within their own communities. In Goudebou, marketing problems have reduced their profits. For example, a craftswoman who was able to sell around 15 pots per month in Mali at 10,000 FCFA to 15,000 FCFA (with an average net profit of 6,000 FCFA to 8,000 FCFA per pot) only sold three pots in the past four months in Goudebou. In addition to the poor market conditions, local soils do not provide the clay needed for high quality pots.

For women’s artisan work (jewellery, cushions and key fobs), a monthly capital investment of 60,000 FCFA brings in an average profit of around 5,000 FCFA. However, groups of women in Mentaou also carry out highly specialised leather work making tents. Using up to 70 skins, three to four women can make a tent in three months. These are generally sold at around 500,000 FCFA, and no more than one tent per year is likely to be sold.

Women specialising in artisan work highlighted the problem of poor market access at all sites – but particularly in the Sahel camps – and problems in accessing materials. With the low level of demand and high input costs, their businesses are declining<sup>13</sup>. Women stressed their need for materials that would allow them to “make beautiful products like those made in factories”.

**Responses: If artisan activities are to be maintained in the camps, mechanisms are needed to provide capital for production and to take high-quality goods to regional and international markets (promoting unique items produced by skilled craftsmen and women that are of a higher quality than those made in factories). The potential loss of specialist skills due to displacement and lack of demand is a serious problem among all refugee communities.**

**For small businesses in general, agencies working with women refugees should consider capital support for new and existing enterprises and livestock-rearing, after market analysis has been**

<sup>13</sup> For example, the returns from making traditional mats (*nattes*) were high in Mali: after input costs of 3,000 FCFA per animal skin and 10,000 FCFA for dyes, profits were between 10,000-40,000F per month. However, with a lower demand for their traditional crafts, it is harder to generate incomes at this level in the camp. This means that some *Touareg noire* women are now more likely to do domestic work – with average pay of only 5,000 FCFA per month.

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**undertaken. Both men and women considered assistance in setting up businesses and in restocking as the most important interventions that agencies could make.**

*Skilled work in camps:* NGO activities and projects allow some people to continue their previous occupations; for example, one woman in a focus group was a nurse in Mali and continues to be employed as a nurse in the camp. The IHM analysis shows that nearly a third of all households have a household member who is employed either part-time or full-time by agencies working in the camps. Such employment provides an important opportunity to build on existing skills and to extend knowledge and skills to a wider group, particularly engaging young people who have lost out on education and employment opportunities through the conflict.

***Responses:* Work with NGOs operating in the camp to identify existing skills among the refugee community, including women as well as men, and highlight skills gaps. Develop an investment plan to extend relevant vocational skills, particularly to younger refugee women and men, widening the pool of expertise and enhancing human resources over the longer term.**

## External market-related activities

### Key points:

- Livestock rearing and artisan work are the main activities through which refugees generate income outside the camp economy.
- Artisan work is the most important source of non-camp income in Sag Nioniogo.
- Livestock rearing is the main source of non-camp income in Goudebou and Mentao.

In this section, we review the main non-camp market-related activities that provide cash income for refugees in all three sites: livestock rearing and artisan work, which, along with local and regional commerce, were also the main activities of refugees in their home areas. The livelihoods of refugees involved in these and other types of work (salaried employment, general trading, other businesses and services and unskilled labour, mainly taking place within the camps) are reflected in the IHM dataset, with further analysis of the various sources of cash income (including transfers) featured in the quantitative household economy report<sup>14</sup>.

In Sag Nioniogo, where artisanal work is the most important market-related activity, focus group interviews involving both male and female artisans were conducted in order to gain a fuller understanding of the ways in which they are able to access and interact with markets. Similar information was collected from focus groups and key informants in Goudebou and Mentao, where livestock production is the main market-related income-generating activity overall<sup>15</sup>.

## Livestock and livestock-marketing

### Key points:

- Livestock is a major income source for refugees in the Sahelian camps of Mentao and Goudebou, but much less so in Sag Nioniogo.
- In Goudebou, most refugees keep their herds close to the Malian border where they can access pasture, rather than close to the camp.
- Residents of Mentao have access to rangeland closer to the camp, although they are only able to keep a limited number of animals in the immediate vicinity.
- While grazing is free, access to water points requires payment, adding to overall input costs.
- A proportion of livestock owned by refugees are kept and marketed abroad. In these cases, brokers are paid a set amount for each animal sold.

