



seed **madagascar**  
sustainable environment, education & development



A Donor Report for

## **EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

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**To Implement the Distribution of Food to the Most  
Food-Insecure Communities of Madagascar's Anosy Region**

December 2021 – January 2022

## Summary

### Context

The drought in Madagascar continues to worsen; low rainfall between October and December 2021 has made it amongst the driest starts to the season on the 40-year historical record. Forecasts now predict below-average rainfall across Madagascar between December 2021 and March 2022, which will further worsen already dire conditions.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that 1.3 million people are currently facing hunger in the ‘crisis’ phase of food insecurity, with an additional 334,000 Malagasy now in ‘emergency’ food insecurity conditions.<sup>2</sup> The region’s most severe drought since 1981 has diminished access to food whilst the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated problems for many.<sup>3</sup> Pest outbreaks and the continuous drought have contributed to the destruction of 60% of crops in the region, with these conditions heavily impacting the October 2021 planting season.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, sandstorms caused by soil depletion from deforestation have covered croplands and pasture, making once arable land desolate and leaving many agricultural livelihoods at extreme risk.<sup>5</sup> Food prices have begun to increase in December 2021.<sup>6</sup> As a result of these factors, malnutrition rates have risen sharply in southern Madagascar, and in some regions, admissions for severe acute malnutrition have reached approximately quadruple the five-year average.<sup>7</sup> Children are particularly vulnerable; as of December 2021, 60,000 children under five are at risk of severe acute malnutrition, with an overall acute malnutrition burden of 309,000 children in Madagascar’s Grand South.<sup>8</sup> Unless immediate action is taken, these children will suffer irreversible damage to their growth and development; children with acute malnutrition are four times more likely to die than healthy children.<sup>9</sup> As the situation worsens, an urgent response to this growing crisis is needed.

### Emergency Food Distribution as a Solution

**SEED Madagascar (SEED) is responding to this crisis through the implementation of the Emergency Food Distribution Programme.** As part of Madagascar’s Nutrition Cluster and the Anosy committee in response to emergency food insecurity—Centre de Coordination Opérationnelle contre le KERE (*famine*)—and in collaboration with the Medicine Inspector and local community health centres, the programme is operating where no other NGOs are currently supporting emergency food distribution. **The programme is supporting children aged six months to five years suffering from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) or severe acute malnutrition (SAM).** To improve the capacity of community health workers, SEED trains community healthcare providers to identify, treat, and monitor the recovery of children with acute malnutrition. Children diagnosed with MAM and SAM receive ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), a home-based malnutrition treatment. Families receive a parcel of unprepared food, including rice, beans, and fortified oil, each month for two months while their child undergoes treatment. Children with SAM who have additional complications, such as respiratory infections, oedema, or dehydration, are transported to the nearest hospital for emergency care, with transport expenses and unprepared food parcels provided by SEED. To support sustainable behaviour change, family members receive targeted nutrition and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) information, covering nutrition for children, breastfeeding, the identification and treatment of common childhood illnesses, and health-promoting hygiene behaviours.

