HUMAN MOBILITY AND RESILIENCE IN THE SAHEL

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CROSS-LEARNING FROM EU EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA PROJECTS IN CHAD, BURKINA FASO, MALI, NIGER AND MAURITANIA

OXFAM

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2016, Oxfam has been involved in the implementation of resilience-building projects in fragile areas of the Sahel, working in partnership with international and national organizations in Chad, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania and Mali, and funded under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).

BURKINA FASO

'LRRD' programme to build the resilience of vulnerable communities to food and nutritional insecurity in the northern border areas

MALI

Project to build the resilience of vulnerable populations in the Gao and Mopti regions to food and nutritional insecurity

MAURITANIE

Community and institutional resilience for the economic and social integration of young people and women in Nouakchott, Hodh El Chargui and Hodh El Gharbi (SAFIRE)

NIGER

Entrepreneurship and employability for young people in the Tahoua and Zinder regions in Niger (JEEN)

TCHAD

Employment, Resilience and Social Cohesion project in the Sahel strip and Lake Chad area (RESTE)

In order to build resilience, our actions must be guided by an in-depth understanding of the causes of risks, fragility and vulnerabilties, and of how risks affect certain groups of people living in poverty. However, they must also identify opportunities for positive change through **a continuous process of context analysis and understanding**.

Our experience and that of our partner organizations in EUTF projects **has taught us that the different human mobility dynamics present in the intervention areas have an impact on the communities and projects**.

Thus, we initiated a cross-learning process across the EUTF projects in which Oxfam is involved, in order to better understand the links between resilience and human mobility in the intervention areas in these five Sahel countries.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Oxfam defines resilience as the ability of women and men to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses and uncertainty.

We work toward resilient and sustainable development. Development that does not cause or increase the risks faced by people living in poverty, and that creates a fairer world in spite of shocks, stresses and uncertainty.

WHAT IS HUMAN MOBILITY?

Human mobility refers to people who are forced to leave their homes because of conflict, persecution, extreme poverty, natural disasters and the consequences of climate change, as well as those who move in search of opportunities for a better life. This movement may take place within the same country or across national borders.

WHAT DID WE WANT TO LEARN?

Learning was guided by the following questions:

What **are the different types of human mobility** seen in the context of the projects?

What **impacts** do different human mobilities have on projects and their contexts?

What **actions** can be implemented in resilience-building projects to mitigate risks and maximize the opportunities related to human mobility?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LEARN ABOUT THE LINK BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE SAHEL?

The aim of learning across EUTF projects was to:

- Improve the quality of resilience-related actions in contexts marked by human mobility dynamics in order have a greater impact in terms of resilient development of ongoing EUTF projects.

- Influence stakeholders involved in EUTF projects and those linked to human mobility in the Sahel to create a better understanding of the link between resilience and human mobility in the region and to improve present and future interventions in these areas.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE LEARNING WORKSHOP?

Some 29 participants attended the workshop, as well as 2 Oxfam facilitators (an expert in human mobility and an expert in resilience monitoring, evaluation and learning). It was a multi-stakeholder learning group including:

- Participants from international and national NGOs from the 5 EUTF consortia from Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger
- The European Union Delegation to Burkina Faso
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Technicians from Burkina Faso's governmental institutions: the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (CONASUR) and the General Directorate of Pastoral Spaces and Developments (DGEAP)

