



GUINEA

IMPROVING THE RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN GUINEA



A woman cools her food following a cooking demonstration as part of the RESIGUI project. © WFP/Studio 2k

Malnutrition in Guinea

Malnutrition in Guinea is an urgent public health concern and results from poor infant and young child feeding practices, inadequate care, and the prevalence of infectious and parasitic diseases, in a context of insufficient access to health care, lack of hygiene and sanitation, and food insecurity¹. Nearly a third of children under five in Guinea suffer from stunting (30.3%)², with rates in the Boké region particularly high at 39%, and almost one child in 10 under five suffers from wasting (9.2%). Just under half of women (48%) of childbearing age suffer from anaemia³, whilst 27% of women aged 15-49 in Guinea are overweight, 8% of whom are obese.

RESIGUI (2020-21)

An EU-funded (EUR 8 million) project implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP), 'Améliorer la résilience des populations vulnérables de Guinée' (RESIGUI), seeks to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) in Guinea. The project aims to counter the negative effects of ongoing food insecurity, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and deliver nutritional and resilience support to Guinea's most vulnerable populations in all four regions of the country. In collaboration with NGOs in the target areas, WFP's intervention has sought to immediately stabilise the food and nutritional status of households already vulnerable to food insecurity and at additional risk due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, with subsequent support to increase resilience and support livelihoods in the longer term.

An initial emergency response phase of RESIGUI provided cash transfers to all targeted households, cooking demonstrations and awareness-raising on good nutrition practices, and nutrition supplements for children aged 6 months to 5 years and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Subsequent project phases have promoted recovery and resilience through the continued provision of cash transfers for the most vulnerable households, as well as support for smallholders, and food assistance for households participating in community asset creation, such as market gardens and harvest storage facilities.

Effects of COVID-19

Since the first case of the coronavirus was identified in Guinea in March 2020, more than 30 000 cases and 388 deaths have been reported⁴, with a high risk of transmission and contamination due to inadequate environmental health conditions and the lack of testing and follow-up capacity in health facilities. More than 67% of the population⁵ depend on agriculture for their daily income and livelihoods, and restrictions related to COVID-19, including those on domestic and cross-border movements, have affected access to markets, supplies, inputs and credit. Coupled with food price increases, this has significantly heightened the risks of food and nutrition insecurity, particularly for those populations already vulnerable during and after the lean season. Over the 2021 June-August lean period, 2.17 million Guineans were projected to be in a situation of food security stress and 680 000 in a situation of crisis⁶, compounded by ongoing inadequate access to water and sanitation and health care service.

1 Plan stratégique national multisectoriel de nutrition (PNMSN) 2019-2024, République de Guinée.

2 Joint Malnutrition Estimates (JME) UNICEF, WHO and World Bank 2021 ([Link](#))

3 Global Nutrition Report 2021 ([Link](#))

4 As of 10/12/2021, World Health Organisation ([Link](#))

5 Analyse multisectorielle de l'impact socioéconomique du COVID-19, SNU, Guinée, Avril 2020

6 CILSS Cadre Harmonisé d'identification des zones à risque et des populations en insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle. Avril 2021 ([Link](#))



Tangible results in the lives of women and children

During the first half of 2021, under the emergency component of RESIGUI, 9 248 vulnerable children under five (51% girls, 49% boys) and 8 748 pregnant and breastfeeding women received nutrition supplements (fortified super-cereals and peanut paste). In parallel, awareness-raising sessions on good nutritional practices were conducted with NGO staff⁷ and 7 164 women benefited from cooking demonstration sessions using local foods. This is likely to have a significant impact on the nutrition of both mothers and children, where surveys have found four out of five children between 6 and 24 months are in a precarious situation, with very limited dietary diversity and at high risk of chronic malnutrition (stunting). While food prices have risen sharply, a very high proportion of households in the target areas had lower harvests than usual, and reported continuing difficulties in feeding their families. Households headed by women were particularly affected, with many having to take on debt to feed their families. During the first half of 2021, over 12 000 households (or 65 920 people) received cash and food transfers to enable access food markets, to avoid further debt and to improve food security and nutrition status. Cash and food distribution provided opportunities to raise awareness on good nutrition and hygiene practices, infant feeding and practices to promote resilience. Around 14 600 people benefitted from these sessions, of whom over 80% were women.

Realising human potential

Nutrition is a crucial dimension of human development, and undernutrition is associated with poor cognitive function and educational outcomes as well as increasing the risk of non-communicable disease in later life. Beyond providing emergency assistance to protect nutritional status, RESIGUI

also recognises the importance of building resilience of vulnerable and food insecure populations through agricultural development and diversification, as well as infrastructure improvement. In the first half of 2021, around 10 000 people have been engaged in these activities, resulting in a number of community assets including 304 hectares of fenced market garden and 45 market garden wells, 503 hectares of fenced rice fields, 100 km of rehabilitated rural tracks to open up production areas and 21 harvest storage facilities. The creation of community assets has been reinforced through the distribution of seeds, tools and equipment, in addition to technical and vocational education and training and skills development to enhance diversification of production and livelihoods for nearly 3 000 farmers in rural areas, half of whom were women.

Tackling climate and environmental challenges

Despite considerable natural resources, Guinea is one of the least developed countries in the world, due in part to the poor management of climate variability over recent decades. Rainfall has declined and become less predictable, with recurrent droughts as well as frequent floods since the 1970s. This has resulted in riverbeds and soils drying up, reduced vegetation cover, a decline in agriculture, pastoral and fishing production and an increase in waterborne diseases. Unsustainable production systems only exacerbate this situation⁸. The RESIGUI project has been designed to take into account the potential detrimental impacts on the environment of the agricultural and infrastructural development components, with additional activities such as vegetation restoration.

⁷ 43 out of 145 participants in these trainings were women.

⁸ UNDP 2019 Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Guinea [Link](#)