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<sup>14</sup> Petty, C., Ellis, W., & Seaman, J. (2014) *Livelihood baseline assessment of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso: Quantitative analysis of household economies*, Evidence for Development & UNHCR. Available online at <http://www.efd.org/reports/Baseline-UNHCR-Burkina-Faso-livelihood-assessment-Malian-refugees-part-I/>

<sup>15</sup> Although in Goudebou income from other trading and small businesses is at comparable levels.

Although there is a weekly livestock market in Ouagadougou, as there is no access to grazing in Sag Nioniogo, the number of livestock kept per household in this camp is low<sup>16</sup> and people from the camp rarely use this livestock market; they buy and sell goats in local villages. More animals are kept by refugee households in the Sahel camps, where they can access some local grazing and are closer to the border areas where many animals remain.

### Livestock in Goudebou

Most refugees in Goudebou camp keep their livestock close to the border between Burkina Faso and Mali. This reduces the risk of conflict with the host community around the camp, avoids the extra costs of keeping animals in the camp – where fodder has to be purchased – and allows them to remain in an environment that is closer to that of their home area. Animals kept close to the border are generally left with a close family member, with another friend or relative already living in Burkina Faso, or with an unrelated herdsman. When animals are left with a herdsman, he will take responsibility for cattle and his children will be responsible for sheep and goats. The women look after young and new-born animals.

Decisions to sell livestock are taken by the head of the household. If this is a man, however, he would be expected to explain the reason for selling to his wife, who would be responsible for livestock products such as milk and butter. Goats, sheep, donkeys and poultry are mainly kept close to Goudebou camp, with smaller numbers of camels and cows. Livestock held close to the border include camels, cattle, sheep and goats.

Refugees in Goudebou use the state-controlled ‘Fourrage Christine’ watering point on the Mali-Burkina Faso border during the dry season (March to May or June). This is about 12 km from the normal grazing area used by most of the refugee population. A monthly tariff is charged for usage of Fourrage Christine, based on the size of herds as follows: 50,000 FCFA for a large herd, 20,000 FCFA for a medium-sized herd, and 3,000 to 5,000 FCFA for a small herd.

**Table 2: Classification of Goudebou refugee households’ livestock herd sizes**

Animal	Small herd	Medium herd	Large herd
Camels	1-2	5-8	20 (5 if kept in Goudebou)
Cows	5-10	40-50	100
Sheep / goats	20 (1-2 if kept in Goudebou)	100 (5 if kept in Goudebou)	200-300 (10-12 if kept in Goudebou)

Table 2 shows how these herd size descriptions may be interpreted, with differences if camels or small ruminants are kept in Goudebou rather than away from the camp – these are shown in

<sup>16</sup> Petty, C., Ellis, W., & Seaman, J., *op. cit.*

brackets/parentheses.

Livestock are owned on an individual household basis. The main livestock disease in this area is 'berder'; in the dry season this affects around 50% of cows and around 90% of small ruminants (camels and donkeys are not affected). Generally, the weakest animals are sold in the dry season to conserve those that are more likely to survive. Fodder and mineral licks are also bought during this period.

### Livestock in Mentao

Refugees in Mentao refugee camp have free access to pasture away from the immediate vicinity of the camp. Animals not kept in the camp (where it is necessary to buy fodder for most of the year) are taken by herders to more distant grazing areas including Ariel, Seliba, Inassambo, Dambasimiti, Deou, and Gantouré Gnègnè. While access to pasture is free, contributions are required to pay for the upkeep of water points. Payments vary, depending on the size of the herd and type of animal. The maximum fee for a large herd of cattle is 10,000 FCFA, and for a large herd of sheep and goats the fee is 1,500 FCFA. Details of markets used by livestock owners in Mentao are given in the appendix of this report.

### Artisanal work

*Key points:*

- Most artisan work takes place in Sag Nioniogo.
- The market for artisan work in Ouagadougou is far better than in the Sahel region, and includes international tourists as well as local residents.
- The main problems facing artisans are access to credit to buy inputs, and the costs of marketing – which is done either through middlemen or directly to clients.
- The recent Ebola epidemic has had a serious impact on trade and resulted in the cancellation of the November 2014 International Art and Craft Fair in Ouagadougou. This has meant a loss of business opportunities for some of the larger artisan households.