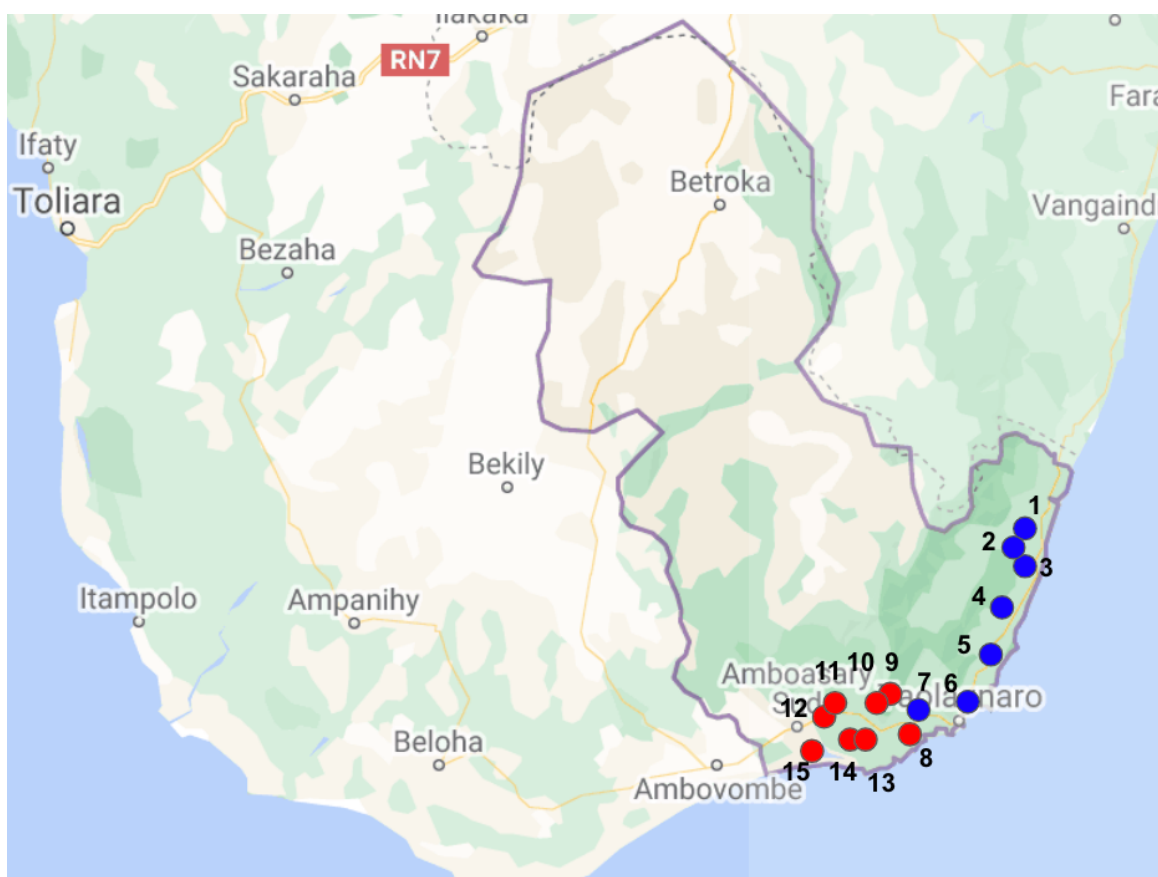


Parents and their children receive RUTF and food parcels at the health centre in Manambaro

**Round II of the Emergency Food Distribution Programme in Fort Dauphin North, supporting 268 malnourished children and their families, was completed in December 2021.** Due to rapidly increasing food insecurity in the region, the team has begun preparations for Round III to commence in February 2022. Round III will work with the same seven health centres located in five communes, providing continued support to families across 41 referring villages.

**In December 2021, SEED started an exciting new partnership with the NGO Humedica, enabling an expansion of distributions to a further eight health centres located in five communes, Fort Dauphin South sites, encompassing an additional 45 villages.** SEED will complete two rounds of distribution in these eight sites over seven months, supporting the recovery of a predicted 730 malnourished children and 4,300 family members. These are newly targeted villages which have not been covered under any previous SEED emergency food programming, thus an additional 90 community health workers will be trained by SEED to diagnose, treat, and monitor children with acute malnutrition. SEED will work to procure the unprepared food locally to stimulate local markets and communities; food pricing will be closely monitored to ensure this does not negatively impact food security in the region.