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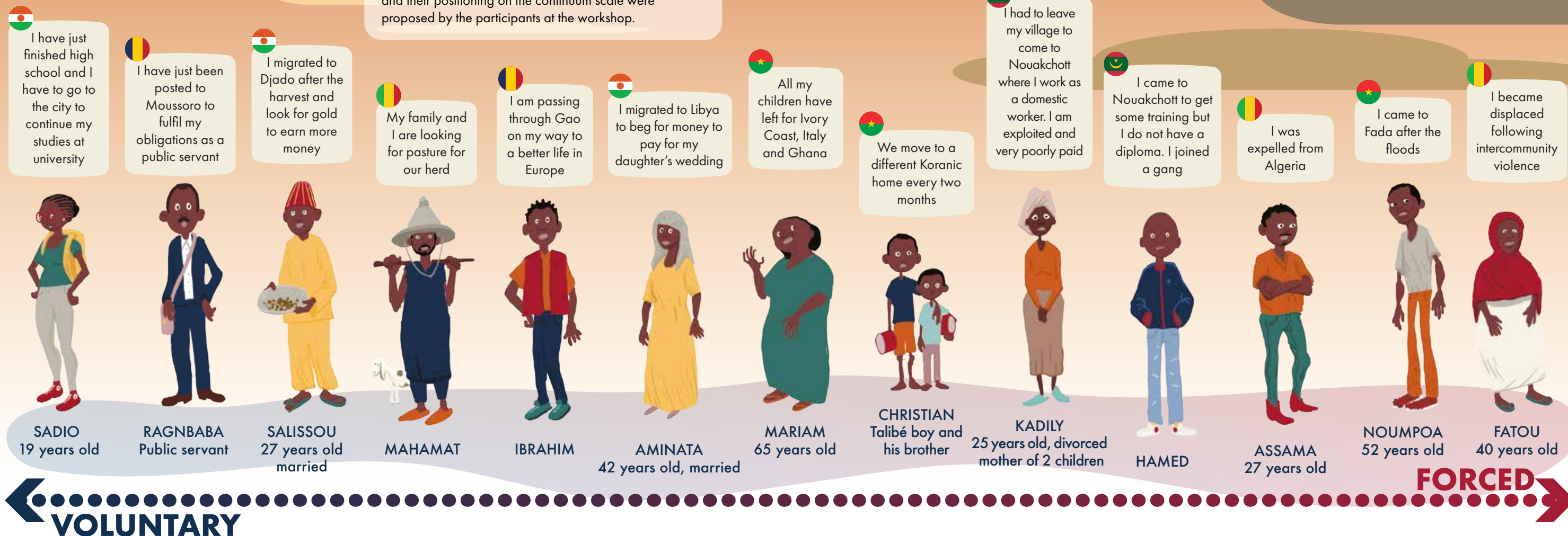# DIVERSITY OF HUMAN MOBILITY IN EUTF PROJECTS

THE CONTINUUM OF CHOICE IN HUMAN MOBILITY

It is not possible to establish forced or voluntary movements as two isolated categories when we talk about mobility. Many complex factors influence people's choices and their decisions can be placed on a continuum of choice scale between fully voluntary or forced choices.

The examples of mobility cases below illustrate the diversity of human mobility dynamics observed in the intervention areas of the EUTF projects. These examples and their positioning on the continuum scale were proposed by the participants at the workshop.

- EUTF Burkina Faso
- EUTF Mali
- EUTF Mauritania
- EUTF Niger
- EUTF Chad

I have just finished high school and I have to go to the city to continue my studies at university

I have just been posted to Moussoro to fulfil my obligations as a public servant

I migrated to Djado after the harvest and look for gold to earn more money

My family and I are looking for pasture for our herd

I am passing through Gao on my way to a better life in Europe

I migrated to Libya to beg for money to pay for my daughter's wedding

All my children have left for Ivory Coast, Italy and Ghana

We move to a different Koranic home every two months

I had to leave my village to come to Nouakchott where I work as a domestic worker. I am exploited and very poorly paid

I came to Nouakchott to get some training but I do not have a diploma. I joined a gang

I was expelled from Algeria

I came to Fada after the floods

I became displaced following intercommunity violence

SADIO 19 years old

RAGNBABA Public servant

SALISSOU 27 years old married

MAHAMAT

IBRAHIM

AMINATA 42 years old, married

MARIAM 65 years old

CHRISTIAN Talibé boy and his brother

KADILY 25 years old, divorced mother of 2 children

HAMED

ASSAMA 27 years old

NOUMPOA 52 years old

FATOU 40 years old

VOLUNTARY ← → **FORCED**

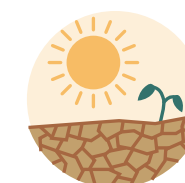# WHAT FACTORS ARE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE?

