Rita Mambou is a widow and has 7 dependents (5 children, 1 grandchild and her elderly mother). No one in her family currently has a job. She sells foufou (a staple food often made from cassava) at a market in Brazzaville. Her daughters are in school or university. Bridie, for example, has a degree in hotel management but hasn't found a job yet. Bartelina is in 2nd year of university, studying economics.

When WFP met Rita, she was going to buy oil, salted fish, milk, soap, and cans of sardines, with her son Christ who helps her. Christ has been running a sound transfer business, selling CDs for 5 years. This allows him to have some income to help the family. He dreams of working in ICT.

Rita and her family are among 75,000 vulnerable people in Brazzaville who have received WFP cash transfers to help them cope with the impact of the pandemic. She says "It goes straight to our hearts. It's a big thank you to WFP. We are very happy."

"It's really difficult right now. Since the lockdown, nothing works. I'm managing. I've been a bricklayer's helper with my older brother's friends but I don't like it at all. I prefer to do a job that suits me to really help the family," says Christ.

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

**USD 26.2 million** received

**COVID-19 IMPACT AND ADAPTATION**

The Republic of Congo (RoC) has an economy that relies heavily on oil revenues. The economy was hit hard in 2014 by the sharp decline in oil prices and was on the path to recovery in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, the pandemic and associated restrictions impacted the global demand for oil, creating an excess supply and a steep decrease in oil prices. This has significantly impacted RoC's economic outlook.

To curb the spread of the virus, a national lockdown was imposed, and roads and airports were closed. As a country that heavily depends on imports for its food needs, the border closures and mobility restrictions triggered food inflation and disruption to urban-rural food supply chains between March and June. Besides, the pandemic struck Congo when the northern region was still coping with the consequences of its worst floods in nearly 20 years (which occurred in October 2019) before being confronted to another double crisis at the end of 2020: intense flooding in November 2020 and influx of thousands of new CAR refugees displaced by post-election violence (December 2020).

**CROSS-CUTTING RESULTS**

To address COVID-19 impacts in rural areas on women, WFP designed the Mbala Pinda project which supports 16 women's groups (approx. 160 women) with training and equipment to process and sell Mbala Pinda, a highly nutritious local snack with cassava and peanut. Through this programme, school committees received vouchers to purchase and distribute the product to 3,700 primary school students. Based on a WFP survey, the project contributed to women's empowerment by having a production market and income (which increased by 200-300 percent) and helped retain students after a long period of school closure.

WFP’s COVID response included a protection component to tackle gender-based violence (GBV), which increased sharply during the lockdown. From May onwards, WFP teamed up with UNFPA to identify and support GBV victims in the network of shops identified by WFP. They were referred to hospitals for medical and psychological follow-up, while wider communities received awareness sessions on GBV and sexual and reproductive health.
Strategic outcome 1: Food insecure people affected by shocks have access to adequate food all year round

- USD 1.3 million transferred by mobile money to 68,400 vulnerable people in Brazzaville
- 13,800 refugees assisted with food and cash based transfers
- 75,000 students received on-site school meals and three months of take home rations during school closure

Strategic outcome 2: Equitable national social protection interventions effectively target vulnerable populations, including school-aged children, with sustained access to safe and nutritious food

- Food Assistance for Assets participants rehabilitated 140.5 kms of feeder roads
- 72 mt of salt and USD 20,000 contribution from the government for the school feeding programme
- 24,000 students received a daily school meal through the Home Grown School Feeding Programme

Strategic outcome 3: Targeted smallholder farmers and communities benefit from productive and sustainable livelihoods which support nutrition value chains

- 29 warehouses built to reduce post harvest losses in Bouenza and Pool Departments
- 25 mt of beans and pigeon beans purchased by WFP from smallholder producers for emergency food assistance.
- 160 women producers of cassava snacks received equipment and training to increase production
- 2589 mt food transported through the Pointe-Noire corridor for the WFP response in the Central African Republic

Strategic outcome 4: Humanitarian and development actors and national systems have access to WFP expertise and services

- 46 UNHAS flights operated between Brazzaville and Accra through the WFP Humanitarian Hub
- 1555 mt of food and non food items transported by barge on the Congo river for the UN flood response

PARTNERS


DONORS
The Adaptation fund, Canada, China, China fund for SSTC, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Global Partnership for Education, Japan, Mastercard, Republic of Congo, The SDG fund, United States of America, UN Central Emergency Response Fund