The Namibian School Feeding Programme, introduced by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in the early 1990s, is now managed and implemented by the Government of Namibia. The programme transformation symbolises WFP's evolving role in southern Africa and is indicative of governments’ initiative to find lasting solutions to hunger and food insecurity.

Namibia’s school feeding programme was born from an initial one-year WFP pilot that developed into a four-year, joint WFP-Government project launched in 1992. During the latter period WFP established mechanisms for the longer-term sustainability of a School Feeding Programme in Namibia under full government ownership. WFP initially provided the major share of the budget and oversaw training of personnel at school and community levels. The Ministry of Education, initially in charge of monitoring and targeting, assumed full control of the programme in 1996.

The transition of the WFP-implemented programme to the government coincided with Namibia’s improved financial capacity and attainment of middle-income status as well as an improved policy environment and institutional arrangements for coordination and implementation.

By 1996, the number of programme beneficiaries had increased from an initial 148 in the southern region of Karas to 78,000 in 364 primary schools across Namibia. The programme had also garnered widespread recognition as a vital tool for increasing access to and equity within education in Namibia, thanks to the support and participation of communities across the country. Strong political will and government commitment ensured the continuing sustainability of the programme.
Other countries in the region transitioning from externally supported to nationally owned programmes can draw the following lessons from the Namibian experience:

> **Policy:** embedding school feeding programmes in national legal and policy frameworks enhances their sustainability. Namibia’s school feeding programme is rooted in nine national policies and strategic and development plans.

> **Stable funding:** school feeding programmes fully funded by government using local resources tend to be more effective and easier to scale up.

> **Institutional frameworks:** A dedicated and fully staffed institution needs to be in place to manage the programme. The Namibian school feeding programme is managed by the Ministry of Education and has structures at national, regional and circuit levels for its implementation.

> **Programme design:** School feeding programmes using locally produced food tend to have greater sustainability because they stimulate local agricultural production. Sixty-five percent of food commodities used in the Namibian school feeding programme are locally sourced to boost local economies.

> **Community participation:** Programmes with strong community support and participation in decision making, oversight and contributions enjoy enhanced sustainability. In Namibia relying on local communities to implement the school feeding programme has not yet yielded positive outcomes due to their limited capacity. Several support mechanisms to relieve the burden of vulnerable communities are being considered, such as linking smallholder farmers to school feeding, providing cash incentives to cooks and supporting schools with non-food items.