



No. 5.4 Livestock Programmes: Re-stocking

What is re-stocking?

Re-stocking or livestock provision is a method of asset-building, aimed at families who have recently lost most or all of their stock.

There are many different re-stocking methods, depending on the aim of the intervention and the area of operation.

Delivery options for re-stocking include: animal fairs, direct distribution of a set of animals, loans and gifts. These need to be carefully considered prior to implementation.

Re-stocking projects are generally costly and their sustainability will depend on the quality of the project design and its implementation.

Table 1 highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages or challenges of re-stocking.



Fig. 1: Goat with characteristic yellow tag for a re-stocking programme (Credit: Geoff Sayer/OXFAM)

When is it appropriate to do re-stocking programmes?

Re-stocking programmes can be implemented at various stages of an emergency. For instance, re-stocking can be used in an emergency's **recovery phase** to restart/boost the livelihood activities of affected families, or during a **chronic emergency** to improve vulnerable households' income, food production or diet through better access to protein resources. Providing livestock is also used as a strategy to reduce poverty in the **rehabilitation phase** of responses in various contexts.

It is appropriate to do restocking programmes when:

- The environment has the capacity to sustain the current and planned number of animals present in the area (i.e., there is sufficient fodder, animal food, shelter and water, and vet services are available);
- Beneficiaries have the capacity (economical and technical knowledge) to take care of animals over the long term, either prior to the project or through a training programme;
- The distributed animals are relevant to the lives and livelihoods of the recipient households, i.e., they are in a position to market, consume or process the animals and/or animals products; and,
- There are no major hazards present in the area, such as an endemic animal disease, that would jeopardise animal survival

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages or challenges of implementing re-stocking programmes

Advantages	Disadvantages/challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock owners are re-established in a livelihood that they are accustomed to • New animal-related livelihood options can be explored • Suitable for those areas where no other livelihood options exist other than rearing animals • Re-stocking takes place traditionally within communities • Restocking re-establishes dignity and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some areas are already overstocked or overgrazed—re-stocking only increases the problem • Livestock owning can be high risk, with losses every three/four years, so re-stocking can become a frequent activity • Re-stocking insecure areas may increase raiding • External re-stocking projects can weaken traditional re-stocking practices, creating dependency • When budget constraints exist, re-stocking projects may not provide the animal numbers and types requested/needed

What critical factors, procedures and resources need to be considered when re-stocking?

When re-stocking, factors that require careful consideration include the calculation of the number of animals provided and the impact of this on recipient households and their livelihoods.

Such projects fail when an inadequate number or type of animals is provided, or when the household is not in a position to maintain the animals due to their high level of deprivation or basic needs.

Other considerations include:

- Government animal policies and regulation;
- Local vs. external availability of animals and their suitability for the context;
- Partnership with local government livestock agencies or local vet services for: (a) health checks of animals to be distributed; (b) animal vaccinations; (c) household training in animal care etc.; and, (d) future animal health care support;
- Modalities of the re-stocking (number and type of animals distributed, loan vs. free distribution vs. refunding system, distribution of a predefined set of animals vs. animal fair, etc.);
- Identification of animal sellers (using local traders where possible to boost local economy);
- Logistics (trucks and distribution plan for animal transportation);
- Tracking system for distributed animals (branding of animals with numbers and/or logo); and,
- Agreement between beneficiaries and the organisation about ongoing animal care.

How can programmers make re-stocking work?

There have been innovative approaches to re-stocking in Oxfam GB programmes, including the use of cash grants (Box 1).

Some tips for successful re-stocking include:

- In situations requiring rapid impact, re-stocking with small ruminants (sheep and goats) can be successful as they are cheaper and have a short production cycle;
- Re-stocking with small ruminants—usually cheaper and more easily disposable than camels or cattle—may also suit households that commonly require small amounts of cash quickly and do so through animal sale;
- Animals should be issued that are suited to the local environment and feed source and are in sufficient numbers to meet household need; and,
- Re-stocking programmes can be combined with other complementary projects such as capacity building and cash grants, to make them more sustainable.

Box 1: Combining restocking and cash grants in Uganda

As part of an integrated program funded by SIDA from 2004–2007, Oxfam distributed small and large livestock to 4,559 households living in three IDP camps in Kitgum. Beneficiaries were organised into groups of 20 and supported with animal houses and training in animal husbandry. In addition, each household also received a monthly cash relief transfers of UGX10,000 for seven months. This enabled them to meet their basic household needs while allowing the livestock to multiply.

At the end of the three-year program a number of beneficiaries had managed to multiply their livestock, sell off some of their pigs and goats to meet their daily needs. They also supplied livestock during livestock fairs organised by Oxfam, an indication that livestock had multiplied.

Where can I find further reading and more detailed information?

Oxfam EFSL Rough Guides on Livestock Programmes – 5.1 Livestock Systems – 5.2 Vaccination and 5.4 Re-stocking	Information on livestock health: – The World Organisation for Animal Health www.oie.int – Vet Aid www.vetaid.org
Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) www.livestock-emergency.net	CIRAD – Agricultural research for developing countries http://epitrop.cirad.fr

Who can I contact for more information and guidance?

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