



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Eastern Africa

## School Based Programming

### Regional outlook and 2020 Achievements

June 2021

THIS BUILDING WAS FINANCED BY UNCDF/UNDP, EXECUTED BY G.O.U. NEX UNIT, AND IMPLEMENTED BY C.G.O. KARAMOJA DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT OFFICE.

UN WFP



SUPPORTS THIS SCHOOL THROUGH THE SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME



## Overview of School Feeding (In Numbers)

3,634,477 2,747,391  
Number of **school children reached** by WFP (Direct)



○ Planned ● Reached



USD value of **assets and infrastructure handed over to national stakeholders** as a result of WFP capacity strengthening support:

**USD 401,021**

Number of children reached with **alternative take home rations during school closure due to COVID**

**391,154**



Cumulative **government investment** to school feeding:

**USD 101.5 M**



## 2020 School Feeding achievements

School feeding is one of the most extensive social safety nets which yields substantial benefits across multiple sectors including health and nutrition, education, social protection, and agriculture. School feeding contributes to increased enrolment, enhanced learning, and support higher education achievement particularly among girls and young women. Where there is local procurement of food, school feeding provides a predictable market for smallholder farmers positively impacting their livelihoods and local agricultural systems. Given its potential multi-sectoral returns, school feeding is one of the most cost-effective interventions.

As part of an integrated school health and nutrition response, WFP worked jointly with national governments, UN agencies, NGO partners and communities to ensure vulnerable children including those living in extreme poverty access safe and nutritious school meals in eight out of nine countries across the region. WFP **provided operational support in crisis – affected Countries (South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and Burundi)** to increase coverage of existing school feeding programmes and **technical assistance in stable countries with emerging and/or established capacity such as Kenya, Djibouti, Rwanda, Uganda, and Ethiopia** to transition to national government ownership.



## Enhanced Partnerships and Complementary Interventions in school feeding

For improved outcomes, WFP has strengthened its partnerships with UN agencies and partners, and the Governments ministries to provide a comprehensive package of essential interventions. WFP is committed to ensure school children have access to safe and nutritious foods and complementary nutrition interventions. In 2020, countries in Eastern Africa provided essential package comprising of nutrition; water, health and sanitation (WASH); social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) campaigns and nutrition education; enhanced linkage to markets and food systems; and use of safe energy options.

The closure of schools due to COVID-19 posed risks to the education, health, and nutrition of approximately 10 million children in Eastern Africa. Working together with UNICEF, UNESCO and other Partners, WFP actively engaged in planning for safe re-opening of schools with the Government taskforces across the countries to restore access to education, meals, and health services.

WFP continued to strengthen its partnership with UNICEF to ensure school going children benefit from an integrated package of health and nutrition interventions in schools. This partnership has led to the development of a plan of action in Ethiopia outlining six key outputs for prevention and treatment of maternal and child wasting, and implementation of integrated package of health and nutrition interventions in schools.

**In South Sudan**, WFP and UNICEF ensured vulnerable school children receive a holistic set of interventions, including a nutritious school meal, improved teaching-learning materials, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH),

and strengthened Parent and Teacher Associations' capacity. Fortification of school meals using micronutrient powders which was hampered in 2020 due to the protracted closure of schools will be implemented in 2021.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education (MOECHE) **in Somalia**, schools supported jointly by UNICEF and WFP received an integrated package of quality education, school feeding, water, sanitation, health, and deworming interventions. **In Burundi**, WFP partnered with UNICEF and IFAD to develop a joint programme on food security and nutrition and hygiene strengthening in schools assisted under school feeding and strengthen the milk chain value chain, respectively.

In partnership with FAO and UNICEF, WFP established school gardens in 21 schools and piloted two hydroponics projects in Djibouti. Each agency provided specific expertise to the project: FAO provided training on crops and agriculture, WFP developed recipes on how to cook and preserve the nutritional value preserve of fresh produce, while UNICEF developed educational tools to support the project.

**In Burundi** WFP partnership with UNICEF, UNFPA and cooperating partners, increased awareness on gender-based violence, early pregnancies, and marriages through youth clubs across 278 primary schools in reaching nearly 35,000 school children. In Rwanda, WFP supported construction of essential school infrastructure such as kitchens and stoves, handwashing stations, water systems, eight girls' sanitary rooms and six latrines to improve sanitation and hygiene practices.