A majority of the Malian artisan refugees settled in Sag Nioniogo, due to its proximity to markets in the capital city and access to international trade. However, they have had to develop their own trade contacts in Ouagadougou – a process which takes time. Artisans in Sag Nioniogo sell their goods either through middlemen (generally at a lower price) or directly to buyers, for example in hotels. This gives a higher price, but can take a great deal of time: sometimes up to three days to make one sale of 10,000 FCFA. Customers include international tourists and local Burkinabés.

The potential market for high-quality artisan goods extends to Togo and northern Nigeria. One interviewee (who has a large household and much family labour) said that they could potentially expand their sales, but were constrained by a lack of working capital such that they could not build

up a sufficient stock to exploit the wider market. As far as possible, people keep manufacturing within the household, but when this is not possible they may subcontract work to other households.

Artisans face even greater difficulties in establishing viable businesses in the Sahel region. For example, a successful jeweller who was interviewed has been able to continue to produce high quality jewellery, but only by sourcing materials and marketing his goods in Ivory Coast. A second was able to recapitalise his business through loans, repaid from WFP cash transfers. Neither is making the profits they had achieved at home. In both cases, improved access to markets would have the greatest impact on their livelihood security and sustainability.

Many of the refugees who settled in Sag Nioniogo are artisans who arrived with some or all of their tools. Most basic tools (leather scrapers, an adze, knives, etc.) can be replenished by artisans. Purchased tools include files (1,500 FCFA each), pliers (2,000 FCFA) and hacksaws (2,500 FCFA). The cost of manufacturing a set of bellows was estimated at 29,000 FCFA.

The main artisan work produced includes leather hand bangles, key holders/fobs, boxes, knives/swords, stools, pouffes, mirrors, mats and bags. Most of the raw materials required for artisanal products are obtained through a factory in Ouagadougou. However, high quality leather continues to be imported from Mali on a bimonthly basis.

Materials such as metal sheets (steel and brass) are obtained in Ouagadougou. Small skins (of goats or sheep) are obtained from Kaya in an unprocessed state, and finished by the artisan. This requires considerable labour: skins are repeatedly scraped (using an ebony scraper) and dyed (a mixture of iron and lemon juice is used). Large skins (cow or camel), which are required for special jobs such as covering doors, are obtained from Kano.

Despite its relative proximity to large markets for artisan products when compared to Goudebou and Mentao, the location of the camp is a major market-access problem for refugees in Sag Nioniogo. Ouagadougou is 45 minutes by road and the return taxi fare is 2,000 FCFA; sales of artisanal products are not guaranteed, so marketing carries a real risk of loss-making. Artisans generally have to sell item-by-item rather than in bulk, and their bargaining power and sales prices are eroded by the lack of customers and the urgent need to make money. Where marketing is entrusted to other people who take goods into the city, the general view was that the artisans were often cheated and did not receive full payment for their products. One of the women interviewed also reported that in Mali she was able to sell in a wider range of markets, that demand was higher and that selling her work was much easier. Within the camp itself, there are few opportunities for artisans to sell their products other than to NGO workers and other agency visitors.

Nevertheless, Ouagadougou is a major regional and international centre for artisanal work, and the Salon International de l'Artisanat in Ouagadougou can be used by artisans from Sag Nioniogo who have access to gallery space through a resident stallholder. A flat rate of 15,000 FCFA (paid collectively by the artisans using the stall) is charged for transport of each load of goods, but the

goods' subsequent exhibition and sale involves no extra fee.

## Summary of constraints and opportunities for refugee artisans

### *Constraints:*

- Limited capital for purchase of raw materials, especially during the off-peak months of July to September, when most households have to prepare for school fee payments in October.
- General reduction in the number of tourists visiting Burkina Faso during the rainy season (July to September).
- Limited capacity among the artisan refugee community to participate in regional and international trade fairs.
- Bureaucratic tendencies (particularly on the part of humanitarian agencies) which sometimes hinder physical access to the refugee camp by potential customers for local artisan products.
- The current threat posed by the Ebola epidemic has already led to the cancellation of the November 2014 edition of Ouagadougou's biennial International Art and Craft Fair<sup>17</sup> and other regional fairs in Burkina Faso.

