



**Protect the population against COVID-19  
and allow families to recover from the  
impacts of COVID-19 in the commune of  
Jean Rabel**

**Northwest, Haiti**

*Duration: September 2020 – June 2021*

*Progress report: September 2020 – March 2021*

*Implementing partner: Association des Groupes Évangéliques  
d'Haïti pour la Prédication du Monde et le Développement  
d'une Nouvelle Génération (AGEHPMDNG)*

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Page 9 (upper photo) and page 10 (lower photo): CWS

## Executive summary

***“This is the biggest thing you could have done, to give us food.”*** (97-year old woman, Jean Rabel)

In Haiti, the compounded effects of COVID-19 led to high levels of unemployment, loss of income, depletion of assets and reserves. The goal of the COVID-19 response of Church World Service (CWS) as implemented by its partner Association des Groupes Évangéliques d’Haïti pour la Prédication du Monde et le Développement d’une Nouvelle Génération (AGEHPMDNG) is to protect the population against COVID-19 and allow families to recover from impacts of COVID-19 in the commune of Jean Rabel, Northwest department.

In October 2020, 50 families in situations of extreme food insecurity received food rations, including 20 older people who had been part of a survey carried out with HelpAge International related to the impact of COVID-19 on older people.

When planting season arrived in the Northwest of Haiti in November 2020, farmers had prepared the land but did not have the money to purchase seeds. Short-cycle seeds were made available to 101 farmers. 70 women and 31 men received a total of 97 cans of lima beans, 140 cans of peanuts, 226 cans of black and white beans, and 304 cans of corn. The office of the Council of Administration of the Communal Section (local authorities) of the 7<sup>th</sup> communal section of Jean Rabel also received 100 cans of corn. As of April 2021, most farmers had already harvested and reimbursed part of the yield so that seeds will remain available for future planting seasons.

Two public schools in the commune of Jean Rabel were selected for installation of handwashing facilities, which will be done in collaboration with fellow ACT Alliance member Norwegian Church Aid. Masons, plumbers and iron workers in the respective communities are preparing price quotes for production of the facilities. In December, three public primary- and middle schools with 796 students received liquid soap and 48 teachers received hand sanitizer.

This response to COVID-19 was made possible by Week of Compassion and had a budget of \$ 22,000.

## Context

When the first cases of COVID-19 were registered in Haiti in March 2020, the country had just come out of a series of lockdowns resulting from socio-political instability, one of them lasting from September to November 2019. The school year was therefore only able to start in December 2019/January 2020. Students lost most of the year, as schools had to close again in March due to COVID-19. They were only able to reopen in August, pushing the start of the 2020-2021 school year to the month of November. Online classes are no realistic option in a context of no electricity in rural areas and only erratic electricity in urban areas, combined with limited access to internet and complete absence of internet signal in part of the country.

Luckily, COVID-19 has spread much less in Haiti than was expected, for unclear reasons. As of April 2, 2021, the Ministry of Health had registered 12,855 cases (259 in the Northwest) and 251 deaths. As a caveat, not all of the 10 departments have testing facilities available, meaning that testing is limited.

Although the direct impact was therefore not as severe as expected, the indirect impacts on access to education and income-generating activities were substantial. The loss of employment and depleted assets made food a luxury, while farmers were unable to purchase seeds when planting season arrived. Exchange rate fluctuations added to a loss of purchasing power. The socio-political situation has deteriorated, with a political crisis escalating as the people claim the end of the current presidency as of February 7, 2021. Protests and roadblocks are frequent, while insecurity worsens with increasing rates of kidnappings and armed robbery.

An updated integrated food security phase classification published by the National Coordination of Food Security (CNSA) in September 2020 identified 9% of the population (905,471 persons) in phase 4 (urgency) and 33% (3,083,497 persons) in phase 3 (crisis). The Lower Northwest is one of the areas with a major severity of people in food insecurity crisis or urgency situation. Farmers feel the impacts of climate change, with periods of drought getting longer and changing rain patterns.

In August 2020, CWS carried out a rapid needs assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on older people, interviewing 120 persons in Port-au-Prince and 120 in the Northwest. Interviews were held in collaboration with four organisations that each spoke with 60 people. This study found that 92% of those interviewed had to reduce the quantity and quality of food they consume, while 87% had a food stock for less than two days at home. 98% did not know where the nearest facility was located that tests or treats for COVID-19. 56% could not afford COVID-19 preventive materials. The situation has an impact on mental health as well, with 49% reporting that they have been worried “all or most of the time” since the outbreak of COVID-19, while 46% felt depressed “all or most of the time” and 41% felt unable to cope with their current situation.