**Map of the 15 sites targeted by SEED’s Emergency Food Distribution Programme**



**Fort Dauphin North Sites:**

- 1. Sainte Luce
- 2. Tsagnoriha
- 3. Mahatalaky
- 4. Mandromondromotra
- 5. Ampasy Nahampoana
- 6. Soanierana
- 7. Manambaro

**Fort Dauphin South Sites:**

- 8. Sarisambo
- 9. Ankaramena
- 10. Analandravay
- 11. Ankariera
- 12. Berongo
- 13. Ranopiso
- 14. Ampikazo
- 15. Ankilivalo

## Activity Detail

### Activity Update

#### Fort Dauphin North

Round II of the Programme in Fort Dauphin North commenced in August 2021 and was completed in December 2021. Key successes to Round II included the delivery and distribution of unprepared food and RUTF. A total of 16,080 kilograms of rice, 10,720 cups of beans, and 1,608 litres of oil were distributed to support 268 households with malnourished children, reaching approximately 1,700 family members across 41 villages. Additionally, 14,160 sachets of RUTF were distributed to 236 children diagnosed with MAM across 41 villages, whilst 32 children diagnosed with SAM received RUTF directly from the health centre. **All malnourished children supported by Round II of SEED's programme recovered from malnutrition, reflecting a 100% recovery rate for both SAM and MAM across all five communes** – reference *Table 1*, below.

*Table 1: Number of children who recovered from Malnutrition (Round II)*

Malnutrition status	Treated	Recovered	Recovery (%)
<b>SAM</b>	32	32	100%
<b>MAM</b>	236	236	100%

Food distributions were accompanied by targeted nutrition and WASH information sessions, which were delivered to all caregivers of malnourished children enrolled in the programme. Subjects covered a range of topics, including breastfeeding, nutrition for children, identification and treatment of common childhood illnesses, and the promotion of safe hygiene behaviours. Through surveys and interviews, participants reported the sessions to be highly informative. Many stated that, upon applying lessons learned to their family practices, they saw improvements in their children's overall health.

Endline monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) revealed significant programme impacts related to health seeking behaviors and trust in local health centres, which are likely to improve the health of participants in the long-term. **Overall, 97.8% of respondents said they would be more likely to approach a community health centre due to SEEDs food distribution project.** When asked about their relationship with health centres, 35.1% of caregivers reported an increase in confidence to approach health centres and 31.7% reported a decrease of fear associated with visiting. This shows an overwhelming success of Round II's education and sensitisation in facilitating the connection between community members and their local health centres.

***“Being part of it [SEED's Emergency Food Distribution Project] pushed me to trust the health centre with their healthcare services. The project built a bond between me and the health centre.”*** - Parent of a malnourished child in Mandromondromotra

SEED has gathered valuable programme insight through interviews conducted with participants. As a result, SEED will increase the number of interviews going forward. The Nutrition Survey, completed by the primary caregiver of each malnourished child at baseline and endline, has been adapted and some questions have been removed. These questions will instead be investigated through interviews with participants, which will be used to get more in-depth answers. SEED learned from Round II that shortening the surveys allows for more time and resources spent on food and education, and less on administration, as the surveys are completed on an Open Data Kit platform which requires IT assistance. It also makes the surveys less exhaustive for participants to answer, decreasing the chances of data errors and increasing the efficiency of food distribution.

## Fort Dauphin South

Round I of the Programme in the Fort Dauphin South sites commenced in December 2021, and SEED has spent much of that time laying the groundwork for distribution. By the second week of December, SEED had completed the courtesy visit to the Medicine Inspector, the Regional Office of Nutrition (ORN), and the Regional Office of Disaster and Risk Management to inform them of programme implementation and ensure smooth working relationships in the future. SEED has also confirmed storerooms for the health centres in targeted communes; these storerooms will be used to hold RUTF and unprepared food that will be distributed to children diagnosed with MAM and SAM and their families. Additionally, SEED completed the capacity building sessions with 80 community health workers across seven of the eight target health centres, with training in the final health centre scheduled for the last week in January 2022. These sessions covered the identification and treatment of malnutrition.



*A mother takes notes at SEED's nutrition information sessions for children suffering from moderate or severe malnutrition*

## Planned Work

Round III of the programme in Fort Dauphin North is scheduled to begin in February 2022. SEED will prepare for this coming round by meeting with the Medicine Inspector to inform them of the current project goals. The tools used by community health workers will also be updated to ensure compliance with this latest round of the programme. Capacity building with community health workers in the seven target health centres is scheduled to be completed in late February 2022. Following training, community health workers will conduct village-wide mobilisations across the 41 target villages to raise awareness of the programme and identify cases of SAM or MAM. Distribution of RUTF and unprepared food will begin in early March 2022.