### *Opportunities:*

- National and international trade fairs normally provide marketing opportunities for refugee artisan products between the months of November to January.
- Linkages with prominent business people have also helped improve access to some international markets.
- Annual festivals in Mali (Mopti and Ségou) have provided good exposure and linkages with the international markets for refugee artisan products.
- Local purchase of artisan products within Sag Nioniogo refugee camp.

**Responses:** There is scope to improve marketing, for example through collective organisation and contact with regional suppliers of retail goods. As Ouagadougou is an international centre for both traditional and innovative artisanal work, there is scope for more entrepreneurial refugee artisans to explore new markets and opportunities. New markets could be sought out among potential middle-class consumers in West and North Africa, and new products introduced to regional and international tourists. Women could be encouraged to take part in this process.

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<sup>17</sup> *Le Salon International de l'Artisanat de Ouagadougou (SIAO)* – held at the same venue where artisan households in Sag Nioniogo are able to exhibit and sell their work during the rest of the year.

## Appendix: Livestock and artisan case studies

### Livestock case studies

#### *Pastoralist with average-sized herd, Mentao*

This household crossed the border into Burkina Faso from Mali in February 2012, entering through Boulel. They moved to Areyl village where they lived for two weeks, before continuing to the unofficial Damba refugee camp and eventually the official Mentao refugee camp in April 2013.

At the time of entering Burkina Faso, the household had 5 camels, 8 cows, 15 sheep, 30 goats and 2 donkeys. However, due to lack of money or material support when they arrived in Burkina Faso, the household sold around half of their goats to purchase food. In April 2013, they moved to Mentao refugee camp with 10 goats, 15 sheep and 2 donkeys, leaving 5 camels and 8 cows with a herdsman in Areyl. This was due to limited grazing land around Mentao and a lack of transport. They soon realised that keeping small stock in Mentao was also expensive, as fodder had to be purchased, so they also returned these animals to Areyl village in May and June 2013.

#### **Annual input cost of maintaining livestock in Areyl village:**

- Purchase of fodder, May to July = 10-12 sacks x 3 months at 9,000 FCFA per sack = 297,000 FCFA.
- Herdsman = 12 months x 20,000 FCFA = 240,000 FCFA plus additional food (provided from the household's ration).
- Animal salt = 3 months during rainy season (July, August and September) x 3-4 sacks at 5,000 FCFA = 52,500 FCFA; and 9 months during dry season (October to May) x 1 sack at 5,000 FCFA = 45,000 FCFA. Annual total = 97,500 FCFA.
- Vaccination = entirely free and implemented by Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (VSF) through UNHCR.
- Transport from Mentao to Areyl village for supervision of livestock herders = about 3,000 FCFA x 2 x 4 trips in a year = 24,000 FCFA.

*Total expenditure = 658,500 FCFA*

#### **Livestock sales:**

- 5 goats at 27,500 FCFA per goat = 137,500 FCFA
- 6 sheep at 33,000 FCFA per sheep = 198,000 FCFA
- 1 camel at 500,000 FCFA per camel = 500,000 FCFA
- 1 cow at 250,000 FCFA per cow = 250,000 FCFA

*Total income = 1,085,000 FCFA*

The respondent suggested that in order to improve their livelihoods, refugee households without livestock should be helped to acquire 1-2 goats or sheep and provided with animal feed to assist with the maintenance of these animals.

*Better-off pastoralist with a large herd, Mentao*

**Livestock owned:**

- 40 cattle
- 18 sheep
- 35 goats
- 4 camels
- 2 donkeys

**Production costs of livestock kept along the Burkina Faso-Mali border:**

- Labour = 1 heifer given to the herder per year.
- Annual feeding costs = 150,000 FCFA (10 sacks at 7,500 FCFA, plus another 10 sacks at 4,000 FCFA = 115,000 FCFA).

**Livestock products consumed by the household:**

- 10 litres of butter
- 22.5 litres of goat milk
- 180 kg of goat meat

**Livestock sales (total cash income):**

- 15 cattle at 150,000 FCFA per animal = 2,250,000 FCFA
- 3 goats at 40,000 FCFA per goat = 120,000 FCFA

These examples illustrate the potential returns but also the high input costs involved in maintaining livestock in the Sahel. For refugees who had to flee without their herds, or who lost animals through conflict and disease, rebuilding a sustainable pastoral livelihood from the camps is extremely difficult. However, recent figures provided by VSF do suggest that livestock numbers are increasing, due in part to vaccination and disease control.