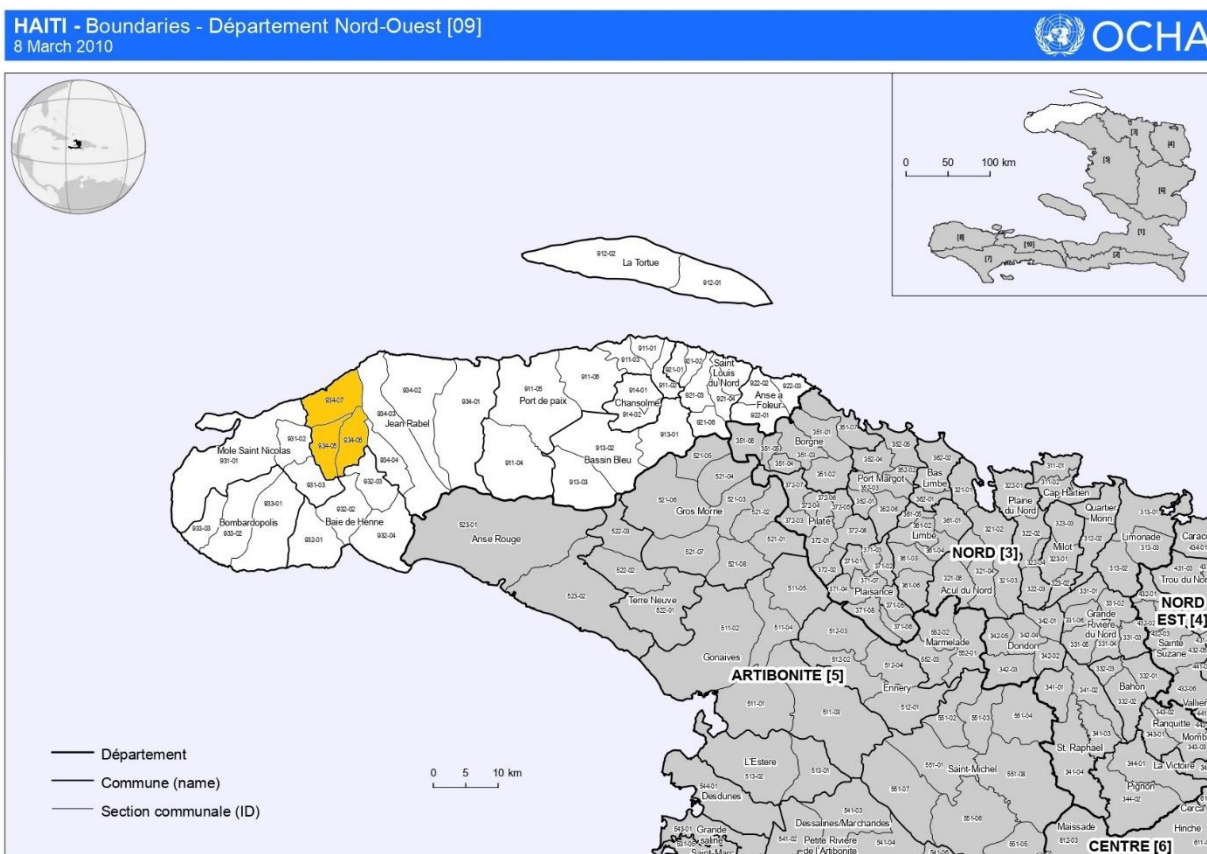
Access to agricultural inputs (including seeds) and improved access to education are both included in the strategic plan of development in Haiti published by the Government of Haiti, with the vision and title ‘Pays émergent en 2030’ (Emerging country in 2030). Both were also confirmed as priorities in the recent Humanitarian Response Plan published in March 2021.

**Beneficiaries**

<b>Targeted beneficiaries:</b>	<b>Beneficiaries reached:</b>
450 students and teachers at 3 public schools for handwashing stations, soap, sanitizer, and face masks.	796 students and 48 teachers at three public schools with liquid soap and sanitizer.
100 families for buckets for handwashing.	90 families with buckets for handwashing. 35 of these also received food rations and 55 received seeds.
100 families for short-cycle crops.	101 families with short-cycle crops.
50 families for food rations.	50 families with food rations. 5 of these also received short-cycle crops.

