

World Food Programme  
**FACTSHEET | SCHOOL MEALS IN KENYA**



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## QUICK FACTS

With **McGovern-Dole** support, WFP has built national capacity for school meals in:

Raising awareness on the importance of education

Building a rehabilitating school kitchens, storage and sanitation facilities

Raising awareness on nutrition

Raising awareness on hygiene and sanitation, such as handwashing

Promoting food safety and quality

Donations to WFP Kenya by McGovern-Dole 2004–2017.

**US\$121.5 million**

# McGovern-Dole and WFP Food for Primary Education

## The impact...

**T**he Government of Kenya will completely take over school feeding in Kenya by end of 2018 after more than three decades of joint WFP-Government programming. The announcement was made by the Cabinet Secretary for Education in May 2017 during the African Union Home-Grown School Feeding meeting in Nairobi and followed sustained advocacy and engagement by WFP on the benefits of investing in a national school meals programme.

Generous support from McGovern-Dole has enabled **WFP to engage fully with the government** on the benefits of school feeding, whilst **developing the capacity of the government** to take over ownership of the programme.

The transition of school feeding to government ownership was made possible thanks to **generous predictable multi-year funding to the school meal programme by international donors**. This enabled the provision of daily meals to school children to continue across the country while a strong **transition strategy** was put in place to systematically hand over WFP-supported schools to the government.

Continued support to the Kenyan school meals programme is now enabling **1.5 million children** to receive a hot meal at school every day.

In 2017/2018, the Ministry of Education **increased the school meals programme budget** by US\$16 million to **US\$25 million** as a commitment to the transition. By 2019, with sufficient funding and the required legal frameworks in place, Kenya could have one of the largest locally procured and fully government-financed school meals programmes in Africa.



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In June 2017, the Ministry of Education and WFP formulated a roadmap to ensure an effective and accelerated transition of the programme by the end of 2018.

**The National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy**, formulated with the support of the McGovern-Dole programme, the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil and other donors, was finalized and endorsed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries this year, and is scheduled to be launched in December 2017 at a national school meals conference. The national conference is an





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## Benefits to schools of McGovern-Dole support

- On average, school attendance by girls has increased to almost equal that of boys.
- Parent-teacher groups have formed, increasing the awareness of the importance of education in communities.
- Schools storing food appropriately (not on the ground) increased from 67 percent in 2014 to 76 in 2016.
- Teachers have been trained in better food preparation and storage practices, decreasing spoilage.

important avenue for enhancing advocacy on the school meals programme.

According to a 2016 evaluation, provision of school meals has resulted in a **2–4 percent increase in school attendance** in the arid counties and informal settlements. The project has also allowed WFP to transition 1.2 million children in 17 semi-arid and four arid counties to the Home-Grown School Meals Programme. By the end of 2016, nearly 1 million children were receiving meals under the government-led Home-Grown School Meals Programme, whilst WFP was providing one hot school meal per day in all primary schools in eight of Kenya's arid counties and Nairobi's informal settlements, reaching over half a million children.

Thanks to support from the McGovern-Dole programme, WFP has been able to continue supporting school meals in arid counties – with low capacity markets, remote regions and limited infrastructure – whilst the government has increased its capacity to manage the school meals system and has been able to transfer to a robust to a cash-based school meals system.

From January 2019, the McGovern-Dole programme will be continuing to support the Kenya school meals programme through WFP by building the capacity of the national and county governments to manage the school meals programme.



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with a meal, the programme was also designed to **stimulate local markets** by enabling schools to **purchase food from local smallholder farmers** and food suppliers. Schools were provided with cash to buy what they needed to prepare and serve the daily school meal. This initially covered 12 counties (half a million children), and by 2012 had covered all primary schools in 13 semi-arid counties (800,000 children).