**Responses:** The livestock and dairy project may stimulate further improvements for established producers. Nevertheless, a sustainable long-term impact benefitting both refugees and the local population will require significant development of the milk collection and marketing infrastructure.

## *Mentao, main livestock markets and marketing costs*

### **Main livestock markets and marketing costs**

The main livestock markets used by refugees in Mentao and associated marketing costs are as follows:

#### **Camels:**

- Within Burkina Faso: Djibo and Déou
- Outside Burkina Faso: Mali (Gao, Lené, Assougou, and Lemeka), Algeria and Mauritania

When livestock are sold outside Burkina Faso, a broker oversees the sales and provides documentation for the transactions. For each camel sold, the broker earns 5,000 FCFA.

#### **Cows:**

- Within Burkina Faso: Djibo and Déou
- Outside Burkina Faso: Mali (Gossi, Hombori and Douentza,) and Nigeria

The broker is also paid 5,000 FCFA for each cow sold.

#### **Sheep:**

- Within Burkina Faso: Djibo and Déou
- Outside Burkina Faso: Mali, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Algeria and Ghana

The same procedure happens as for camels and cows, but the broker earns 2,500 FCFA per sheep.

#### **Goats:**

- Within Burkina Faso: Djibo and Déou
- Outside Burkina Faso: Mali, Ivory Coast and Ghana

As with sheep, the broker is paid 2,500 FCFA per goat.

#### **Donkeys:**

- Within Burkina Faso: Bobo-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou, Kaya and Ouahigouya
- Outside Burkina Faso: Mali (Sikasso)

Brokers earn 5,000 FCFA per donkey.

#### **Guinea fowl:**

- Within Burkina Faso: Djibo and Ouagadougou
- Outside Burkina Faso: Ivory Cost

In Ivory Coast the broker is paid 50 FCFA per guinea fowl, or 100 FCFA if the bird has to be killed as well.

## Artisan case studies

### *Artisan case study, Sag Nioniogo*

This household of 10 people fled from Mali directly to Sag Nioniogo refugee camp in 2012. The most important and productive asset they carried with them was their set of artisanal tools. Since then, the household has continued to make different artisanal products such as leather boxes, key holders, bags and stools, among other goods. The following table sets out the minimum material requirements, costs of making leather products, and net profits from these inputs as described by the household.

**Table 3: Sag Nioniogo artisan household's costs and income**

Item(s)	Cost
Plywood	11,000 FCFA
Leather	25,000 FCFA
Glue for wood and leather	4,000 FCFA
Nails no. 2 and no. 3	3,500 FCFA
Regular replacement of designing knives	2,500 FCFA
Polish of different colours	12,000 FCFA
Iron bar (1 kg)	2,000 FCFA
Wrapping material	1,000 FCFA
Shining materials	10,000 FCFA
<i>Total expenditure:</i>	<i>71,000 FCFA</i>
<i>Total Income:</i>	<i>98,500 FCFA</i>
<i>Net profit:</i>	<i>25,000-50,000 FCFA (estimated by interviewee)</i>

### *Artisan case study, Mentao*

This household of five people also fled from Mali in 2012, taking with them their artisanal tools. They first settled in Damba, and relocated to Mentao in March 2013. They brought with them some silver bracelets, rings, earrings and necklaces which they sold in Ivory Coast, and have returned at least three times since settling in Mentao. Their sales are now made in Ivory Coast, rather than in Burkina Faso.

***Cost of production for artisanal products sold in Ivory Coast:***

- Purchase of 3 pieces of white silver at 12,500 FCFA for making various metal products = 37,500 FCFA

***Sales:***

- 3 pieces of jewellery, each piece sold at 22,500 FCFA = 67,500 FCFA

***Profit\****

- 30,000 FCFA

\*costs of transporting goods to Ivory Coast not recorded

To develop his business, this artisan identifies the need for a loan of 500,000 FCFA. He would need a minimum repayment period of 6 months to allow his household to invest, produce and sell their work before repaying the loan. This is a highly-skilled artisan, whose craftsmanship had enabled him to build a permanent house and purchase a vehicle while in Mali.