Key nutrition challenges

214,000 children under 5 years were wasted in 2022
67,000 of them were severely wasted
98,000 pregnant and lactating women were acutely malnourished

Source: IPC AMN, October 2021.

High levels of acute food insecurity have contributed to the number of children and pregnant and lactating women that were wasted in 2021.

Caring and feeding practices

Although almost half of children are breastfed exclusively until 6 months of age (SMART, 2019), minimum dietary diversity is very low in all the areas analysed (varies from 1.6–32 percent) and only 2 percent of children aged 6–23 months have a minimum acceptable diet (IPC AMN, October 2021).

Health services and household environment

Conflict and insecurity in tandem with the persistent effects of COVID-19, including the restrictive measures put in place for its control, have had a major negative impact on basic social services, accentuating the already inadequate functioning of many decentralized health structures and further reducing the coverage of nutritional interventions. Insecurity made it difficult for households to access nutritional assistance and prevention activities in most sub-prefectures analysed (IPC AMN, October 2021).

Key drivers

Food security and access to healthy diets

Acute food insecurity appears to be a major contributing factor to child wasting in all the sub-prefectures classified in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3). More than 40 percent of the population in all of these sub-prefectures have faced Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) acute food insecurity, which reflects serious limitations on access to food (quantity and quality) (IPC AMN, October 2021).

In Kabo, Mingala and Mbrès sub-prefectures, mobile clinics had to be suspended due to insecurity and health facilities were occupied by armed groups, while people relied on humanitarian aid to survive (HNO, October 2021).

Inadequate access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation contribute to the high prevalence of childhood diseases – notably malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and measles outbreaks. Water facilities are no longer functional due to vandalism or lack of maintenance, containers for collecting and storing water have been lost during people's flight, wells have been contaminated and insecurity has limited access to water points that are still functioning. In 2021, people in Ouham-Pendé suffered the highest number of violent shocks in the country and the number of people without access to water trebled (HNO, October 2021).