



Safe Access To Fuel and Energy (SAFE) Liberia

Saving lives through SAFE cooking

WFP works to ensure that the food assistance provided can be consumed as safely and nutritiously as possible. While cooking may be thought of as a safe activity, in many circumstances, especially humanitarian settings, it poses serious health, safety and environmental risks. In Liberia, people face severe challenges related to the use of solid fuels and traditional cooking practices.

FACTS Liberia

- **About 98 percent of the population depends on solid fuels (mostly firewood and coal) for cooking.** This dependence contributes to deforestation and can lead to heavy pressure on local environmental resources.
- In some regions, adherence to cultural norms has resulted in **low adoption of alternative, fuel-efficient cooking practices.**
- In Liberia, **school meals are predominantly cooked on traditional three-stone fires**, a highly fuel- and time-intensive system.
- **Cooking with solid fuels on open fires exposes school cooks and children to toxic fumes and serious health hazards.** WHO estimates that indoor air pollution from cooking with solid fuels leads to 4.3 million premature deaths per year.

Until 2015, Liberia has supported 79,000 people through the SAFE initiative. WFP has globally reached over 6 million people with SAFE in 18 countries.

The challenge

In Liberia, where adoption of fuel-efficient stoves is limited, cooking can negatively affect the well-being of vulnerable populations, especially women and children. In school canteens, the preparation of meals can be a long and unsafe process for cooks and students alike. Exposure to indoor air pollution poses major health risks for cooks and students and is associated with higher mortality from respiratory diseases. Traditional open fires are very inefficient, requiring great amounts of fuel and multiple hours of cooking.

Currently in its pilot phase, WFP-assisted schools in Liberia are transitioning to Home-Grown School Feeding, where the food to prepare school meals is procured from local farmers. This initiative will bring numerous benefits to local communities by enhancing the nutritional status of school children and supporting the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. Providing more sustainable and nutritious meals to students also requires fuel to cook. Addressing energy needs can both reduce costs for schools and provide a healthier environment for cooks and students.



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Working on sustainable solutions

The **success of SAFE in Liberia** relies on an innovative combination of energy-related and income-generating activities aimed at ensuring that local cooking systems do not impede the populations' ability to safely prepare and consume school meals. These activities focus on nutrition, livelihoods, health, gender, environment and education.

SAFE in Liberia

In 2013 WFP and its partners launched the SAFE initiative in Liberia, integrated with WFP's School Meals Programme. The programme aims to address the cooking energy needs of populations in the Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Maryland, Bomi, Grand Bassa, River Cess, Gbarpolu and River Gee counties through the implementation of the following activities:

1. The installation of **locally-produced and fuel-efficient institutional stoves in WFP-assisted schools.**
2. **Training of school cooks** on stove production, use and maintenance, as well as on fuel-efficient cooking practices.
3. **Awareness-raising** on environmental conservation and the benefits of fuel-efficient stoves.



Progress to date

- Production and installation of **291 fuel-efficient institutional stoves in 291 schools** have reduced pressure on the environment, as the improved stoves require **40% less fuel** to prepare the same meals.
- 580 school cooks have been trained to use the improved stoves and have reported a **20% decrease in time required for food preparation.** The improved stoves also emit **less smoke, making cooking faster and safer for school cooks.**

Future objectives Liberia

Building on the success of the pilot phase, SAFE in Liberia is actively seeking funds to expand its installation of fuel-efficient stoves to an additional 350 schools under WFP's School Meals Programme.

Complementary activities will include tree planting and trainings of teachers, PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations) and school administrators on stove use and maintenance. This in order to reduce the environmental pressure of meeting fuel needs so that they can safely and fully prepare meals for their children.

The activities will aim at improving the health conditions of school cooks and students by reducing their exposure to toxic emissions from cooking and the health risks associated with it. They are also expected to raise awareness and reduce pressure on the environment.

WFP has globally committed to support 10 million people through SAFE activities by 2020.

A global survey conducted by WFP in 54 countries in 2015 highlighted that two thirds of these countries had energy-related concerns affecting people's food security, nutrition or safety. WFP has cookstove activities in 27 of its country offices.