



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Namibia Country Brief October 2020



Operational Context

WFP’s focus in Namibia shifted from food aid to providing technical assistance to the Government. The aim is to strengthen national capacities to end hunger by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of food systems to include: safety net programmes, such as school feeding, national food bank programme, relief operations, and to enhance the Government’s capacity to assess, plan and respond to food security needs.

The emergence of COVID-19 has caused adverse effects on the socio-economic fabric of the country. High levels of job losses, disruption of markets, a significant drop in government revenue, closure of schools have had adverse negative effects on the economy. The most affected people are communities with fragile livelihoods caused by years of recurrent drought and people living in informal settlements. IPC results paint a grim picture with over 18% of the population in IPC 3 plus. On the other hand, field assessments in October indicate an emerging group of youth and women who are engaging in entrepreneur ventures in the crop and livestock sector, a consequence of COVID-19.



Population: 2.3 Million

2018 Human Development Index: **173 out of 189 countries**

Income Level: **Upper Middle Income**

2019 Global Hunger Index: **97 out of 117 countries**

In Numbers

US\$ 1.1 million Cash Based Transfers (envisaged to begin in December 2020)

US\$ 2.3 million six-month (November 2020 – April 2021) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

WFP Country Director met with the Head of state: Following WFP’s nomination as Nobel Peace Prize winners, H.E the President of the Republic of Namibia hosted George Fedha, Country Director, to congratulate WFP on this milestone. H.E highlighted the significance of school feeding as a social safety net and an enabler to learning with a potential of creating a structured market for smallholder producers. He emphasized the need for sustainable food systems to address hunger and poverty.

School feeding resumed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic: Schools in Namibia resumed fully in September/October 2020, with learners reporting to school in shifts (twice to thrice a week) to ensure adherence to the COVID-19 protocols. Learners are subjected to regular handwashing and mandated to wear masks and practice social distancing. School feeding resumed with learners receiving fortified maize meal (porridge) complemented with pasta donated to WFP by the Russian Federation.

COHA study Resumed and due to finish in December 2020 WFP in partnership with the National Planning Commission, UNICEF, FAO and GIZ resumed the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) study which had stalled due to funding constraints. Primary data in the health sector was collected in October and relayed to the African Union, who will complete the study by December 2020. The findings from this study will bring nutrition to the fore-front and influence policy change.

Fill the Nutrient Gap Study: This study coordinated by WFP (lead), in partnership with the National Planning Commission (government lead), IFAD, GIZ and FAO. The study is intended to highlight the major drivers of malnutrition and proposes actions to address the gaps. Namibia continues to have worrying malnutrition trends with stunting at 24%, wasting at 13% and underweight at 3%. This study is due to finish in March 2021.

CSP Revision: WFP Namibia has reviewed its CSP in response to an evolving socio-economic of the country following the advent of COVID-19. This will be followed by an external consultation exercise scheduled to take place in the first week of December 2020 involving government, donors, sub-national government leaders, the private sector, civil society and the WFP regional bureau.

International Disaster Risk Day Commemoration

Namibia celebrated the International Disaster Risk Day on the 13 October 2020, with the theme, “Substantially increase in the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies”. The localized theme was “increased

WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2017–2022)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
22.3 m	16.3 m	2.3 m

Strategic Result 01: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 01: Vulnerable populations in Namibia are enabled to meet their food and nutrition needs throughout the year.

Focus Area: *Root Causes*

Activities:

- Provide capacity strengthening to the government entities responsible for national shock-responsive safety net programmes.
- Provide capacity strengthening and technical assistance to the government entities responsible for school feeding.

Strategic Result 05: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 02: Government policy dialogue and programme design in Namibia are informed by enhanced evidence and knowledge of hunger issues throughout the NDP5 period.

Focus Area: *Root Causes*

Activities:

- Provide capacity strengthening to government entities involved in hunger-related policy and programming.
- Provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare and partners involved in the implementation of the Zero Hunger Road Map

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 03: Targeted food insecure households affected by shocks in Namibia benefit from enhanced access to adequate food and nutrition during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus Area: *Crisis Response*

Activities:

- Provide food assistance to vulnerable people affected by shocks.

Monitoring

- The WFP Programme Team accompanied the Country Director on a Country-Wide assessment of the effects of COVID-19 and years of recurrent drought on communities that WFP supported with food assistance in 2019/20. Key findings from the field visits indicated that markets were significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a direct effect on food access.
- WFP and UNICEF carried out a joint field visit to assess the effects of COVID-19 on schools in Omaheke region. The visit established that the region was adapting quite effectively to teaching while observing the COVID-19 protocol. Learners go to school in shifts, allowing for adequate spacing in class. All learners wore masks and adhered to regular handwashing. Learners received school meals.

SCOPE: WFP continued to engage with the government and the Regional Bureau as well as HQ, on the transition of SCOPE to government. The government is urging WFP to provide a robust and all-encompassing digital solution to

bring cohesion to its social safety net programmes, whose data management is currently disjointed.

Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis:

During emergencies, the actual traditional means of vulnerability assessments become a challenge. With COVID 19 impacting on most activities of government, innovative ways of collecting data become key. WFP Namibia Country office introduced Mobile Vulnerability Assessment (Mvam). Data collection tools have been finalized and the use of mVAM envisaged to begin in February 2020. This will strengthen the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) process.

Challenges

Resource mobilization remains a challenge in the phase of COVID-19. The CO spent most of October engaging with donors and senior government officials to lay a foundation for future funding. There is a general positive response from donors towards the enhancement of sustainable food systems and addressing malnutrition.

While schools have resumed, there is an increased concern that learners from poor households are deprived of half of the meals they would have otherwise received at school due to the restricted number of days (2 to 3) that each learner is supposed to attend school. WFP is advocating for a take-home ration for learners from food insecure households.

The effects of COVID-19 and years of recurrent drought have adversely impacted on the livelihoods of over 435,000 Namibians (18% of the population) who are in IPC 3+. And although a good harvest was anticipated in the previous season, some regions of the country continued to phase serious food shortages due to poor rains.

Partnerships Strengthening

WFP received Euro 1 Million funding from ECHO to provide food assistance to communities adversely affected by COVID-19 and effects of consecutive years of recurrent drought, through Cash Based Transfers. Over 30,000 beneficiaries are envisaged to benefit from this assistance. The assistance will be targeted to people residing in urban informal settlements and marginalized communities in Khomas and Omusati regions.

WFP held high level consultation meetings with Ministers and Executive Directors of various ministries, as well as Governors and senior regional officials in 10 regions of the country. WFP also met with numerous embassies. In all these meetings, the government urged WFP to cascade its capacity strengthening activities to the grassroots with a view to expand its scope of work to include strengthening of food systems.

Donors

USAID, European Union, Russian Federation, Brazil, Japan, China, Korea.