



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

# DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for  
International  
Development

Washington D.C.  
20523

## UPPER VOLTA - Meningitis Epidemic

Date: January - June 1981 (FY 81)

Location: Departments of Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo, and Ouahigouya

No. Dead: 441

No. Affected: 3,801 cases between January 4 and June 27, 1981

### The Disaster

Upper Volta is in the "meningitis belt" which stretches from Senegal across the Sahel through the Sudan. Localized outbreaks of meningitis occur every year during the dry season, while major pandemics occur approximately every eight to ten years. The 1981 epidemic was spread out over a broad area stretching across the Mossi Plateau from Ouahigouya in northwestern Upper Volta to Tenkodogo in the southwest; the city of Ouagadougou and Koudougou were the most severely affected areas.

### Action Taken by the Government of Upper Volta (GOUV)

In March 1981, when information about the extent of the epidemic became known, the GOUV requested assistance, in the form of vaccine, from the international community. In addition, the GOUV Council of Ministers made an emergency appropriation of 20.5 million CFA (\$82,000) for the purchase of vaccine and medicine to supplement the 6,000 doses of meningococcal vaccine already available within the country. The vaccination campaign was conducted by the Ministry of Health through EPI (Expanded Program of Immunization) centers located in the affected areas. Between March 26 and April 19, 103,138 people aged three months and older were vaccinated in Ouagadougou, and by May 27, 283,200 doses of vaccine had been sent to rural areas.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

The USG, through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), responded to the GOUV's request for assistance by sending 200,000 doses of meningococcal A/C vaccine to Upper Volta. The vaccine was procured from two private U.S. firms and sent by airfreight in two separate shipments, the first arriving on March 30 and the second on April 6, 1981. The USG-provided vaccine was used to vaccinate children three months to 14 years of age in Ouagadougou, Tenkodogo, and Koudougou. The vaccination campaign was carried out by local vaccination teams supplied by the GOUV Ministry of Health. Total value of the vaccine including airfreight) was .....\$50,068

In addition, an estimated \$2,000 of in-kind assistance (the loan of four ped-o-jets and a ped-o-jet technician) was provided by the A.I.D. Mission in Ouagadougou..... \$2,000

TOTAL \$52,068

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

Foster Parents International - provided 50,000 doses of A/C vaccine valued at approximately \$13,000.

TOTAL \$13,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

UNESCO - provided 10,000 doses of meningococcal A/C vaccine, value estimated at \$2,500.

UNICEF - provided 100,000 doses of A/C vaccine, value estimated at \$25,300.

World Health Organization (WHO) - supplied 300,000 doses of A/C vaccine, value estimated at \$74,100; \$4,000 worth of antibiotics; the services of an epidemiologist; and a room to use as a communications center during the epidemic.

Governments

France - provided 40,000 doses of A/C vaccine through the French Fund for Aid and Cooperation (FAC), value estimated at \$10,000.

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Voluntary Agencies

Association for the Promotion of Preventive Medicine (a French foundation) - aided control efforts in the Tenkodogo region.

TOTAL

\$115,900

\* Please note: the figures for total U.S. voluntary agency and international assistance are an approximation. In many cases, the cash value of in-kind aid is unavailable.