All families are inhabitants of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sections of the commune of Jean Rabel.

Figure 1: Map of three communal sections of intervention



For seed distributions, 101 families were selected among the 250 members of AGEHPMDNG. In addition, the office of the Council of Administration of the Communal Section CASEC of the 7<sup>th</sup> section of Jean Rabel received 100 cans of corn, as they requested support from AGEHPMDNG.

**Selection criteria:**

- Farmer living in one of the communities of intervention in the commune of Jean Rabel.
- Member of AGEHPMDNG.
- In need of seeds.
- Willingness to reimburse seeds after harvest.
- Willingness to contribute half a can interest for each can received.
- Head of household in charge of a family with children.
- Vulnerable family.
- Willingness to share personal stories and photos.
- Willingness to receive visits from AGEHPMDNG/CWS.

In August 2020, AGEHPMDNG interviewed 60 older people as part of a rapid needs assessment studying the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of older people. Among these participants, 20 persons were selected as beneficiaries of food rations. Another 30 vulnerable families in the community were selected, for a total of 50 families benefiting from food rations.

**Selection criteria:**

- Participant at rapid needs assessment.



- Aged 60-100 or orphan.
- Extreme vulnerability.
- Physical disability.
- Living in one of the communities of intervention.
- Suffering from a disease.
- Without economic means.

Each food ration is calculated to last one month for a family of five, meaning that there are an estimated 200 indirect beneficiaries, including children.

### Seed distributions for short-cycle crops

Gedeon Cedernier received peanuts and corn. After harvest, each participant reimburses the number of cans received, plus an extra half can per can received. When Gedeon came to reimburse corn, he said: "With three cans of corn received, I was able to harvest a yield of 80 cans." A lot of joy has come into the community.



November is planting season in the Northwest of Haiti. Members of AGEHPMDNG had already prepared their land, even though it was not yet clear where and how they would be able to get seeds to plant. Agricultural technicians on staff with AGEHPMDNG consulted with farmers about the crops they usually plant at that time of the year. In November, a wide variety of crops are planted, including black and white beans, lima beans, pigeon peas, corn, manioc, bananas, plantains, sweet potatoes, sorghum, and peanuts.



Four types of seeds were selected: lima beans, black and white beans, peanuts, and corn. With help of the agricultural technicians, a short-cycle type of corn was acquired that is good to harvest after 2.5 months. This variety was well-liked by the farmers, as other varieties take 3 or 5 months before they are ready for harvest.



Purchases were done at the markets of Jean Rabel and Mare Rouge. Distributions took place at the office of AGEHPMDNG on November 6. Beneficiaries were invited per group to come receive their seeds. The seeds were planted in November. Beans and corn were harvested in February and March, while peanuts are harvested in April-May.

101 families (70 women and 31 men) received a total of 304 cans of corn, 97 cans of lima beans, 140 cans of peanuts, and 226 cans of black and white beans. In addition, the office of the Council of Administration of the Communal Section (CASEC) of the 7<sup>th</sup> section in the commune of Jean Rabel received 100 cans of corn, which they distributed among residents of their locality. Ages of the farmers range from 20 to 69, with an average age of 49. For each can of seeds received, participants agreed to reimburse the can received plus an additional half a can.



*Table 1: Amount and type of seeds distributed per family*

Description	Families	Cans	Total
Lima beans	8	1	8
	22	2	44
	15	3	45
Peanuts	3	3	9
	1	5	5
	2	6	12
	1	7	7
	4	10	40
	2	12	24
	1	13	13
	2	15	30



Black & white beans	10	1	10
	8	2	16
	8	3	24
	5	4	20
	12	5	60
	2	6	12
	2	10	20
	4	12	48
	1	16	16
Corn	9	1	9
	11	2	22
	51	3	153
	30	4	120
	CASEC		100
<i>Total</i>			<i>867</i>



All 101 families received corn (ranging from 1-4 cans per family), while 45 families received lima beans (1-3 cans each), 16 peanuts (3-15 cans per family), and 52 black and white beans (1-16 cans each). The type and number of cans per family was based on input of the beneficiaries concerning what and how much they needed, as well as what they are used to planting, and availability of land.