To pave the way for a smooth transition to a fully government-owned programme, in 2013 WFP launched a transitional **cash-transfers-to-schools** programme. This programme was designed to prepare government officials and communities to integrate their schools into the national Home-Grown School Meals Programme. At the same time, with the continued support of in-kind food donations from the McGovern-Dole programme, WFP was able to continue providing school meals in arid counties with more challenging environments that were not ready to make the transition to cash transfers. ■

## How it happened...

McGovern-Dole has been supporting school feeding in Kenya since 2004. At the time, WFP and the Kenyan Government were jointly implementing a school meals programme targeting all the primary schools in the most food-insecure districts with the lowest enrolment and completion rates in Kenya's 23 marginalized arid and semi-arid counties and the informal settlements of Nairobi. Meals were being provided through the traditional in-kind WFP programme.

In 2009, the Kenyan Government launched its own school feeding programme, the Home-Grown School Meals Programme. In addition to providing children at school



**"Without food, we cannot concentrate in class, we will be anxious about what we will eat at night."**

**Hamisi Bakari, Grade 4, Malnomai Primary School.**

# En route to a national school meals programme in Kenya

## Overview

**S**ince 1980, WFP and the Ministry of Education have jointly implemented a school meals programme targeting the most food-insecure districts with the lowest enrolment and completion rates and high gender disparities.

In 2009, the Government of Kenya started a national Home-Grown School Meals Programme to provide a meal to children at school to support education achievements, while also stimulating local agricultural production through the purchase of food from smallholder farmers and local food suppliers.

Today, WFP and the Government of Kenya are giving a hot lunch to more than 1.5 million children attending school across the country each day of the school term. The Government is set to fully take over the school meals by the end of 2018.

To better understand this journey, we speak with **Mr. Abdi Habat, the Director of Primary Education in Kenya.**



**Mr. Abdi Habat**  
Director of  
Primary  
Education  
in Kenya

**Q: The Government of Kenya started the Home-Grown School Meals Programme in 2009. What is the progress so far?**

**A:** The Home-Grown School Meals Programme was launched in 2009 in the semi-arid regions, feeding about 540,000 children. Since then, it has expanded to become one of Kenya's flagship projects. This programme is now reaching 1.2 million children in the arid and semi-arid areas, while WFP complements it in four arid counties (Garissa, Mandera, Turkana and Wajir) and in informal settlements in Nairobi – reaching another 394,000 children.

The number of children reached by WFP is being progressively scaled down as counties are handed over to the Home-Grown School Meals Programme. Starting at the end of 2018, the responsibility of giving hot meals to pupils will be solely borne by the Government.

**Q: Why is the Government keen on taking over school meals in Kenya?**

**A:** The Government is keen on taking over school meals because it is committed to improving the livelihood of its citizens as demonstrated by the constitution, Vision 2030 and other legislation such as the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, and the National School Health Policy. The Government views its action as strategic for enhancing national ownership of the programme and thus making it more sustainable. The responsibility of feeding our

children lies with us but we appreciate the support provided by WFP for more than 35 years.

The school meals are critical in not only giving children access to education, but also in providing access to safe and nutritious food. As a safety net, school meals contribute towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 – Zero Hunger.

Access to food and good health is a basic human right, as well as achieving desirable education outcomes such as quality, equity and access. But school meals not only enable children to access education, but also empower parents economically by boosting local economic growth.

**Q: What steps is the Ministry taking to guarantee the success of the programme?**

**A:** The Ministry has worked closely with WFP to prepare a roadmap to take over the funding and implementation of school meals. This entails building capacity of all the stakeholders, investing in relevant structures and policy documents such as the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy, and the National Food Quality and Safety Strategy.

The Ministry is also actively lobbying to have adequate resources for school meals set aside in every financial year. Already, the Government is setting aside US\$25 million every year for the Home-Grown School Meals Programme.