In most cases, there are **several causes** behind the decision to leave. It is therefore difficult to attribute people's movements to a single cause, except for sudden occurrences like natural disasters or armed conflicts.

Socio-cultural factors
Family reunification, social pressures, the need for income for women's dowries, following traditions and rites of passage/emancipation for young men, cultural or religious factors, seeking adventure/fulfilling aspirations

Socio-economic factors
Search for better opportunities in life, job offer in the country of destination, lack of employment and economic opportunities, poverty, looking for pasture, cross-border markets

Socio-political factors
No feeling of belonging and lack of trust in local and national public institutions, absence of the state in the provision of basic services (education, health), seeking medical care, continuation of secondary/tertiary education, mobility of posted state officials, democratic deficits (civic space, inclusive spaces and accountability towards citizens in decision making)

Conflict/violence-related factors
Conflict, poor non-violent management of conflicts, widespread violence, insecurity

Environmental factors
Pollution, rainfall variability and soil degradation, climate change

Example

Diallo is migrating in search of economic opportunities, because his livelihoods, primarily in agriculture, have been affected by the shortage of rainfall and are insufficient to meet the needs of his family. Diallo believes that the total absence of the State in the provision of basic services (health and education) and the lack of state investment for the development of their municipality mean that he and his family have no guarantee of a dignified future.

WHAT TYPES OF HUMAN MOBILITY DYNAMICS ARE OBSERVED IN EUTF PROJECT AREAS?

Internal rural-urban migration
Temporary – usually post-harvest, to urban areas seeking economic opportunities – or permanent. Migration of young women to work in domestic service.

Transhumance
Internal or international transhumance. Due to rainfall variability and soil degradation, there has been an increase in distances travelled.

Rural-rural internal migration
Seasonal post-harvest migration to another rural area to diversify livelihoods (gold panning).

International migration or transit
From Niger to Algeria: migration of women beggars. From Chad to Libya or Saudi Arabia. Mali: linking several routes to Europe. Mauritania: departure and transit to Europe in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

Forced displacements
Because of violence and insecurity. A reality in most Sahel countries. For project areas, northern Burkina Faso and Mali.

Returns or deportations
Return of persons (voluntarily or forced) after migration procedures. In Niger, Tahoua is one of the regions receiving the greatest number of returnees and expelled persons mainly coming from Libya.

People who stay or cannot move
Women who become the heads of households after their spouses leave.

EUTF Burkina Faso
EUTF Mali
EUTF Niger
EUTF Chad
EUTF Mauritania

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IMPACTS OF HUMAN MOBILITY

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF HUMAN MOBILITY ON EUTF PROJECTS AND TARGET

Negative impacts

Positive impacts

Remittances and potential investment from the internal and international diaspora

Economic and social empowerment of women who migrate to improve their status

Diversification of livelihoods and safeguarding livestock by compensating the deficits inherent to rural production

Transfer of knowledge and skills from people who migrate/move to the host and return communities

Solidarity with displaced people and good social cohesion within the host community

Social recognition and reputation of the migrant and their family

Empowerment of women who stay behind becoming more involved in community decision-making

Poor management of or excessive reliance on migration remittances without a productive alternative

Risk of breaking family ties - family fragmentation

Lack of education for children of migrants/displaced people (long journeys for transhumance, migration with mothers, begging)

Stigmatization of returnees/ lack of adaptation

Loss of workforce and capital for the departure community

Pressure on basic social resources and services in the host community and social tension during travel due to violence

Increased vulnerability of women who stay: greater economic burden, less decision-making capacity

Increased vulnerability and protection risks for migrants and displaced people: Gender-based violence (GBV), loss of documents and lack of access to rights, health risks

Final observation

Most of the effects described above have both a positive and a negative reading. This strengthens the theory that the governance or management of human mobility is key because it can mitigate the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones.