When Merantier Destin received 10 cans of peanuts and 4 cans of corn, he said: "I am a farmer. It is rainy season now, planting season. We are going to plant peanuts and corn. The seeds are expensive to buy on the market. It helps us a lot that we receive these seeds, because otherwise we would have to spend money to buy them and we don't have the money to buy them, especially this quantity. It is a fortune for us to get seeds as farmers, so that we can continue to plant. We pray that God will send us rain and blessings. This is very useful for us. Thank you to all those who have contributed to help us progress."

Harvests depend on the soil type and fertility. One can of black and white beans can yield anywhere from 3 or 5 cans to 20 cans. A can of lima beans can yield about 8 cans, a can of peanuts can yield about 30 cans, and a can of corn can yield about 15 cans.

As of April 19, 2021, 38 families who had received lima beans reported a combined harvest of 660 cans for the 79 they had planted, or an average yield of over 8 cans per can planted. The advantage of lima beans is that they can be harvested several times.

12 families had harvested 459 cans of peanuts off the 97 they had planted, or an average of 4.7 cans yield per can planted. All 52 families had already harvested black and white beans, with an average yield of 5 cans harvested per can planted (a total of 1145 cans harvested for 226 planted). All but four had already reported harvests of corn, which yielded over 9 cans per can planted (2,704 cans were harvested for 304 planted). 13 families had not yet finished harvesting.

Ruthelaine Destin is a single mother of three. When she came to AGEHPMDNG to comply with her commitment to reimburse, she said: "In November I received corn, black and white beans, and lima beans. It was a good moment for me to receive this, because my land was prepared, but I had no money to buy seeds. [AGEHPMDNG and CWS] gave us seeds to plant. I had nice

crops, good crops. I have already harvested black and white beans and lima beans. Even though the harvest of black and white beans could have been better, it was still good. They gave me one can of beans, with which I made a yield of 6 cans, without counting what I have eaten and donated



to others. As for lima beans, I made 14 cans out of 1 can. I shared with others, I sold a part, I paid school for my children, and I used part for our own consumption. On top of that, I have 14 cans saved. They gave me one can and now I have come to reimburse 1.5 can, while the rest is mine to keep, so that I can take care of my family and our daily needs. That makes me really happy, because this season it looked like I was not going to be able to plant, even though I had finished preparing my land. With these seeds, I am doing well. Right now, I am harvesting the corn. If you go to my house now, you will see the bags of corn. Once I am done harvesting the corn, I will reimburse one and a half cans, because they gave me one can. This is my joy, and this will help

me advance, because I am progressing thanks to this group that gave us these seeds. My lima beans are already giving a second harvest. If you look at them, it seems they are beans that have just been planted, giving such a good yield, while I already harvested them once.”

Anasile Dorvil is the coordinator of Organisation Femmes Vaillantes pour le Développement de Digé (OFVDD), a community-based organisation supported by AGEHPMDNG. She explained that the seeds and food kits represent a major strength for OFVDD, the only women’s organisation in the 6<sup>th</sup> section supporting women in need. Those who received food rations showed their satisfaction on a daily basis, claiming that OFVDD is their source of life. Anasile’s husband was also among the 60 older people interviewed in 2020. He is paralyzed and was among the beneficiaries of food rations.





While seed distributions are completed, harvests registered, and reimbursements made, seeds will remain available for future planting seasons.

### Food rations for older people

Osanie Noel (75) participated in a survey related to the impact of COVID-19 on older people, carried out by HelpAge International and CWS in collaboration with AGEHPMDNG. During this survey, she identified food as her number one priority. She had to reduce both the quantity and quality of food she consumed, as a result of COVID-19. The food stock available at home would last her less than two days. Osanie has difficulties walking, while access to health care is limited. All of this caused her to feel worried and depressed all of the time. She lives with her children and sister, while her neighbors take turns in keeping her company.



Osanie received one bag of rice, two cans of beans, one bag of corn, one gallon of oil, salted herring, spices and sugar. "I feel different now. I can't walk, but I can eat," Osanie said laughing, during a visit in October. She got meals twice a day now. "The sugar finished today," she said, as she had enjoyed drinking a fresh glass of fruit juice.

Price quotes were gathered in Jean Rabel and Port-de-Paix for comparisons of price and availability of products. Purchases were done in Port-de-Paix. A mixture of local and imported products was selected to support a family of five for a period of one month.



