

Reducing hunger among school kids

In many developing countries, a daily school meal provides a powerful incentive to send children (especially girls) to school and keep them there. Proper nutrition is also vital to ensuring students are able to concentrate and learn. The World Food Programme (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: Mozambique

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 nutrients they need to concentrate and learn more efficiently. The production and purchase of school meals from local small-scale farmers, predominantly women, boosts local agriculture and transforms food assistance into a sustainable investment for the whole community.

Mozambique has been identified as one of the countries with the greatest needs for the WFP programme linking school meals and local agriculture.

ACTION

Two initiatives are supported by WFP and the Ministry of Education, as part of a pilot phase that lays the foundation for a nationally owned, funded and managed home-grown school meals programme.

- *School meals programme:* 74,500 students and 2,000 teachers and voluntary cooks at 175 primary schools in two vulnerable districts of Tete province (Cahora Bassa and Changara) benefit from hot meals of fortified maize meal, beans, vegetable oil enriched with vitamin A and iodized salt.
- *Boost local agriculture:* All food commodities are purchased locally and partially from small-scale farmers' organisations. The three-year commitment provides small-scale farmers both with quality training and the assurance of guaranteed demand, which is essential to encourage investment and access to credit.
- *Government support:* WFP supports the National Government's testing of decentralized food procurement models in 12 primary schools in the provinces of Nampula, Tete, Manica and Gaza, reaching a total of about 13,500 students.

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. Specifically, the programme aims to increase school enrolment and attendance rates and increase the use of local products in schools:

- 885 metric tonnes of maize and pulses are purchased locally from smallholder associations and distributed in schools
- 24 associations of smallholder farmers (587 farmers) are trained in market access and post-harvest handling skills
- The number of boys and girls enrolled in WFP-assisted schools is increasing by 6% per year
- The attendance rate of boys and girls in WFP-assisted schools has risen to as much as 90% of schooldays (disaggregated by gender)

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

WFP's efforts are geared towards ensuring Government ownership of the school feeding initiative, with a view to creating a nationally owned, funded and managed home-grown school meals programme. The already-approved national school feeding programme plans to achieve gradual coverage of all pre-primary and primary schools in the country, starting from the most food-insecure areas, and emphasizes community engagement and nutrition education. This WFP initiative to link school feeding and local agricultural production addresses the root causes of hunger and food insecurity by helping farmers, particularly women, produce higher quality food and access markets where they can sell it at a fair price, boosting their incomes and improving their livelihoods. School feeding programmes are multisectoral in nature. Synergies with other relevant development actors and stakeholders, such as UNICEF, the World Bank and WHO, are promoted to ensure sustainability and efficiency.