



UN Volunteer Simon Challemet listens to a community member in charge of a market gardening site in the village of Baho Fello, Labé prefecture, Guinea.

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Delivering much-needed emergency support and nutrition

Simon Challemet (France) is a UN Volunteer Programme Officer with the World Food Programme (WFP) in Guinea. He initially joined WFP in 2019 through France Volontaires, as a Volunteer for International Solidarity. Seeing an opportunity to continue serving the country, he became a UN Volunteer in November 2020. One year on, Simon shares his experience with WFP, where he coordinates the RESIGUI project to provide emergency support and build resilience.

The RESIGUI project delivers cash transfers and nutritional supplementation to 20,000 Guinean households. Funded by the European Union to the tune of eight million Euros, the project also assists communities in market gardening, rice cultivation, processing, storage and marketing of agricultural products.

RESIGUI relies on the work of 12 local non-governmental organizations and national technical services, including the National Agency for Promotion and Agricultural Advisory services, to provide emergency support and implement resilience activities.

My role is to set up an inclusive coordination mechanism to cover implementation, monitoring and reporting. I also promote the visibility of our activities on the ground.

“ Managing a project of this magnitude has not been an easy task. It has been an opportunity for me to learn and adapt to different aspects: coordination, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and managing donor relationships. --Simon Challemet, UN Volunteer Programme Officer with WFP, Guinea

As a UN Volunteer, I oversee the activities of our team, which operates in eight prefectures in Guinea, and closely monitor the budget.

“ I often go to the field to evaluate the impact of our actions on the people we serve. It is encouraging to hear their testimonies. One woman I met told me that before the project, she had limited interaction with and support from other community members. Since we helped set up groups, it strengthened their social cohesion. They can now rely on each other to cope with common difficulties. --Simon Challemet

Sometimes, field visits bring surprises. In Labé prefecture, for example, we identified project beneficiaries while the presidential election campaign was

underway. We went to food-insecure villages to announce that we would give cash for work, but were met with skepticism and reluctance. In some places, people declined participation in our activities, because they were convinced that we were affiliated with political party members. Only after extensive outreach efforts and clarification of our intentions were we able to get people on board.

I gained a lot of insight from this UN Volunteer experience. I appreciate the fact that I am participating to combat food insecurity and improve food systems for vulnerable communities. Working in an intercultural environment made me step out of my comfort zone. I opened up to others, to new ways of living, seeing and thinking. And I have experienced cultures, landscapes, climate, fauna and flora that are different to everything I have ever known.



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