Local meals to fight hunger at school

In the world’s most vulnerable countries, a daily school meal provides a powerful incentive to send children (and especially girls) to school and keep them there. Proper nutrition is also vital to ensuring students are able to concentrate and learn. The WFP home-grown school feeding programmes, linking school lunches with small-scale farmers’ production, are an effective way of providing adequate nutrition for students, boosting local agriculture and transforming food assistance into a sustainable investment for the whole community.

**DURATION:** 2014-2017

**CHALLENGE:** Access to Basic Services

**COUNTRY:** Burkina Faso

**PARTNER:** World Food Programme

**CONTEXT**

School feeding is helping mitigate hunger for millions of children around the globe, contributing to their education, nutrition, health and future productivity. School meals programmes have many benefits: they provide a powerful incentive to send children (and especially girls) to school and to keep them there, while ensuring students receive the nutriments they need to concentrate and learn more efficiently. The production and purchase of school meals from local small-scale farmers, prominently women, boosts local agriculture and transforms food assistance into a sustainable investment for the whole community. Burkina Faso has been identified as one of the countries with the greatest need for the WFP programme linking school meals and local agriculture.
**ACTION**

- **School meal programme:** all 839 primary schools as well as 19 pre-schools in the Sahel region of the country are provided with daily meals prepared onsite by community members, mainly mothers of students, while the food stock is managed by a committee including a teacher, two students, two parents and two cooks.

- **Milk pilot initiative:** locally produced yoghurt is gradually replacing the current mid-morning meal, externally provided and made up of cereal, reaching 2,263 children. The milk pilot scheme targets 2,500 primary school children in 20 schools that are close to existing milk processing facilities. 110,000 litres of yoghurt will be produced per year so that each child receives 250 g of yoghurt every day. The milk initiative targets increased milk production by small-scale farmers: a specialist, experienced in milk product distribution and milk transformation has been identified to train smallholder cattle breeders, supervise dairy cow selection and monitor animal health and milk quality.

- **Boost local agriculture:** the domestic purchase of locally produced maize and beans stimulates the local economy, providing smallholder farmers with a stable market for their products, increasing their income and encouraging the reinvestment of resources. Small-scale farmers’ organisations are empowered to become effective players in the agricultural market through training on post-harvest handling, financial literacy, gender awareness, marketing and record keeping.

- **Government support:** WFP works alongside the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy to set up a nationally owned, funded and managed home-grown school meals programme. It also collaborates with the Ministry of Animal Resources in the milk initiative to support increased milk production by small-scale farmers, participate in dairy cow selection, monitor animal health, verify milk quality and train smallholder cattle breeders. The Ministry of Health ensures that milk delivered to schools meets hygiene and sanitation standards.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

The global purpose of this programme is to reduce hunger while strengthening children’s access to primary education, to leverage purchasing power by connecting small-scale farmers with markets and to create an enabling environment that promotes economic opportunities and gender equality. The main expected results are:

- 330,000 litres of yogurt (110,000 per year) purchased locally from smallholder associations and distributed in schools
- 10 trainings on hygiene and dairy product handling organised for smallholder farmer organisations
- 1% increase in the number of girls and boys enrolled in WFP-assisted schools
- Rise in the retention rate of boys and girls at WFP-assisted schools to 99%
LONG-TERM STRATEGY
WFP is working alongside the Government to enable it to take over the school feeding initiative, and create nationally owned, funded and managed home-grown school meals programmes. The WFP’s efforts to link school feeding and local agricultural and milk production addresses the root causes of hunger and food insecurity by helping farmers and smallholder cattle breeders access markets, boost their incomes and improve their livelihoods. School feeding programmes are multisectoral in nature. WFP works with other United Nation agencies (including UNDP, FAO, UNFPA and IFAD) to ensure coordination, sustainability and efficiency.