



WFP Armenia Country Brief

WFP Assistance

Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
DEV 200128 (2010 - 2017)	30.3 m	29.1m (96%)	-

*May 2017 - October 2017

Launched in 2010, WFP's School Meals Development Project provides school meals in food insecure areas with a two-fold objective: 1) to support the food security and education of children through school meals, and 2) to support the Government of Armenia in developing and implementing a sustainable, cost effective and nutrition sensitive national school meals programme.

Since September 2015, the programme has provided meals to 81,500 primary school children, and distributed take-home entitlements to 1,700 kitchen helpers involved in the daily preparation of school meals. Of these, the Government is funding the costs for 21,500 primary school children in three provinces (Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Ararat), where the gradual shift from a biscuit and juice snack modality to more nutritious hot meals increased from zero to 45 percent in 2015 and to 87.7 percent by January 2017. WFP continues to advocate for a cooked versus snack modality because hot feeding provides multiple health benefits and significantly improves diet diversity through well-balanced portions of protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamin and mineral daily requirements. Cooked meals are culturally appropriate as they are tailored to local tastes, which is another facet of their added value. For the remaining 60,000 children under seven WFP-administered provinces, the project provides diversified hot meals to all children from grades 1-4. With the technical support of WFP's cooperating partner, Social and Industrial Food Services Institute (SIFI), WFP pursues the objective of fostering government ownership of the national school meals programme through the gradual handover of the remaining seven provinces of the country.

The project is in line with the new WFP Strategic Plan of 2017-2021, and by building partnerships to enable children to exercise their rights to nutrition, health and education, the project contributes to Sustainable

Main Credit: Ministry of Education and Science of RA.
Photo Caption: WFP meeting with the Minister of Education and Science of RA.

Highlights

- The official results of Armenian's Parliamentary elections held on April 2nd gave victory to the ruling Republican party.
- On April 11th, the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC), in cooperation with WFP and Maastricht University, presented the findings of a new study, titled "Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia" at the UN House in Yerevan.
- Arminian Government signed an agreement with WFP to cover the costs of in-country food transportation and storage.

Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 4 and 17. School meals is also aligned with the priorities of the 2014-2025 Armenia Development Strategy, namely: the human capital development and improvement of social protection

According to 2016 [Country Gender Assessment](#) of Asian Development Bank, the extent to which men and women share the same equity in Armenia indicates limited progress in the last five years. Government policy related to gender equality has evolved from measures aimed at addressing women's issues to a more comprehensive view of disparities between women and men. Although the country has consistently scored high in equal access to education and positive health outcomes for women, this has been negated by a lack of progress in women's political empowerment and women's declining access to economic opportunities.

The school meals programme directly and indirectly addresses gender equality and women's economic empowerment through involving school headmasters, parent teacher associations (PTAs) and kitchen-helpers represented by women in decision making and the implementation processes. The PTAs, where 92 percent of participants are women, are encouraged to regularly mobilise resources and engage parents and communities in school meals activities. They also participate in the planning and monitoring of food preparation in the schools. The programme provides opportunity for 1,700 women kitchen helpers to contribute to the food security of their households by receiving food entitlements calculated for five family members. As reported by post-distribution focus group discussions, the women increased their confidence and self-esteem by being employed in the programme, as they realize their potential outside their homes.

In Numbers

59,999 primary school children reached

1,666 kitchen helpers assisted with family rations*

**People Assisted
April 2017**

53%



47%



*kitchen helpers received food entitlements calculated for five family members.



April 2017

Operational Updates

- On April 11th, the Caucasus Research Resource Centre in Armenia (CRRCC), in cooperation with WFP and Maastricht University, held a workshop at the UN House in Yerevan to present the preliminary findings of a new study, titled "Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia." The workshop allowed key stakeholders in the country to critically assess and discuss the main findings of the scoping study and to translate these findings into policy recommendations. Over twenty representatives from line ministries, UN agencies and NGOs attended the workshop, including the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Centre of Strategic Initiatives, FAO, and UNICEF. Formalising a coordination mechanism across ministries and sectors to optimise social protection programming in Armenia was a prominent item of discussion. WFP commissioned the study as part of a larger effort to expand the evidence base on social safety nets and food security in the country and support the Government's efforts on rethinking national social protection programmes in light of the 2030 transformative agenda. The results of the study will further inform the formulation of the National Strategic Review.
- WFP held a productive meeting with His Excellency the Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Levon Mkrtchyan, and his advisers to provide a strategic and an operational update, and to discuss the future of WFP's capacity strengthening initiatives with the Government. The Government was pleased to hear about the successful implementation of the cash-based transfers (CBT) in Tavush province, and encouraged WFP to take on this approach in other provinces. To support the handover process for the next two provinces (Shirak and Aragatsotn), MoES and WFP agreed that WFP will conduct a comprehensive assessment on the kitchen infrastructure of all primary schools in both provinces in collaboration with SIFI, its cooperating partner. The assessment will be conducted from May to June to determine kitchens' and cafeterias' renovation and equipment needs. In addition to these operational updates, the Ministry agreed to nominate Government focal points to attend the upcoming Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) in Canada this September. The MoES also pledged to disseminate a draft of the new National School Meals Strategy document by the end of April for WFP's review.

Partnerships

The Country Office and the Government of Armenia renewed a trust fund agreement, which annually commits the Government to cover in-country food transportation and storage costs (ITSH). The Government has covered these costs in previous years, however changes in legal criteria delayed the renewal.

Country Background & Strategy



Armenia is a landlocked country and highly vulnerable to external shock factors, including global economic downturn and conflicts. Border closures with neighbouring Turkey and Azerbaijan since Armenia's independence in 1991 have constrained economic development of the state. According to the latest [National Statistical Service](#) data, the poverty rate reached 29.8 percent of the population in 2015.

WFP established its presence in Armenia in 1993 with an emergency operation. During 1999, the emergency operation was replaced with a protracted relief and recovery operation. Since 2010, the Programme has shifted to development assistance, through Development Project 200128 – 'Development of Sustainable School Feeding'. Aligned with the Government's priorities, WFP continues to support the ongoing development of a National sustainable school feeding programme.

Based on the [Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis \(CFSVNA\)](#) conducted in March 2016, WFP proposes to keep the focus on school meals, with a potential expansion to social protection programming around disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness. The results of National Zero Hunger Strategic Review, anticipated to be endorsed by the Government in October 2017, will further reshape the Country Strategic Plan of WFP.

Population: **2.97 million**

2015 Human Development Index:
85 out of 188

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **19% of children between 0-59 months**

Donors

Republic of Armenia, Israel, and Russian Federation

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