Operational Context

With the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2019-2024, WFP Armenia embraced a new phase of programme implementation with innovative interventions and new delivery modalities in the areas of nutrition, social protection, food value chains and disaster risk reduction. The new programmes continue contributing to the efforts to end hunger and achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030. To ensure sustainable and equitable impact, WFP programmes are inclusive and gender-transformative to empower women in key areas, ensure education for all, have a climate-sensitive design and improve the sustainable management of natural resources. WFP Armenia will continue nurturing its continuous and efficient partnership with the Government of Armenia, national and international partners, and involve stakeholders from the whole of society for a maximized and greater impact.

WFP has been in Armenia since 1993, initially to provide emergency support. Since 2000, WFP has shifted to development assistance and under the CSP focuses on enabling, supporting and strengthening an environment for the government to provide solutions for increased food and nutrition security.

Armenia is an upper-middle income, landlocked, net food-importer country vulnerable to external shocks. Since its independence in 1991, the border closure with neighbouring Turkey and Azerbaijan has constrained the country’s economic development. According to the latest National Statistical Service data, the poverty rate reached 25.7 percent in 2017.

Operational Updates

- WFP Armenia is piloting a clean energy greenhouse model for schools to sustainably produce their own fruits and vegetables and serve as a platform for teaching students about sustainable agricultural practices. In December, the green house in Aragatsotn province was equipped with a solar station, which will be technically verified in January together with training sessions on solar station and green house management for school staff.

- In 2019, WFP Armenia implemented a snack pilot project targeting preschoolers to complement the School Feeding Programme. The pilot aimed at providing evidence of the role of school snacks in supporting learning of preschool-aged children. In December the impact evaluation was finalized, and it showed that the provision of morning snacks to preschool children contributed to closing the “ability to learn” gaps between children coming from less advantaged households and their peers. The ability to learn parameters tested during the evaluation were: processing speed, fluid reasoning, and short-term memory. The provision of morning snacks was popular both among families and among school administrators; as nearly half of children in the provinces were not used to having breakfast prior to coming to school. The findings of the evaluation will feed into the revised School Feeding Strategy 2020 of the Government of Armenia.

- In December in cooperation with Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute (SIFI) an initial assessment for the School Feeding and Food Value Chain projects was conducted in “Arpi” community in Shirak province. Upon discussion and finalization of the combined School feeding and Food Value Chain project proposal, project implementation is expected to be initiated in the first Quarter of 2020.
donations apart from the contribution of WFP and the parents. According to monitoring results, 89% of the parents make contributions to cover other necessary food and products.

**Partnerships**
- In December, the partnership unit started consolidating many of its partnerships through the formal exchange of letters with the Agrarian University and the ICRC to move forward implementable actions with its partners for 2020-2024;
- WFP Armenia received a Vulnerability, Analysis and Monitoring (VAM) mission from the Regional Bureau in Cairo, Egypt. The mission showcased the latest technological innovations that WFP has made available to implement in countries the tools, analyses and best practices to monitor the evolution and impact of the climate crisis on countries. The mission also trained staff on shock simulation models, which can monitor impact in changes of food prices. Thanks to these new tools, project and funding proposals will be shared in Q1 of 2020 with partners to support national efforts to balance growth with climate change and to monitor price shocks.

**Donors**

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**Photo Caption:** Children from Dzorakap village participating in the school feeding programme.