Impacts on **project implementation and results**

Activities that disrupt pre-existing human mobility dynamics: the implementation of cash-for-work activities during the lean season makes men who traditionally practised seasonal migration stay and this seems to have a negative impact on the role of women in decision-making (Chad).
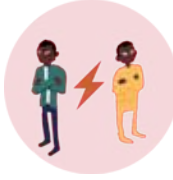
Challenge of working on good local governance in human mobility contexts: it is not possible to work with the local authorities because they are threatened by violent groups and are the first to leave (Burkina Faso). Young people do not feel included by local elected officials and do not get involved. Their mobility intentions, fuelled by this lack of representativeness, make any commitment even more difficult (Chad).

Challenges in implementing the project approach: projects use individual targeting taking into account the beneficiaries' vulnerabilities and providing a 'multisectoral support package' during the project. This approach is difficult to implement in cases of mass displacement caused by violence. It is impossible to access some populations, causing delays; activities are disrupted and have to be adapted.

Challenges in measuring the impact of the project: implementation of projects that are abandoned because of the displacement of people facing violence (Burkina Faso).

Challenges in the targeting of beneficiaries: dispersion of targeted people, new people to target and new needs.

Effects on the implementation of project activities due to insecurity and the risk of deterioration of the relationship between the donor and the state

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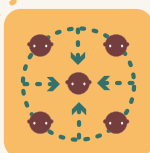# RESILIENCE-BUILDING ACTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMAN MOBILITY

© Pablo Tosco / Oxfam

The EUTF project actions included in this learning process are divided into three sets of action related to the EUTF Programme for Africa strategic framework:

1. **Job creation and economic opportunities.**

2. **Food and nutritional security, resilient livelihoods and access to basic social services.**

3. **Good local governance, conflict management and social cohesion.**

Considering the different types of human mobility and the observed impact, we suggest some possible resilience-building actions. In addition to these three areas, we have identified actions related to **project design and adaptive management.**

Actions related to job creation and economic opportunities

Promoting links and relations between migrants and their communities of origin and between urban and rural stakeholders

- Connecting rural and urban entrepreneurship as well as central and local government initiatives
- Collaborating with associations of nationals/diaspora to contribute to the implementation of productive/job creation projects in the areas of origin
- Establishing mixed committees (diaspora, local authorities, DTS[1] and communities, youth associations) to better guide migrant flows to boost economic development in areas of origin

Maximized or mitigated effects

Facilitating the economic integration of migrants and displaced persons in host areas (learning centres)

- Facilitating access to displaced persons' documents to ensure their financial inclusion
- In community displacements, implementing economic activities with host communities, facilitating access to land
- Provision of welcome and guidance services (job search, training, grants) by the local government

Maximized or mitigated effects

Facilitating territorial connections between departure and host areas for access to information, employment and training opportunities

- Providing information to potential migrants on employment opportunities in host areas
- Creation of guidance and support frameworks for those who want to migrate and those who stay or return
- Linking the existing vocational training and employment services in the departure and arrival areas

Maximized or mitigated effects

Availability of appropriate economic opportunities in areas of origin for those who want to stay

- Ensuring continuous analysis of promising niches to provide profitable opportunities that are adapted to the local area
- Ensuring youth participation in the planning process of training plans
- Facilitating and promoting actions for access to land

Mitigated effects

Adapting training and employment actions to the needs of groups that migrate or stay (particularly women that stay whose spouses have left)

- Adapting employment and training to the specific needs of women, whether they have migrated or not
- Adapting training initiatives to transhumant herders and facilitating the implementation of IGAs[2] along transhumance corridors

Maximized or mitigated effects

[1]   DTS: the State Decentralized Technical Services

[2]   IGA: Income-Generating Activity

Actions related to food security, resilient livelihoods and access to basic social services

Developing planning and response strategies with local authorities to provide welcome for displaced populations in situations of fragility and/or conflict

