Executive Summary

The DCA food security programme (Phase I) was implemented between 2005 and 2009 in Amhara and Oromia regional states. The food security programme has four main components: Service delivery, empowerment, advocacy, relief and DCA added value. The overall goal of the FS programme was to enhance the fulfillment of the right of the poorest and most vulnerable groups including the landless, women, people affected by HIV/AIDS, pastoralists in DanChurchAid working areas to access adequate and nutritious food through development of sustainable livelihoods. This should be viewed in the context of food security pillars: food availability, food access and food utilization. The major objective of the evaluation was to assess the achievements, identify weaknesses and draw best lessons to help decisions on the best course of action that DCA and its partners should pursue.

The data necessary for the evaluation was generated from review of programme and project documents, reports, key informants interview with partners and DCA staff, survey of beneficiary households at Goro (93 HHs) and Dehana (89 HHs), FGD with groups of beneficiaries, case studies, observations and discussions with relevant staff and officers at Dehana and Goro woreda line departments involving a total of 128 people. The major findings are summarized below.

Partnership:

1. DCA has partnered with three types of organizations: Faith based organizations sharing common values with DCA, secular NGOs working in DCA interest areas and Forums and umbrella organizations. The partners have long years of experience in the areas of collaboration and operate in different parts of the DCA programme areas. The partners have certain excellence in implementing the food security components. Observing the institutional capacity differences and their excellence is a useful strategy to be followed in future implementation of the food security programme.

Programme design, implementation and targeting:

2. The program design approach of DCA is generally participatory involving partners’ participation at different levels including the community. The community participation, however, differs between projects. For instance, 90% of the sample beneficiary community at Goro and 47% of them at Dehana indicated that they participated in project designing. Though the situation analysis helped to identify needs, final project component should also adhere to pre-set priorities of DCA.

3. A total of 1,096,017 benefited from the food security programme including the relief and drought preparedness projects and rehabilitation. That is 178,478 people benefited from the short-term (1-year) and long-term (3-4 year) projects under the food security programme, and 917,539 people (346,289 direct and 571,250 indirect) benefited from the relief and drought preparedness projects and rehabilitation interventions.

4. The food security programme components aim at attaining food security. But the activities are too many resulting in spread of limited financial and human resources, a few beneficiaries which in turn affected the overall impact. Activities of intervention have generally reflected the needs of the right holders. In terms of priority setting, however, the activity selection has been influenced by the donors (e.g. water projects at Goro) and the implementing partner’s strategy (variety demonstration rather than seed supply at Goro).
5. The food security programme identified achievable indicators but the targets were not adequately specified to enable measurable evaluation.

6. DCA transfers project funds to project account or partners’ account depending on how centralized the fund management of the partners is. The partners designated a staff who follows up the project activities being at the Head Quarters. Often the staff also manages other projects funded by partners other than DCA thus overburdening the project focal person. A project coordinator and other staff are assigned for project implementation at woreda level. Both at Goro and Dehana projects, development agents are assigned to facilitate the development process at community level.

7. The majority of the project beneficiaries felt that the implementation was transparent while relatively larger proportion reported delay in the implementation.

8. Targeting was mainly done in a participatory manner involving the kebele level administration, development committees, and DAs. Targeting was also consistent with DCA’s principle of especial consideration of gender aspects particularly in including women and FHH as project beneficiaries. The fact that the large majority of the population of the target areas is poor ensures inclusion of the poor as beneficiaries. In some project components such as beekeeping and seed use, availability of land for cultivation and experience in beekeeping were considered, other than the poverty level. The poorest of the poor mainly the FFH participated in NRM which is highly labour demanding.

**Implementation efficiency**

9. The overall physical plan implementation was moderately high and varied with programme components. The project components are generally relevant leading to the intended goal. However, the implementation in some instances did not consider specific conditions of project kebeles (e.g. beekeeping where water shortage is critical and introduction of non-adaptable forage varieties in Goro) or inadequate assessment of the specific needs and capacities of female headed households (the case of poultry and gardening by FHH at Amdework, Dehana).

10. The actual budget allocated to the food security programme during 2005-2008 was DKK 38,247,137.30, which is 16.2% less than the initial budget. About 42% of the actual expense was used to improve production of food, 39% used to strengthen poor peoples’ capacity to withstand emergency situations and 7% of the budget was used for the livelihood diversification component. DCA expense was 9% of the actual budget.

**Attainment of programme objectives**

11. According to the survey report, the proportion of very poor right holders in Goro decreased from 27% before the project to 5% at the time of the evaluation, August 2009 and the proportion of poor decreased from 58% to 27%. On the other hand, the proportion of the people with medium wealth status increased from 16% before the project to 68%.
12. In Dehana, the change in the wealth status is low may be due to climatic and natural resources degradation attributes. The proportion of the very poor right holders declined from 11% to 5% during the project period without much change in the proportion of the poor and medium wealth groups. Although other actors in the project areas also contributed to the change in the wealth status of the beneficiaries, the role of the project is significant.

13. The household income after the project nearly doubled at Dehana while it increased by 53% at Goro. Although a large proportion of households felt that the living condition has improved, 67% of the beneficiaries at Dehana and 39% of at Goro earned per capita income of less than Birr 2,000 in 2008 indicating that a large proportion of the households is still food insecure.

14. The programme created capacity for the partners to implement food security programmes through the training components embedded in the programme components. The DCA added value has not brought much impact. Through its support for thematic research, the programme generated knowledge and contemporary information on food insecurity, food aid, soaring food prices, etc. which were used for advocacy. Food security platform provided an opportunity for knowledge exchange and experience sharing among the partners.

15. The yields of crops introduced by the projects have increased except wheat at Goro. The change in crop yield can also depend on climatic factors. The projects resulted in diversified livelihood strategy. The proportion of improved seeds users increased due to the food security programme intervention. Comparing before and after the project implementation at Goro and Dehana, the proportion of improved seeds users increased from 6.7% to 33% at Goro and from 2.7% to 22.1% at Dehana.

16. The total food supply per household increased during the project implementation and months of food availability between 2006 and 2008 increased from 7.7 to 8 at Dehana and from 4.8 to 6 at Goro.

17. Large number of the project beneficiaries participated in training and non-farm activities. No. of beneficiaries without any livestock decreased from about 35% in 2006 to 7% at Dehana and from 13% to 4% at Goro. However, the average livestock holding in the whole population decreased over the project period.

18. Trainings were given on early warning and methods of data collection and analysis to generate early warning information. Although the projects closely worked with community level administration and the woreda offices to communicate shocks and manage the risk in the project areas, systematic mechanisms have not been yet in place. Relief as currently practiced is different from the concept of risk management which aims to protect beneficiaries from falling back to their poor positions due to risk factors. Many project goats died without replacement. The concept of risk management through, for example, insurance mechanism should be introduced.

19. Partners differ in terms of their advocacy capacity. Creating and capacitating community based institutions such as the ones organized at Goro provided excellent lesson for
advocacy. Documenting and systematically working with government structures is a way forward.

20. There are several evidences of empowering women through the programme implementation. Women’s participation in decision making, public and community issues and their capacity to claim their rights increased especially at Goro.

21. The project has strengths and weaknesses. Good lessons have also been learned. These and recommendations are listed in Chapters 6-9.