The programme will follow a similar timeline in the Fort Dauphin South sites. With capacity building sessions on track to be completed in all eight health centres by the end of January 2022, RUTF and unprepared food distributions are primed to begin early February 2022, immediately following village-wide mobilisation and the identification of SAM and MAM cases.

MEL surveys have been updated to capture a more holistic view of the food insecurity situation, which will enable SEED to assess project impact more accurately. Prior to food distribution, caregivers of malnourished children will complete baseline surveys. All children who are indicated as being SAM or MAM within the programs will have their height, weight, and MUAC measured, so that SEED can assess their recovery by project end in a more detailed way. This data will allow SEED to discuss any relevant programme findings within clusters and with stakeholders as necessary.

## Story from the Field

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*Rodia holds her son Gertino, who was classified as MAM during malnutrition screening*

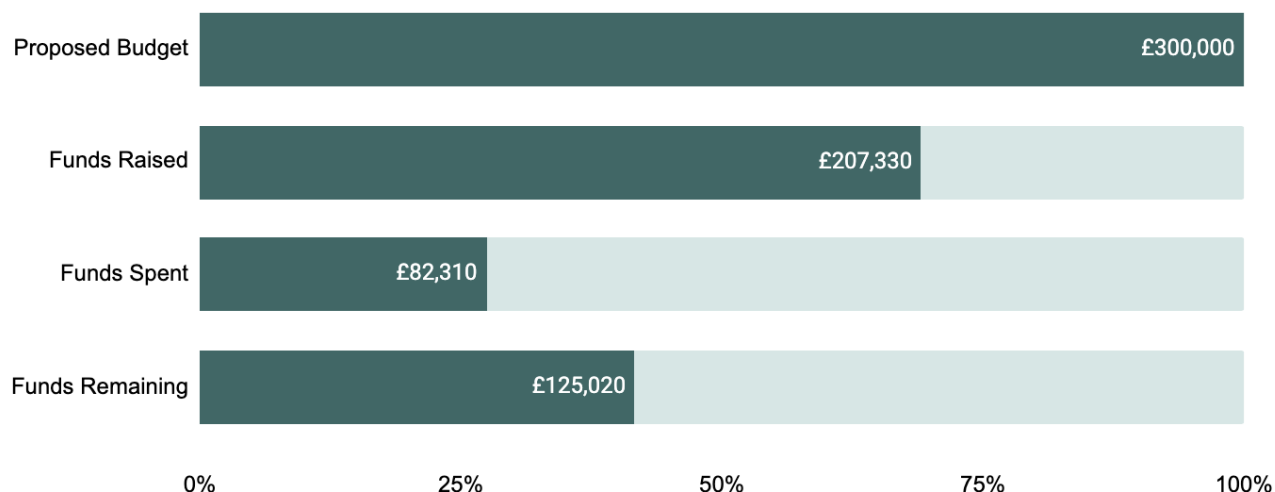
Rodia is a single mother living in the Mahatalaky commune, which is served under Round II of SEED's Emergency Food Distribution Programme in Fort Dauphin North. Rodia's main source of income relies on growing and selling crops. Due to the severe drought afflicting the south and her community, Rodia has struggled to feed herself and her children. Although she planted sweet potato and cassava, harvests have been poor, and she has been unable to make enough to support her family. Without the money she would make selling crops, Rodia is often unable to buy staple foods such as salt, oil, and rice. As a result, her youngest child, 22-month-old Gertino, was diagnosed with MAM during the programme's second round of malnutrition screening.