- Provision of cereal stocks at a municipal level for displaced people
- Integration of travel-related risks and/or emergencies into CEWS-ERS[3] mechanisms
- Use of new technologies to share information (e.g. on water points for transhumant herders, weather forecasts)
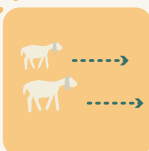
Maximized or mitigated effects

Inclusion of actions for the empowerment of women heads of households whose spouses have migrated

- Activities related to the economic empowerment of women: support in IGAs[4], VSLAs[5], women's groups linked to a professional activity, literacy, access to land, etc.
- Integration of women into community decision-making spaces and advocacy work with local authorities to give women access to the social and economic rights that often remain in the hands of their absent husbands

Maximized or mitigated effects

Supporting livelihoods and expanding local development options, including facilitating seasonal migration and transhumance

- Enhancing and adding value to land through SWC/SDR[6] via EIIP[7] activities; promoting crops that are adapted to climate change
- Securing of pastoral corridors and planning IGAs4 that are specially designed for transhumant herders
- Exchanging information between villages on the farming situation and capacity, facilitating seasonal land rental, etc.

Maximized or mitigated effects

Facilitating and promoting the productive investment of financial transfers from migration into community development

- Supporting the productive investment of financial transfers from migration at a household level
- Facilitating community investments by citizens to improve basic services at a community level

Maximized or mitigated effects

Mechanisms for protection, awareness raising and stakeholder advocacy relating to gender discrimination and violence against migrant and displaced women and girls

- Protection of women on the road at risk of violence (including trafficking)
- Warning and protection mechanisms for women in domestic work in the city

Mitigated effects

Development of innovative approaches to ensure that people on the move have access to basic services

- Strengthening the host community's basic services (avoiding the creation of new ones)
- Using ICTs to inform migrants/displaced persons in urban areas about and refer them to the social and support services available in the city
- Working with the Ministry of Education to include functional literacy via 'Cash for Learning' activities in the training programme so that displaced women can continue their training
- Facilitating displaced persons' access to civilian documents to enable school enrolment for children and access to other basic social services

Maximized or mitigated effects

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3 CEWS-ERS: Community Early Warning System – Emergency Response System

4 IGA: Income-Generating Activity

5 VSLA: Village Savings and Loan Association

6 SWC/SPR: Soil and water conservation/Soil protection and restoration

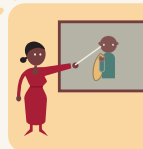7 EIIP: Employment Intensive Investment Programme

Actions related to local governance, conflict management and social cohesion

Implementing actions integrating the displaced and host populations to promote social cohesion

- Promoting mixed structures formed of displaced and host persons (e.g. water point management committees, conflict management structures, etc.)
- Establishing community consultations for the implementation of project actions, ensuring the participation of populations such as displaced and host persons, herders, etc.
- Establishing social mediation structures between the displaced and host population at the community level
- In the host areas (i.e. cities), establishing social welcoming mechanisms using associations of nationals, promoting mixed cultural events

Maximized or mitigated effects

Supporting local authorities to integrate human mobility issues into CDPs (Community Development Plans)

- Training for authorities on human mobility issues with a rights-based approach
- Advocacy plan including the main themes to be addressed and integrated into the CDPs

This is a cross-cutting action which will address many impacts

Inclusion of different community groups to promote local governance that takes into account all aspects of human mobility

- Involvement of associations of nationals/diaspora (both national and international) in community governance
- Integration of young people into decision-making structures and dialogue frameworks to better understand their needs and capabilities
- Integration of women (specifically women whose husbands have left) into community decision-making spaces
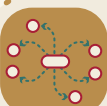
Maximized or mitigated effects

Actions related to project design and adaptive management

Integrating human mobility dynamics into context analysis to analyse risks and opportunities

- Inclusion a specific analysis of present and potential human mobility dynamics in the project context analysis
- Ensuring periodic monitoring of the context during project implementation, including analysis of human mobility changes, especially in fragile contexts.

