

The main objective of the WFP School Meals Programme is to provide an incentive to encourage children in the economically disadvantaged mountainous regions of Lesotho to attend school, as well as enhance regular attendance and retention. WFP will also develop the capacity of the Government to manage the School Meals Programme by 2017.

School Feeding in Lesotho

Since 1965, WFP has been implementing a School Meals Programme in Lesotho for both pre- and primary school children. 2014, 250,000 children in pre- and primary schools countrywide are benefitting from the WFP's School Meals Programme while 190,000 children are receiving two meals a day at school through a Government-led programme. The Government has embarked on a transition process whereby as of 2015 it will cover the costs of the programme while WFP will be the implementing actor until 2017. During this period, WFP will assist the Government build its capacity and draft a school feeding policy which will inform the national programme.

Activities

- ◇ **Fortified Meals:** All beneficiaries get a breakfast meal of sweet porridge and a lunch meal of the staple food *papa* with either fish or beans. The meals are cooked with fortified maize-meal, sugar, iodized salt and fortified oil. The food provides energy, enhances the learning capacity, improves enrollment rates and keeps the children in school. The meals at pre-primary schools encourage parents to enroll their children until they are ready for primary education.
- ◇ **Home-grown pilot:** A Local Purchase Pilot for school feeding, involving 51 schools was initiated by the Government with the assistance of WFP. The pilot links school feeding to the local agricultural production. An evaluation, to be conducted in November 2014, will help inform other future local purchase initiatives.
- ◇ **New Kitchens and Storerooms:** Under the School Meals Programme, WFP is currently building 23 kitchens and storerooms in schools in five districts. The buildings will improve storage and security of food commodities while the kitchens will provide suitable facilities for cooking. The Government of Lesotho is providing US\$760,000 for the project. WFP is currently negotiating with the Ministry of Education, the extension of the programme to additional 40 schools.
- ◇ **Tackling Micronutrients Deficiencies:** WFP is finalizing preparations for the implementation of the micronutrients pilot project in Thaba-Tseka, which is one of the districts with high micronutrients deficiencies among children.
- ◇ **Promoting School Gardens:** In an effort to encourage food production by primary school pupils, WFP is providing vegetable seeds to some WFP assisted schools. The initiative will help inspire similar school-based projects and promote innovative diversification of the schools' food basket.



Grade one pupils at Semonkong African Methodist Episcopal Primary School, Rapelang Letuma and Mpho Mohai enjoy their lunch.

Achievements

- 250,000 pupils receiving two school meals per day since 2012.
- 190,000 pupils benefitting from the Government-led school programme.
- 83 percent net enrolment rate in 2006 compared to 70 percent in 2003.
- 92 percent attendance rate in 2013 compared to 70 percent in 2003.
- A transition for the Government to be able to take over as of 2018 is ongoing. An MoU has been signed, the Ministry of Education and Training has taken the lead on the drafting process of the national school feeding policy document, the government will invest around US\$8 million for school feeding in 2015.
- Government and WFP's Local Purchase pilot in 51 schools (linking the school feeding programme to agricultural food producers and suppliers).
- 23 school kitchens and storerooms are in the process of being built thanks to a government contribution of US\$ 760,000
- Employment creation through the engagement of local communities providing catering services.