On October 12, 50 families (28 women and 32 men) received a food ration with a value of 10,873 gourdes (about \$ 181), which was calculated to last one month. 13 families are located in the 5<sup>th</sup>

section of Jean Rabel, 10 in the 6<sup>th</sup> section and 27 in the 7<sup>th</sup> section. Distribution was done in groups of 10 families, who were invited at the office of AGEHPMDNG to receive their food ration. Families showed great joy, while some of them stated that this was the first time they received such a food support. Some of the beneficiaries shared their food with other families.

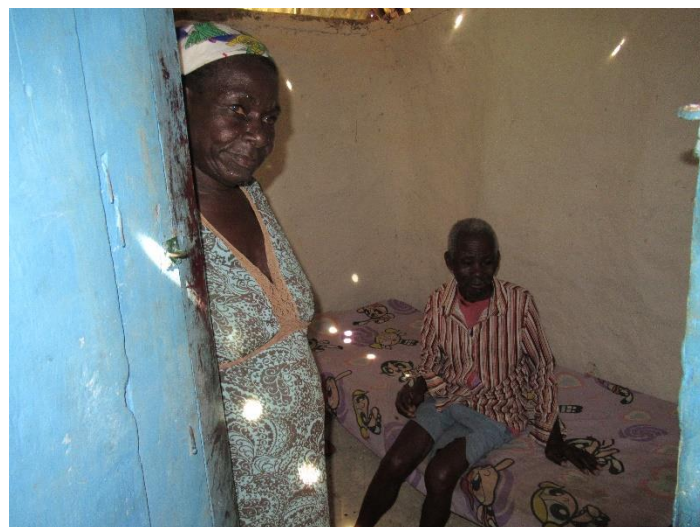
48 beneficiaries are aged 60 or older and 10 have a physical disability. Two persons aged 30 and 38 were selected, one of whom is an orphan, while the other is paralyzed. Ages range from 30 to 98, with an average age of 77.

The contents of the kits were decided in consultation with the families, based on their priorities. Each family received a kit consisting of the following:

Rice	1 bag
Corn	1 bag
Oil	1 gallon
Herring	1 kg.
Spices	Lumpsum
Sugar	3 cans
Wheat	3 cans
Beans	3 cans
Onions	8 lbs.
Garlic	5 lbs.



Christiana Anelus and Delicieu Vilsaint (75) live together. Delicieu is blind and his wife Christiana takes care of him. Their six children have been taken on by relatives, “to reduce the burden.” When arriving at their house, the AGEHPMDNG and CWS teams were welcomed with the following words: “Are these the people who saved us?” Christiana explained that they suffered a lot because of hunger, and they were at the end of their strength. They sometimes get support from church. “All the time I pray to God to guard you.” Delicieu participated in a survey regarding the impact of COVID-19 on older people and identified food as his top priority. Another concern is access to health care. Delicieu does not walk well and his wife helps him move around. Without any income generating activities, they depend on remittances from relatives or neighbors. They had no food at home and had to reduce both the quantity and quality of food consumed, as a result of COVID-19. Their difficult situation made them feel worried and depressed all the time. Delicieu would be happy to eat if he could, but they just don't have the money to afford food. They are used to spending two days without any food at all. Now the couple received beans, corn, rice, herring, sugar and wheat. Other neighbors in the area are also hungry, so the couple shared their food with them. Usually, “we prepare food whenever we find something to eat. This food has been very helpful for us.”



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Dieula Denoit declared that the ingredients of her food ration represent a lot to combat the misery she has suffered. She said it was for the first time since she lost her sight that she received this big grace. “May God bless the organisation that raised funds to give help to us blind people.”

Irma Paulimon is an orphan. She had no words to thank AGEHPMDNG and CWS. “This food ration has brought a total change to the house of my uncle, because I received food for several weeks.”

## WASH

Access to water in the Northwest is limited, with most people depending on natural sources, which reduce as a result of climate change effects. In the context of COVID-19, access to water becomes even more of a priority. However, results of the rapid needs assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on older people showed that 56% did not have adequate WASH facilities. 54% had difficulties accessing drinking water and 52% had insufficient water. As a result, while 99% of older people were aware of the importance of applying handwashing principles, 35% were unable to do so.

### ***Buckets for handwashing of families***

In October-November, 90 families (27 men and 63 women) received a bucket with a tap (purchased in Mare Rouge), to facilitate regular handwashing. These families are among the beneficiaries of food rations (35) and seeds (55).