Maximized or mitigated effects

Implementing flexible procedures (administrative, financial, etc.) to adapt to human mobility dynamics

- Providing a contingency fund in the project budget to adapt actions to a sudden population displacements
- Providing a framework for sharing and exchanging information (a common database) between consortia partners to take into account when beneficiaries move from one municipality to another, allowing continued support

Maximized or mitigated effects

Using a dynamic targeting system that takes into account human mobility to ensure the integration of the needs of migrant populations; designing a monitoring mechanism that adapts to potential mobilities

- Integrating issues related to the context of human mobility (women who stay, potential arrival of migrants, transhumant herders, etc.) into targeting
- Using new technologies to facilitate the monitoring of and support for beneficiaries taking into account their mobility dynamics
- Ensuring a participatory and inclusive approach at all stages of the project to take into account the changing needs of targeted people, including the choice of migrating or not
- In contexts of fragility and conflict, expanding geographic zoning to have the option of widening the intervention area in case of population displacement

Maximized or mitigated effects

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CONCLUSIONS
KEY LEARNING MESSAGES

1. There is a clear link between **resilience and human mobility in the context of the Sahel**.

2. There is a wide variety of **types of human mobility in the Sahel** and **the factors** that influence people's decisions to migrate or not are complex and hardly ever unequivocal. Human mobilities can be placed on a continuum of choice scale between forced and voluntary displacements.

3. **All types of human mobility observed in the contexts of EUTF projects have impacts** within the origin and host communities, but also on project implementation. These impacts can be positive or negative and are often both at the same time.

4. Therefore, it is essential that resilience-building and development projects in the fragile contexts of the Sahel incorporate the analysis and consideration of human mobility dynamics in project design and implementation. This will ensure that interventions mitigate the negative effects and maximize the positive effects of migrations/displacements for a resilient development. **Projects should not, under any circumstances, seek to hinder human mobility.**

5. Projects should also include **human mobility dynamics monitoring during the project implementation** and provide flexibility mechanisms to adapt projects to new needs, risks and/or opportunities to promote the resilient development that these mobilities may present.

Thus, it is necessary for the development agencies and NGOs to work together to develop guidelines and tools for the design and implementation of development projects in human mobility contexts in the Sahel.

6. Indeed, human mobilities can be an opportunity to build resilience if properly managed and supported with respect for rights. Although some mobility contexts, such as those of forced displacement due to violence, entail many risks and are complex to manage, the possibility of moving, even under such circumstances, can be a survival strategy. Interfering with human mobility can undermine the resilience of these people and their communities. **On the contrary, integrating and supporting it in a structured and rights-based manner could open up new opportunities to build community resilience in the Sahel**.

