

# SUCCESS STORY

## Programme for inclusive economic and social recovery and the fight against food and nutritional insecurity in the territories of northern Cameroon (RESILIENT)



### EU Trust Fund for Africa – Sahel & Lake Chad



**EUTF PARTNER:**  
*Action contre la Faim (ACF)*



**COUNTRY:**  
Cameroon



**BUDGET:**  
EUR 13.0M



From **07/2017**  
to **12/2020**

### Objective of the project

To strengthen the resilience of populations vulnerable to nutritional insecurity in northern Cameroon, while contributing to social cohesion.

### Key successes

- > 158 water points constructed or rehabilitated.
- > 3,229 people given access to land.
- > 338 village savings and loan associations created or revitalised.

RESILIENT (“Programme for inclusive economic and social recovery and the fight against food and nutritional insecurity in the territories of northern Cameroon”)<sup>1</sup> was implemented from July 2017 to December 2020 by a consortium of five international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the leadership of *Action contre la Faim*. The project’s objective was to strengthen the resilience of populations vulnerable to nutritional insecurity in northern Cameroon, while contributing to social cohesion. Following a multisectoral approach aimed at linking relief, rehabilitation, and development, RESILIENT implemented activities on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health and nutrition, natural resources and production, as well as governance, advocacy, and capitalisation. The project was active in 12 communes in the Extrême Nord and Nord regions of Cameroon. Although a total of 160 villages across the 12 communes benefited from the project, not all components were implemented in all localities. One of the reasons for this was that support for displaced people was more urgent in the Extrême Nord than in the Nord region, since the former was strongly affected by the Lake Chad Basin conflict.

### How did the EUTF help?

**Between 2017 and 2019, chronic malnutrition, acute malnutrition, and food insecurity prevalence decreased in the Nord and Extrême Nord regions:** chronic malnutrition by 2.9% in Nord and by 0.7% in

Extrême Nord; acute malnutrition by 1.1% in Nord and by 1.2% in Extrême Nord; and food insecurity prevalence from 16.8% to 11.3% in Nord and from 33.6% to 18.5% in Extrême Nord. Although it is difficult to trace causality between project activities and the changes in malnutrition in the two target regions due to many contextual factors, it seems plausible that RESILIENT contributed to these positive developments. Overall, RESILIENT reached 533,000 people with WASH, food security and livelihood activities, including 56,000 internally displaced people. It also supported the operations of 38 health areas<sup>2</sup>, covering 470,000 people, to provide improved health services on severe acute malnutrition, prenatal consultations, childbirth, and immunisation.

### Keys to success

**One of RESILIENT’s key success factors was to systematically strengthen local institutions and align its objectives with national policies**, not only at the strategic and project level but also at the activities level. At the strategic level, the project contributed to Cameroon’s decentralisation strategy. Working with the communes and the decentralised technical departments of relevant ministries (agriculture, livestock, water, environment, etc.), RESILIENT strengthened the capacities of local authorities to provide resilience-fostering services to their constituencies, thus supporting the transfer of competencies and resources to the local level.



**At the project level, RESILIENT strengthened local governance, notably by advocating for resilience-supporting activities and expenditures among local authorities.** Communal consultation frameworks played a key role in strengthening the dialogue between the population and local authorities. These frameworks brought together civil society and state actors to regularly discuss issues related to social and economic development. They also played an important role in advocating for the integration of funding into the communes' budgets to continue project activities after the project's end. Despite limited financial resources available, this approach allowed to maintain 50% of the new posts which had been promoted by RESILIENT within local authorities – supporting their capacity to provide essential services to their population.

**At the activities level, the project collaborated with local partners to institutionalise the results** achieved by RESILIENT for improved WASH, health and nutrition, and for more economic opportunities:

- **Construction, rehabilitation, and governance of 158 water points:** RESILIENT supported a bottom-up governance framework to ensure the maintenance of the 158 water points that the project had constructed or rehabilitated. At the lowest level, local water point management committees, which were composed of five to seven members and represented on average 56 adhering households, collected membership fees among participating households and carried out repair works when needed. At a medium level, water funds (or micro-insurances) grouped together several water point management committees to bundle membership fees and monitor maintenance works across a greater geographic area. At the highest level, local authorities were encouraged to institutionalise water funds and the budget for additional repair costs not covered by membership fees. At the end of the project, seven of 12 communes had a functioning water fund in place.
- **'1% nutrition' budgets in six communes:** RESILIENT advocated extensively for the adoption of '1% nutrition' budgets, notably by mobilising community health workers and mothers' clubs. At the communal level, these budgets included a dedicated sum to be used to screen undernutrition. As a result of the engagement of local health advocates, six of

12 communes adopted '1% nutrition' budgets, successfully translating advocacy work into political decisions and resource allocation. Further support would be needed, however, to raise awareness about the availability of these funds and to develop a strategy for their operationalisation.

- **Access to land for 3,229 people:** RESILIENT cooperated with local chiefs, communes, religious authorities and others to facilitate land lease agreements. Demographic growth, displacements, herder-farmer competition, and transhumance practices have led to increasing pressure on land in northern Cameroon. The project supported vulnerable households to establish lease agreements with landowners or managers, providing access to land for 3,229 people (42% women, 23% internally displaced people).

## Building on success

**RESILIENT's close collaboration with local institutions and actors** paved the way to ensure sustainability beyond the project period. Enabling local communities and authorities to fight food insecurity more effectively provided an important foundation to continue and upscale the activities initiated by RESILIENT. By successfully advocating for communes' budgets to reflect the importance of malnutrition in the area, RESILIENT also developed a sound basis for continued funding of activities against food insecurity.

**Building upon the project's achievements, the EU-funded follow-up programme, PEREN, consolidated RESILIENT's results** in the Extrême Nord. Learning from RESILIENT's success factors, the project followed the same approach, albeit on a more limited scale: it was implemented by three international NGOs cooperating with three national NGOs and focused on six communes in the Extrême Nord. Further strengthening national capacities, PEREN thus continued the fight for food security in northern Cameroon.



**EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa**

<sup>1</sup> Programme de Redressement Economique et Social Inclusif et de Lutte contre l'Insécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle des Territoires du nord Cameroun.

<sup>2</sup> A health area (Aire de Santé) is a geographically defined area of one or several villages in which a health centre is responsible for health activities.

### Disclaimer

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