Supported by advocacy carried out by SEED-trained community health workers, Rodia visited her local health centre, Mahatalaky, every 15 days to weigh Gertino and receive treatment. She regularly attended SEED's WASH and nutrition information sessions and applied this knowledge into her daily practices. She quickly saw Gertino's health improve and was relieved to see that all her children stopped experiencing other issues such as diarrhoea. She attributed this to her increased knowledge of handwashing during critical times, such as before eating, and dedication to drinking and cooking with clean water. With these successes, Rodia has helped raise awareness to other mothers in her village on the importance of hygiene in her everyday life. She told the team that the additional care for malnourished children, the nutrition education for mothers, and the mobilisation of community health agents are all essential to keeping communities healthy. Rodia has requested that this project continue throughout the lean period from October to March, which is the time between planting and harvesting.

## Financial Report

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SEED started a new partnership with NGO Humedica, allowing an expansion of distributions from five communes to ten, and enabling SEED to support participants from 86 villages, compared to the previous 41. This partnership brought in an additional £40,891.75 in funding to date. Figures incorporating the Emergency Food Distribution Programme in Fort Dauphin North and the new Fort Dauphin South sites can be seen below.



## Further Reading

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If you would like to learn more about the challenges that Madagascar is currently facing, please see recommendations for further reading below.

1. SEED Blog Post by Luke Capper “The Impact of Climate Change on Food Systems in Southeast Madagascar”, November 2021. <https://madagascar.co.uk/blog/2021/11/impact-climate-change-food-systems-southeast-madagascar>
2. SEED Blog Post by Emily Bowler “Building Bonds and Resilience: outcomes of our Emergency Response”, December 2021. <https://madagascar.co.uk/blog/2021/12/building-bonds-and-resilience-outcomes-our-emergency-response>
3. UNICEF Madagascar Grand Sud Situation Update No. 1 (Reporting Period: 1 to 31 December 2021): <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20Madagascar%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20No.%207%2C%20December%202021.pdf>
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5. Madagascar Key Message Update: Poor production continues to drive high prices across the south, July 2021. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Madagascar%20-%20Key%20Message%20Update%20Fri%2C%202021-07-30.pdf>
6. Famine Early Warning Systems Network, Madagascar Food Security Alert, December 2021. <https://fews.net/southern-africa/madagascar/food-security-outlook-update/december-2021>
7. United Nations World Food Programme, The Invisible Crisis: WFP Chief appeals for the world not to look away as families starve in Madagascar, June 2021. <https://www.wfp.org/news/invisible-crisis-wfp-chief-appeals-world-not-look-away-families-starve-madagascar>

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> FEWS NET, “Madagascar” (2021), from <https://fews.net/southern-africa/madagascar>
- <sup>2</sup> Relief Web. (2022, January 3). Drought at the start of season and revised 2022 forecast calls for a below-average season. Retrieved 15 January 2022, from <https://fews.net/southern-africa/madagascar>
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- <sup>4</sup> OCHA. (2021, 27 August). Madagascar: Grand Sud Humanitarian Snapshot (July 2021) – Madagascar. ReliefWeb. Retrieved 15 January 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-grand-sud-humanitarian-snapshot-july-2021>.
- <sup>5</sup> FAO. (2021, 25 October). Southern Madagascar | Response Overview (October 2021) : FAO in Emergencies. Retrieved 15 January 2022, from [www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/1446570/](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/1446570/)
- <sup>6</sup> Relief Web. (2022, January 13). Madagascar Food Security Outlook Update, December 2021. Retrieved 15 January 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-food-security-outlook-update-december-2021>
- <sup>7</sup> OCHA. (2021, 27 August). Madagascar: Grand Sud Humanitarian Snapshot (July 2021) – Madagascar. ReliefWeb, Retrieved 14 January 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/madagascar-grand-sud-humanitarian-snapshot-july-2021>.
- <sup>8</sup> UNICEF. (2022, January 6). UNICEF Madagascar Humanitarian Situation Report No. 7: December 2021. Relief Web. Retrieved 16 January 2022, from <https://www.unicef.org/media/114106/file/Madagascar-Humanitarian-SitRep-December-2021.pdf>
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