7. The EUTF Programme for Africa is a great opportunity to **learn from the implementation experience** of the different consortia and contexts of EUTF projects. Experience-based knowledge and learning is acquired from the partners and implementation teams, as well as from the various project stakeholders and the communities themselves. Encouraging and facilitating exercises to learn from practice between the consortia of different EUTF projects and Sahel countries is necessary to capitalize on and co-create knowledge among several stakeholders in order to improve current and future resilience-building actions in the Sahel countries.
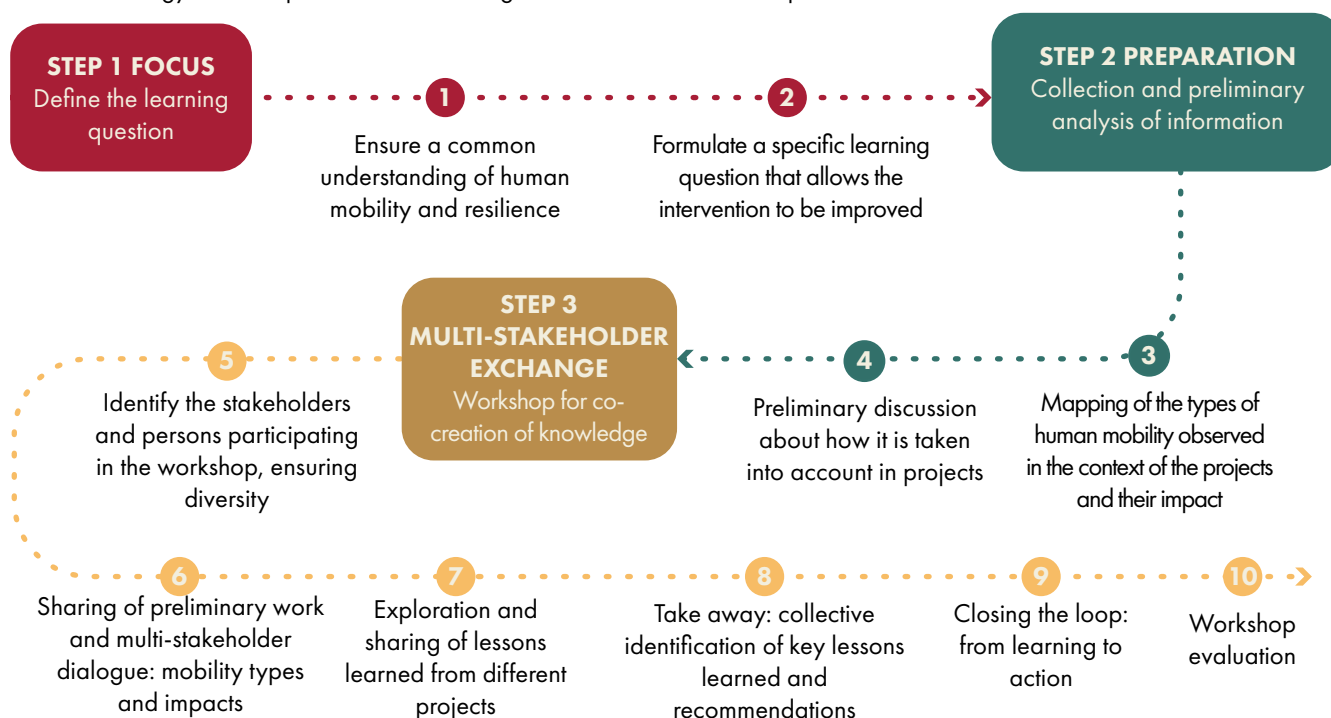
ANNEX - LEARNING METHODOLOGY

These results were achieved during a cross-learning process between the five EUTF projects in which Oxfam is involved in the Sahel as part of the 'Learning at Scale' initiative. The aim of this Oxfam-promoted initiative is to facilitate a collective learning process based on experience from EUTF projects in different countries. Combined with the dissemination and communication of the lessons learned at different levels, it should contribute to the improvement of ongoing EUTF projects and future resilience-building interventions in the Sahel.

Learning about building resilience in human mobility contexts was the first theme to be addressed by the 'Learning at Scale' initiative. The learning pathway that was designed and rolled out is shown below. It could be replicated by other projects aiming to understand human mobility in their contexts and better integrate this aspect into their projects in order to improve the effectiveness and impact of actions.

For further information about the methodology, please click here.

The methodology is developed in three main stages divided into different steps:

STEP 1 FOCUS
Define the learning question

1 Ensure a common understanding of human mobility and resilience

2 Formulate a specific learning question that allows the intervention to be improved

STEP 2 PREPARATION
Collection and preliminary analysis of information

STEP 3 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER EXCHANGE
Workshop for co-creation of knowledge

5 Identify the stakeholders and persons participating in the workshop, ensuring diversity

4 Preliminary discussion about how it is taken into account in projects

3 Mapping of the types of human mobility observed in the context of the projects and their impact

6 Sharing of preliminary work and multi-stakeholder dialogue: mobility types and impacts

7 Exploration and sharing of lessons learned from different projects

8 Take away: collective identification of key lessons learned and recommendations

9 Closing the loop: from learning to action

10 Workshop evaluation

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