

# UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCIES UNIT FOR ETHIOPIA

## FIELD TRIP REPORT WOLAYITA AND NORTH OMO

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### Summary

The purpose of the field trips was to observe the food situation in the area and to monitor the ongoing relief efforts.

Even though the situation in Wolayita is improving due to the slowly starting *belg* harvest, the late *belg* rains delayed the next cropping cycle and may eventually endanger the *krent* harvest. Hence, the situation merits a careful follow up and an early preparedness for the year 1995.

Due to the high population density, the Wolayita agriculture as a means of subsistence is reaching its limits. The fragile equilibrium is easily disrupted by slight changes in climate, pest outbreaks, etc. In order to prevent future emergencies, intensive labour programmes and the creation of alternative long term employment should be introduced to the area. On this behalf, development activities like those of SOS SAHEL should be encouraged.

Transportation of relief food to the area was very slow during the visiting period. From the July allocation, the amount of food which was transported up to 18th of July was only 820 tons. If the flow continues at this rate, it will create a gap in distribution and result in a very low impact of the ongoing supplementary food distribution. Also July distribution might not be finalised before the *belg* harvest. The RRC has now switched transporters and it is hoped that deliveries have improved.

July allocations are only covering 8 weredas out of 15 previously served through Sodo. This might not meet the general needs. Also, the Kulo Konta area has received no allocations at all.

It should be noted that the RRC Coordination Office needs additional transport support to assure and speed up the food distribution activities, especially in remote areas. At least six 4x4 short haul trucks would be needed, whereas only one has been assigned until now.

### **NGOs visited in Kindo Koisha wereda**

GOAL: GOAL is actually covering 9 PAs with a supplementary food distribution programme for 5,500 beneficiaries (children < 115 cm length & < 85% WfL, pregnant & lactating women, severely malnourished adults). In addition they have opened, as of 18th of July, a feeding centre in Zemininare, where they have admitted 25 patients up to now. They are expecting between 150 to 200 patients in the near future. GOAL is also planing to extend its activities to 3 more PAs, expecting the number of supplementary food beneficiaries to reach 8 to 9,000 people.

According to a recent survey in 4 PAs, children under 5, who were 90% WfL in early June, declined to 85-80% WfL in July. The worst peak is expected at the end of July, whereas the situation will improve in August with the incoming harvest. If a positive outcome of the Meher season is foreseen, GOAL will stop its activities in September.

Supplementary food distributions are carried out twice a month and the monthly ration consists of 4 kg beans, 4 kg Famex and 1 litre of oil per person. The actual absence of dry food distribution in many parts of the area, resulting in a very low impact of supplementary food distributions, remains the main concern of the organisation. In addition, there is a lack of pick-ups to transport food to the PAs and the supplementary food supply from Addis Ababa to Bele remains a problem.

INTERAIDE France: Interaide has been working in the area since May 1990. Before the emergency operation of 1994, the activities of the organisation were based on TB control, medical care and safe water supply for rural areas. The main health problems found were malaria, hookworm and TB. From 1990 to 93 345 children were admitted for various health problems. In January 1994, as they observed for the first time 21 severely malnourished children, the organisation announced the existing food shortage in the wereda and started its emergency relief service. In April and May, the number of admissions had risen to 407 and 494 respectively. In June, the situation improved significantly and the number of admitted children decreased to 182.

Interaide's emergency programme started with therapeutic feeding. Meanwhile, they expanded their services to start with a home based supplementary feeding programme in 18 PAs for 4,000 children and 1,000 pregnant and lactating women. The programme is completed by preventive measures like TB and measles vaccinations and distribution of vitamin A to all children under 6 years of age (more than 70% of admitted children show a lack of vitamin A).

However, due to shortage of food supply, the programme for women has stopped. Furthermore, Interaide faces problems to transport food to remote areas due to lack of an adequate number of pick-ups.

SOS SAHEL: The organisation is a long term, development oriented NGO with its phase II programme planned up to 1996. For the moment, their activities concentrate on rehabilitation of agriculture (seed distribution on credit basis and sale of tools at highly subsidised prices) and employment creation on cash for work base (road construction and maintenance, employment of 2,000 food insecure people at the rate of 3 Birr/day per person). Future activities in their labour intensive programme will include reforestation, soil and water conservation, construction of water ponds in the lowland area, etc. According to SOS Sahel, about 13,000 people of the wereda are underemployed.

According to a survey done in January in collaboration with RRC, 60% of the population or about 90,000 people are affected by food shortage in Kindo Koisha. Also, during the *belg* season, pocket areas in 13 PAs were damaged by hail storms, affecting 7,179 farmers.

As all ready stated by GOAL, food distribution has been interrupted and no food has come to the area since 3 weeks. Whereas the first round food distribution has reached all PAs, the second round has so far covered only 2 PAs.

## **NGOs visited in Boloso Sori wereda**

CONCERN: Responding to the emergency situation, CONCERN has opened a feeding centre in Dubo (West of Areka) at the beginning of July and 4,500 people receive supplementary food. There are 140 children registered at the feeding centre for intensive care. As of 25th of July, Redd Barna will open a second feeding centre in Dolla (South of Areka) to assure a better coverage of the area. They will take care of 10 PAs and CONCERN will cover 13.

CONCERN is using a new method to treat children affected by Kwashiorkor, administering an initial 7 days Bactrim treatment. The results are encouraging as children are recovering much faster than with the usual treatment. Redd Barna will use the same method in Dolla.

Dry food distribution of 710 tons of cereals furnished by the RRC is actually carried out in Boloso Sori, improving the general situation as well as the impact of the supplementary food distribution. According to CONCERN, an additional 1,000 tons of cereals has been promised by Redd Barna. Depending on a positive outcome of the *meher* season, CONCERN intends to close its feeding centre in September.

## Kulo Konta

Kulo Konta zone is located in North Omo, west of Wolayita. The zone is divided in 6 weredas. According to Ato Assefa Attaro, the RRC Kulo Konta Coordinator, this zone has received no allocations at all. From the six weredas, three, namely Loma, Genobosa and Mareka are affected. However, 70 tons of cereals and 20 tons of supplementary food have been distributed to 5,330 people in 9 PAs of Loma wereda for one month by Actionaid. The RRC Sodo has reallocated 30 tons of cereals for Mareka, but due to transport problems and bad roads, the food could not yet be delivered. Finally, the RRC has decided to transport the food with the Ministry of Defence Ural trucks which are assigned in North Omo for relief operations. With the first green maize appearing on the market of Mareka and Genobosa, the situation is expected to improve soon.

## Kemba wereda

Until now, the Kemba wereda got only 6 tons of cereals by air drop and 46 tons by road with Ural trucks from Gersi. This road is no longer accessible by car and 500 tons of cereals are blocked in Arba Minch. The RRC has now plans to transport the remaining stock through Daramalo area.

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