**Q: How will the partnership between the Ministry and WFP look like post-July 2018?**

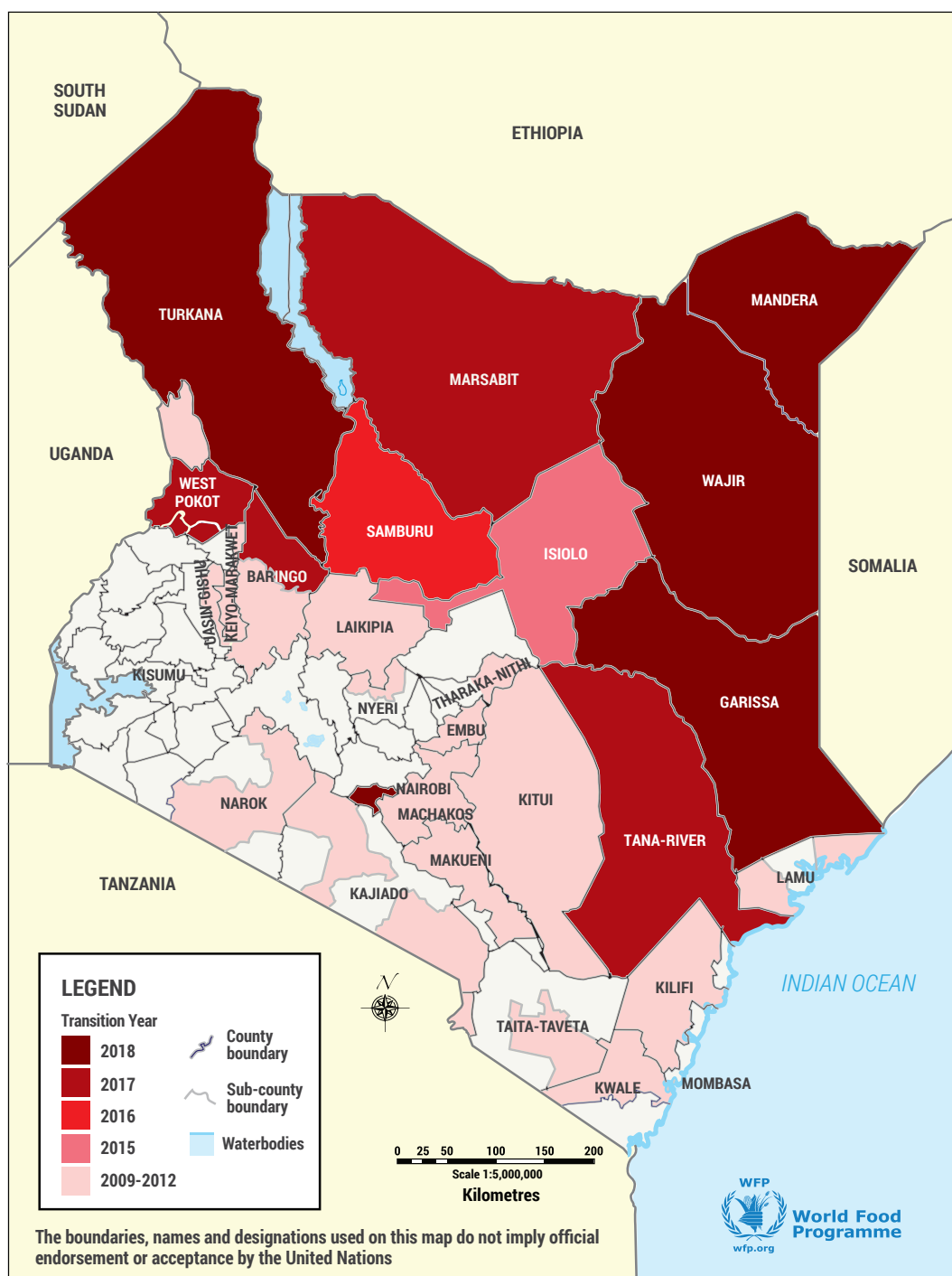
**A:** The Ministry will still continue working with WFP even after the completion of the hand-over phase. While the responsibility of providing the meals will be the role of the Government, we hope we can count on WFP to support robust implementation by offering technical support and advice.

Together we have built a sustainable national school meals programme that will be fully owned, financed and managed by the Government. Ultimately, the Government looks forward to the day when all pupils attending in Kenya will be entitled to a free school lunch – a universal school meals programme. ■

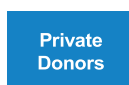
“Access to food and good health is a basic human right, as well as achieving desirable education outcomes such as quality, equity and access.”



## Transition of School Meals from WFP to the National Home-Grown School Meals Programme



### List of Donors in Alphabetical Order (Since 2014: CP 200680)



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