



WFP Lesotho Country Brief

Highlights

- The Government advised the suspension of all relief activities in May, during the preparations for the elections on 03 June 2017.
- The delivery of food for WFP supported schools for the second quarter has been finalized; however, Early Childhood Care and Development centres are yet to receive food as stocks are insufficient.
- WFP and the Government have agreed on the extension until December 2019 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of school feeding.

WFP Assistance

Country Programme Lesotho	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
CP 200369 (2013-2017)	41.5 m	23 m (56%)	1.1 m

*May - October 2017

The Country Programme (CP) comprises two components: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and Nutrition support and HIV support. The CP supports preparedness for primary education among pre-school students and assists the Government's efforts in the prevention and treatment of undernutrition. The CP also tackles malnutrition with strategies that improve the socio-economic status of communities. The strategies include: implementing supplementary feeding programmes, advocacy for an increased national budget for nutrition, strengthening community linkages, implementing sustainable livelihood interventions, scaling up research and information sharing as well as building strong partnerships. To address insecurity caused by the El Niño drought, WFP intensified its fundraising activities to continue the CP's long term objectives.

School Meals Programme	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
Trust Fund (TF) 200771: (2015-2017)	15.5 m	8,000 (52%)

Through the School Meals Programme, which is fully funded by the Government, WFP provides 189,511 children in 921 primary schools with morning porridge and a lunch meal of maize with either beans or peas. The meals provide micronutrients and improves the learning environment, increasing enrolment and attendance and reducing dropout rates. With regards to the El Niño-induced drought, the meals served as an effective safety net for children from food insecure families. WFP also supports the Government's education strategy of free and compulsory primary education.

Support to drought affected population	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
PRRO 200980 (June 2016-Dec 2017)	26.7 m	13.2 m (49%)	6 m

* May - October 2017

GENDER MARKER 2A PRRO 200980

With 709,000 of the 1.5 million rural population in need of urgent food assistance, the Government of Lesotho declared a state of emergency in December 2015. Through an Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP), March-August 2016, WFP reached 22,115. Under the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), WFP has assisted more than 170,000 food insecure people since October 2016. The plan is to assist 263,000 people by December 2017 through conditional and unconditional cash and food based transfers.

In Numbers

709,000 people affected by the drought
263,000 people targeted by the PRRO

162,609
People Assisted
under the PRRO in
April 2017



Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Kabelo Nkone
Caption: Country Programme USAID food stocks being received in the main warehouse in Maseru.



May 2017

Operational Updates

- Due to the Government's advice to suspend relief activities leading up to the elections, there were no distributions under WFP's relief component in May. Recovery activities under the resilience component reached 850 participants in six project sites in Maseru's Hoek. Activities are in accordance with the Ministry of Forestry's public works programme and rehabilitate land and harvest water to enhance agricultural production at household and community level. The families of the participants benefit from food assistance received as compensation for the work done and reached 4,250 people in May.
- In May, WFP facilitated meetings with stakeholders and the Assistant Secretary General and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Coordinator, Ms. Gerda Verburg during her three days visit to Lesotho. The purpose of the visit was to collectively take stock of progress made in addressing malnutrition, identify challenges and propose recommendations on the way forward. The SUN Movement 2017 Joint-Assessment Exercise, aimed to assess progress of nutrition activities in the country between the period April 2016 and April 2017, was undertaken.
- WFP supported the recruitment of a Food and Nutrition Strategy Consultant, funded by REACH and seconded to government's Food and Nutrition Coordination Office.
- The Terms of Reference for the research team which will undertake the Zero Hunger Strategic Review is under development.
- In May, 36,500 people received food assistance (300 mt of maize meal, pulses and vegetable oil) to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, to support people receiving antiretroviral therapy or treatment for tuberculosis and vulnerable orphans and vulnerable children. The activity is funded by USAID/PEPFAR and is carried out in the districts of Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.

Challenges

- There is currently a funding shortfall of USD 1.1 million to cover the components of Country Programme. Commodities are only available for the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme for children aged 6 to 23 months in three districts.



A group of women in Mokhotlong district with WFP Country Director (left) advocating for super cereal plus in feeding of children 6 to 23 months of age. Credit: WFP/Kabelo Nkone

Country Background & Strategy



More than half (57 percent) of Lesotho's population live on less than one dollar per day. Lesotho's GDP stands at USD 2.2 billion while its national gross income per capita is USD 1,500 (World Bank). Revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) contributes a significant proportion to Lesotho's national budget. The Government allocates seven percent of its national budget to safety nets such as school feeding, pension for the elderly, child grants and cash for work.

The population's high vulnerability is exacerbated by recurring climatic hazards, including droughts, early frost and a low performing economy. As a result, 29 percent of people below the age of 35 years are unemployed. The country is also characterized by an extremely high HIV prevalence rate (25 percent) and has to provide care for more than 250,000 orphans, most of whom lost their parents to AIDS. Life expectancy stands at 49 years.

Agriculture, which contributes seven percent to the GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 80 percent of the population living in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government's efforts to build the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards, with the view to stimulate agricultural production.

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1965.

Population: **2.1 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **161 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

Donors

The Government of Lesotho, Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, CERF, ECHO, World Bank, GFDRR, WFP Multilateral and private donors

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