



## WFP Armenia Country Brief

## Highlights

- On 7<sup>th</sup> July, the National Assembly approved the 2017-2022 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, which establishes the strategic framework for the next five years across all sectors.
- The Minister of Finance approved the 2017-2019 mid-term Expenditures Framework, which includes School Feeding with two additional provinces to be taken on by the Government.
- On July 21, the Minister of Education and Science signed the Development Project Action Plan, formally extending the collaboration of WFP with the Government of Armenia through 2018.
- Increased Shootings in the Tavush Province were reported on 21 July, making significant damages, but school meals handover to the Government remains scheduled for September 2017.

### 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)	35.5 m	29.1 m (82%)	-

\*Table reflects the T-ICSP starting from January 2018

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 has increased substantially but still varies from region to region. Of the 261 schools the Government oversees, 157 fall under the hot meal modality. There remains, however, a large discrepancy between schools in the Ararat and Vayots Dzor provinces, where schoolchildren receive 85 percent and 34 percent of hot meals, respectively. Compared to a snack modality, hot feeding provides multiple health benefits, including dietary diversity, adequate provision of daily protein and fat requirements, as well as culturally accepted meals attracting children. For the remaining 60,000 children under WFP-administered provinces, the project provides diversified hot meals to all children engaged from grades 0-4. 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 in the country.

By building partnerships to enable children to exercise their rights to nutrition, health and education, the project contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 17, and is in line with the new WFP Strategic Plan of 2017-2021. School meals is also aligned with the priorities of the 2014-2025 Armenia Development Strategy: human capital development and improvement of social protection.

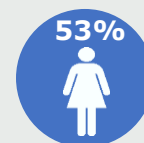
Government policy related to gender now encompasses a more comprehensive view of the disparities between men and women. Nonetheless, despite consistently high levels of equal access to education, and improvements in women's health, Armenia has yet to target women's political empowerment, and increasing their access to economic opportunities. The main gap identified by FAO is pronounced in the labour market, with women receiving 65.9 percent of men's average wages.

The involvement of school headmasters, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and kitchen helpers represented by women in the decision-making process has contributed to increased levels of confidence and self-esteem amongst women participating in the programme. 92 percent of participants in PTAs are women encouraged to regularly engage with the communities and mobilise resources in school feeding activities. Furthermore, 1700 female kitchen staffs benefit from the programme's food entitlements, which contribute to the security within households and allow for women to realise their augmented potential both within and outside the home.

## In Numbers

**60,000** primary school children reached  
**1,700** kitchen helpers assisted with family entitlements

**People Assisted July 2017\***



\*No distributions were made during July as schools are closed due to summer holidays.

Main Photo

Credit: Yessai Nikoyan, WFP.  
Caption: Country Director Pascale Micheau and H.E. Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrtchyan signing the DPAP



July 2017

## Operational Updates

- **National Assembly adopts the 5-year Programme of the Government of the Republic of Armenia:** The National Assembly officially endorsed the 2017-2022 Government Programme, which stresses sustainable development, and propels the country's growth through economic progress and large-scale reforms. The 5-year plan sets the ambitious targets to achieve 5 percent annual GDP growth, to reduce poverty by 12 percent and to increase by 25 percent minimum salaries. Furthermore, the Government Programme seeks to combat corruption, to bolster human development and technological capacities, and to foster stronger ties between the more than 7 million Diaspora Armenians and their homeland. The national School Feeding Programme is included in the Programme, with balanced and safe diet as an important step to enhance the quality and the accessibility of primary education for schoolchildren. The Programme also stresses food safety regulations as well as investment in the agriculture sector as a means to improve food security.
- **Government signed the extension of the Development Project Action Plan (DPAP):** On 21 July, the Minister of Education and Science signed the third extension of the DPAP, prolonging WFP's cooperation with the Government on School Meals through 31 December 2018. Aside from WFP technical support to the State School Feeding Foundation and Republican Training Centre, the extension includes the forthcoming two provinces transitioning to full government ownership, Tavush and Shirak, which are scheduled for September 2017 and 2018, respectively.
- **Nationalisation of SDGs and MAPS Mission:** Government officials have indicated their highest commitment to nationalising SDGs, as well as fostering a multi-partner inclusive dialogue. With the establishment of four subcommittees clustering SDGs, the first series of separate working groups meetings under the respective subcommittees took place. Armenia hosted a one-week Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support (MAPS) mission from UN Head Quarters to discuss the situation, challenges, gaps and opportunities, as they relate to inter-ministerial topics. MAPS identified the following five accelerators for the SDG "roadmap": Effective public administration; human capital development; social protection-leaving no one behind; economic transformation; and natural capital development. WFP assumed a consultative role in both processes, helping to put the Armenian context into perspective, and advising on policy and programming at the nexus between food security, social protection, education and rural development, from the SDG 2 standpoint.

## Challenges

- On 21 July, Chinari and Barekamavan villages of Tavush Province reported increased incidents of shooting. While there were no casualties reported, the shooting resulted in significant damages on individual and community assets, like flour mills and kindergarten schools. However, it did not hamper the implementation of the school meals programme. The Province of Tavush will transition to the national ownership in September 2017 and WFP will continue accompanying the process to sustain the programme quality.

## 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. Armenia's HDI, which stands at 0.743, remains low compared to the average HDI of neighbouring countries in the region, according to the latest data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

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 July 2017, will shape the Country Strategic Plan of WFP from 2019 onwards.

Population: **2.97 million**

2016 Human Development Index:  
**84 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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