

Food and Nutrition Security in Benin



Context

The food and nutrition situation in Benin has been precarious for years now. Rural households in the north of Benin suffer in particular from an unbalanced and unhealthy diet. Even it is the women who are usually responsible for the nutrition of the family, they themselves do not have the necessary resources (such as arable land, livestock or loans) to do so. It is usually the men who decide on the distribution of household income. Causes of the poor diet are not only lack of access and availability of nutritious food, but also lack of

knowledge about a healthy diet and its preparation. Especially pregnant women, lactating mothers and small children have special dietary requirements which are often not known. Infant under- and malnutrition is a common consequence, which often has to be treated in health centers. Only a fifth of the children under 2 years of age obtain a balanced diet. Growth delays are observed as a result of malnutrition in more than one third of the children leading to lifelong physical and mental impairments.

Activities in Benin

- **Community-based nutrition counselling**

 Women in nutrition insecure households are trained in a balanced composition and preparation of diets, hygiene and the nutritional requirements of pregnant women and small children.
- **Capacity development of nutrition advisors**

 Nutrition advisors are trained in nutrition and food diversity. They themselves go to the villages and teach the women about nutrition-related topics and hygiene practices. The nutritionists share their knowledge with volunteers in the villages, which in turn act as multipliers.

- **Alignment at national level**

 Through policy advice and support of the National Council for Nutrition (CAN) successful approaches are established on national level. Moreover, CAN is strengthened in its role as coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) process. Recommendations for national food and nutrition security approaches and their integration into national policies and programs are developed.

Our objective

The nutritional situation on household level of food and nutrition insecure people, especially women of childbearing age and small children, has improved.



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Region(s)

Region of Atacora (Municipalities: Natitingou, Toucountouna, Tanguiéta, Pehunco, Kerou)

Duration

09/2015 - 12/2019

Budget

EUR 5.8 Million

Implementing partners

Plan International/ Bureau Des Projets De Développement Et Des Œuvres Sociales (BUPDOS)

Ministry of Agriculture, Family, Health

Local non-governmental organisation in the field of nutrition and agriculture

Therapeutic feeding centers, social centers

Lead executing agency

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fishery

Target group

13,500 women of childbearing age, 4,500 children in the age of 6 to 23 months (direct counselling in 60 villages)



Example of our work

In the village of Tone, close to the small town of Tanguiéta in the north-west of Benin: In a vegetable garden of the small village 20 women weed, irrigate and examine their plants for pests. They harvest eggplant, tomatoes, okra, soy or chili. Moring trees, tamarinds, baobabs and Néré grow between the beds. Above the garden is a community house, which serves as a meeting place for all 30 members of the Tone women's group. Seven years ago the women of Tone was formed by themselves to improve their income and diet with a communal vegetable garden. According to the President of the group, Sekou Kouagré, the women from the group have significantly changed their lifestyle: "We often prepare vegetables from our own garden." It was only recently that a training session on hygiene was held. The project supports the group in further improving and spreading its experiences and working procedures. That includes training for the group members as well as setting up a demonstration garden. Sekou is quite enthusiastic: "With the help of the new cooperation we have finally got a fence around our garden. So far, wild animals have been destroying a large part of our harvest. They have eaten our vegetables and leaves of the young tree seedlings so they were not able to grow. Fortunately, this belongs to the past!"



Results

The Food and Nutrition Security program provided fences for vegetable gardens with a total length of 50 km. The population itself provides the land and the fence posts. Thus, 125 communal and school gardens are fenced and thus protected against damage and theft. In training courses about 3,000 persons (of which 72 percent are women) were already trained on nutritional issues. The teaching materials are easily comprehensible and innovative. Key messages are spread through comics or theater groups.

Impressum

Editor

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Headquarter: Bonn and Eschborn
Rural Development and Agriculture
Division G500
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36+40
53113 Bonn

T +49 (0) 228 44 60 - 3824
F +49 (0) 228 44 60 - 1766

www.giz.de

Contact

Rüdiger Behrens
ruediger.behrens@giz.de

Photographs:

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GIZ is responsible for the content of the present publication

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