

# SCHOOL MEALS IN NIGER



## STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE BY INVESTING IN EDUCATION

### NIGER AT A GLANCE

EXPECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING

**5.4 years**  
FEMALE 4.8  
MALE 6.1

MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING

**1.5 years**  
FEMALE 0.8  
MALE 2

POPULATION WITH AT LEAST SOME SECONDARY EDUCATION (AGED 25 AND ABOVE)

**5.2%**  
FEMALE 2.4%  
MALE 7.8%

GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO

PRE-PRIMARY (PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN)

**6.6%**  
RURAL 3%  
URBAN 32.1%

PRIMARY (PRIMARY SCHOOL-AGE POPULATION)

**74.2%**  
FEMALE 68%  
MALE 80.2%

PRIMARY SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE (PRIMARY SCHOOL COHORT)

**25.8%**  
FEMALE 35.4%  
MALE 14.1%

### SCHOOL FEEDING IN NIGER

School meals are an essential safety net that help to ensure that every child – even those from the poorest households – has access to education, health and nutrition. World Food Programme (WFP) school meals help households break the cycles of poverty and hunger and better cope with shocks and stresses, while supporting children to concentrate in class, build their potential and develop into healthy adults.

In Niger, WFP is providing school meals, in line with the National School Feeding Strategy, to empower beneficiary families to cover food needs and better cope with shocks, while improving school enrolment and retention. The programme is active throughout the country and targets areas where dropout rates are high and access to education is limited, particularly for girls. The package consists of two in-school meals per day (breakfast and lunch), and a third evening meal for nomadic students.

At the community level, complementary activities are implemented in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) through school gardens and herds and the installation of grain mills to reduce the burden of chores on women and girls. Complementary activities, which are identified and prioritized through a participatory process, contribute to food diversification, and present an entry point for information, education and communication related to gardening, food and the environment. The programme also fosters behaviour change by integrating awareness-raising activities on key family practices, gender and nutrition.

In line with the home-grown school meals approach, WFP looks to increase local purchases from smallholder farmers to improve their integration into the economy. WFP technical assistance facilitates capacity strengthening for the Ministry of Education in the design and implementation of school feeding programmes.



“With the installation of the grain mill and the school meals, things are going better. Our kids eat three meals a day and are able to concentrate on their studies. Thanks to the grain mill, women and girls’ chores have lessened significantly. Mothers have more time to devote to their children and girls can engage more in education.”

-Aissa, School Meals Programme beneficiary in Tajaé, Djirataoua

<sup>1</sup> UNDP, 2015 Human Development Report, [hdr.undp.org/en/data](http://hdr.undp.org/en/data).



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## HOW DOES WFP WORK IN NIGER?

The WFP Niger School Meals Programme is designed to support government institutions and builds on an integrated multisector approach that uses schools as entry points for achieving desired nutrition, health and education outcomes. WFP also serves as an implementing partner for the Government on a World Bank school meal grant within the framework of the Global Partnership for Education.

The School Meals Programme relies strongly on community participation, including for meal preparation and storage. WFP encourages local women to take on these and other activities to support their economic empowerment and stimulate income generation. Municipal education services manage activities to increase government ownership of school meals and facilitate eventual handover from WFP to government counterparts. School meals are linked directly with local value chains through local purchase of food products

from small farmers and innovative tools, such as the electronic voucher system, are used to connect local farmers to the school meal programme.

Particular emphasis is placed on supporting the school enrolment and educational empowerment of girls and young women. In some pilot areas, adolescent girls receive cash grants to encourage families to keep girls in secondary school. The objective is to improve girls' educational attainment and self-confidence and decrease the risk of early marriage, all of which will contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

In crisis settings such as in Diffa, WFP provides school meals to help meet the basic nutritional needs of affected children and get children back into the classroom quickly. This effort serves as an effective bridge between humanitarian interventions and educational development outcomes.

**“School gardens have brought a big advantage to our community. First it has improved the nutritional situation of our kids. They are well nourished and healthy. But it also offers a pragmatic learning and awareness raising channel on agricultural techniques and opportunities and the environment.”**

**-Istefanus Garba, School Director in Tibiri, Madarounfa**



## ZERO HUNGER AT THE HEART OF THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



The Sustainable Development Goals represent an integrated and comprehensive approach to development that places the eradication of hunger, malnutrition and poverty at the core of the agenda. The agenda recognizes that ending hunger

means ensuring access to nutritious food for the most vulnerable, increasing agricultural production through sustainable and resilient food systems and tackling the multidimensional causes of malnutrition. As a key safety net, school meals directly contribute to eliminating hunger and ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food throughout the year.

## KEY RESULTS

- In 2015, nearly 200,000 children received meals and benefited from complementary activities in 1,250 schools, including 568 schools serving nomadic populations.
- Initial trends indicate that the programme has had a positive impact on school retention. According to the most recent official data from the Ministry of Education, in 2014, the dropout rate in WFP-supported schools was 1.3%, compared with 12.4% in schools not receiving WFP support.
- WFP has also supported the Ministry of Education in the areas of advocacy, policy design and implementation, including on local purchase from smallholder farmers within the framework of the home-grown school meals approach.



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