### ***Handwashing facilities at schools***

Handwashing facilities will be installed at four public schools, two in the commune of Jean Rabel and two in the commune of Baie-de-Henne. Due to an unexpected and extreme appreciation of the national currency (gourde/HTG), the equivalent amount in gourdes was lower than expected. As a result, the number of locations had to be reduced. Specifically, handwashing facilities at two instead of five schools (all public primary and middle schools in the commune of Jean Rabel) are covered by this grant. Two more schools are served with a second contribution of Week of Compassion to CWS, for an amount of \$ 25,000 received through the ACT 201 COVID-19 appeal.

Fellow ACT Alliance member Norwegian Church Aid has expertise in WASH interventions and has WASH engineers on staff. From November 9-12, 2020, an engineer of NCA and an engineer of CWS traveled to the Northwest to visit five public schools (three in the commune of Jean Rabel, two in the commune of Baie-de-Henne). An assessment of overall WASH facilities and needs was done at each school.

### ***Summary of assessment findings***

The public school of Fond Ramadou (7<sup>th</sup> communal section of Jean Rabel) has latrines on site and a water pump on the road in front of the building. However, this water pump is often dry. Recommendations for this school include the installation of a water catchment system (using gutters), construction of a cistern or installation of a water tank, and repair of the water pipes in



front of the school. Specifically, in the current context a handwashing facility (with sink) will be installed with water being stored in a water tank and supplied by water catchment using gutters at the tin roof of the building.

The situation at the public school of Dessources (5<sup>th</sup> communal section of Jean Rabel, repaired by CWS and AGEHPMDNG after hurricane Matthew) is somewhat different, as this school has access to a cistern in the yard. A handwashing facility will therefore be supplied with water from the cistern.

The third school is the public school of Diondion, 5<sup>th</sup> communal section of Jean Rabel. This school is in a bad shape and in serious need of WASH facilities, as it has zero latrines and no access to water. Since the visit, an intervention has started at this school to build latrines (by Action Contre la Faim). However, this school withdrew from interventions by CWS and therefore no handwashing installation will be installed here.

The public school Antoinette Dessalines is located in the 4<sup>th</sup> communal section of Baie-de-Henne. The tin roof can be used for rainwater catchment, with installation of gutters. There is an existing cistern, which needs to be repaired. The rain gutters will supply water for the handwashing facility that is to be installed.

The public school of Dos d'Ane, 2<sup>nd</sup> communal section of Baie-de-Henne, is also in a bad shape. Several of the classrooms had to be abandoned due to cracked walls and floors. The school recently had new latrines installed (in 2020), but no handwashing facilities. A cistern and water tank are available in the yard, which both need to be repaired. Some gutters are already available and others will be installed, to facilitate rainwater catchment and supply the handwashing facility.

The skeletons for the handwashing facilities will be produced locally. Contacts have been made with masons, iron workers, and plumbers in the communities where the schools are located. Price quotes have been requested. Given the extra work needed to ensure continuous water supply to the handwashing facilities, the budget per school has increased. Installation of handwashing facilities is expected to take place in May and June.



Example of handwashing facility to be installed (photo credit: NCA)

### ***Soap and sanitizer for students and teachers***

The abovementioned three public schools located in the commune of Jean Rabel received 2 gallons of liquid soap each. All teachers received sanitizer, for a total of 48 teachers (15 at Fond Ramadou, 16 at Dessources, 17 at Diondion). According to Nelson Choute, director at the public school of Fond Ramadou, “this is a grace coming from God to protect our lives.”

## Monitoring

AGEHPMDNG selected three people to prepare distribution of food rations and buckets, as well as three persons in charge of seed distributions (for a total of four women and two men). Three staff members of AGEHPMDNG (two women, one man) were responsible for purchases. Staff visited families once a month at their home, to see how their living circumstances are evolving. Regular meetings also take place with members to share about progress and challenges.

Staff of CWS and AGEHPMDNG visited all schools in October to learn how they function within the context of COVID-19. Installation of handwashing facilities is supervised by a WASH engineer from Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in collaboration with an engineer of Church World Service. After an assessment in November, NCA prepared a report with technical findings and recommendations.

Distribution of food kits and seeds have brought a relief to families trying to recover from impacts of COVID-19 and other crises adding one to another. The installation of handwashing facilities will also meet an important need at the public schools selected.

## Annexes

1. Logframe
2. Financial report
3. List of beneficiaries of food rations
4. List of seed distributions and harvests

