



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GUINEA

CASE STUDY

Food Security Brings Better Health

Improved nutritional techniques boost the health of mothers and children in Upper Guinea



Photo: USAID/Laura Lartigue

Mothers attending a USAID-sponsored course learn how to make a vitamin-rich porridge using low-cost local ingredients.

“I know that to keep my child healthy, I should wash his hands with soap and water before meals, prepare nutritious food, and give him potable water to drink,” said one mother.

Challenge

Guinea suffers from some of the worst health conditions in the world: life expectancy is 49.1 years, and 169 infants die per 1,000 live births. The country also lacks food security; its people are only able to feed themselves and their families a few months out of the year. A shocking 44 percent of people in Dinguiraye, one of the poorest rural districts of Upper Guinea, are malnourished.

Initiative

USAID initially designed its Food Security Initiative to assure basic household nutrition in Dinguiraye, one of Guinea’s most profoundly vulnerable areas. The project has since expanded into other areas in Upper Guinea and has shifted its emphasis to improving agricultural production. The Initiative also works to improve the health of those most at risk — women and children under five years old — by demonstrating nutritional

cooking techniques, tracking infant weights and distributing vitamin A to pregnant women and new mothers, which bolsters the health of their babies.

Results

The Initiative’s substantial results have reverberated throughout Dinguiraye and other communities in Upper Guinea.

Malnutrition in all Dinguiraye residents has dropped from 44 percent to 17 percent, while malnutrition among children aged three years and younger fell from 20.7 percent in 2001 to 15.7 percent today. Today, 30 percent of all new mothers in Upper Guinea receive vitamin A supplements within six weeks of delivery — five times more than in 2001 — and, as a result of USAID collaboration with local partners and the Guinean government, 99 percent of children nationwide also receive the supplements. The Initiative has been effective in reducing poverty in Upper Guinea as well; household incomes for members of women’s groups participating in the USAID program in Dinguiraye have increased an average of 69 percent.