## COVID-19 impact on School Feeding outcomes

Prior to the closure of schools occasioned by COVID-19, an increase in enrolment and attendance was observed in schools providing meals to children across all the Countries. WFP reached a total of **2.7** million school children across the region. Except for Burundi, the rest of the countries closed schools as part of the Government containment measures. WFP supported the Ministry of Education across the different countries to develop back-to-school advocacy and campaigns to sensitize parents, teachers, community leaders and students.

To ensure that school children continue to receive a nutritious meal, WFP changed modality of the school feeding programme activities from daily on-site school feeding to alternative take-home rations reaching more than 391,000 school children in the region. This was also done to encourage re-enrolment and attendance; decrease drop-out rates; and improve learning after the prolonged school closures. Where schools re-opened for candidate classes and school children in

higher grades, on-site school feeding was provided to incentivize attendance, retention and improve nutrition status of students

Despite the high enrolment recorded in Burundi, the dropout rate remained above the target for both girls and boys due to funding constraints and increase in prices occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic which led to withdrawal of food suppliers. For the rest of the countries, overall enrolment and attendance declined in 2020 compared to the previous year. For example, overall attendance and enrolment in Uganda decreased by 13 percent and 6 percent respectively in 2020. In contrast, there was a general improvement in the overall primary school enrolment and retention rates in WFP assisted schools in Somalia compared to 2019. Notably, girls' enrolment rates were higher than for boys. The positive results can be attributed to the provision of school meals to children in WFP assisted schools.





## Government Investments in School feeding

To sustain the gains made so far, WFP continued to create an enabling policy environment and advocacy for increased budgetary allocations from the host governments. Despite the challenges occasioned by the onset of COVID-19, a total of **USD 101.5 million** was allocated to school feeding by the Governments of Burundi, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. This demonstrates their recognition of its contribution to human capital development and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

Notably, the Government of Rwanda made a historic announcement committing to a nationwide school feeding programme which expands the coverage of the Government-led school feeding from 600,000 students to 3.2 million pre-primary, primary and secondary students starting in the 2020/2021 school year. As a result, the national budgetary allocation to school feeding was increased from **USD 8 million to USD 37 million** taking up 10 percent of the annual budget for education sector with an additional allocation of USD 19 million for construction of school kitchens and stoves.

Similarly, the government of Burundi allocated **USD 2.5 million** to school feeding, an eight percent increase from the previous year, to facilitate strengthening of the milk value chain and introduction of innovative milk distribution to some of the supported schools.

WFP's activities in school feeding are aligned with governments priorities, and contribute to multiple sectors mainly education, nutrition, social protection, and local agriculture while also contributing to development of human capital. WFP will continue to support national ownership, leadership, and investment in school feeding programmes. Leveraging WFP expertise and knowledge, greater synergies and support will be established with government ministries and actors to safeguard the investments this far. WFP will continue to support countries' school feeding and education agenda while also advocating for, more resources in education and school health and nutrition; increased domestic financing for school-based programs; and stronger linkage and contribution to local agriculture and markets through local procurement from farmers and other producers.

## Home Grown School Feeding

In the Eastern Africa Region, WFP implements the home-grown school feeding across eight out of nine countries<sup>1</sup> with primary focus on providing nutritious school meals, stimulating local agriculture and markets, improving income and livelihoods of smallholder farmers through procurement of locally produced foods. Based on the priorities and context of the country, the programme was implemented using different modalities including cash-based transfer to schools, direct procurement from smallholder farmers, farmer organizations, and vouchers.

The Government of Burundi identified the HGSF programme as the largest and most important safety net for its vulnerable population placing it and nutrition at the top of its national agenda. The programme gained momentum with the selection of the First Lady of Burundi as a champion and increase of government budgetary allocation from **USD 2 million to USD 2.5 million**. To facilitate progressive handover of

the programme to the government, WFP supported development of a national HGSF policy and transition plan for the next fifteen years.

In Ethiopia, WFP in partnership with FAO supported Regional Bureaus of education to scale-up nutrition-sensitive HGSF by creating synergies with smallholder farmers while supporting the development of food safety and quality standard guidelines and training.

In August, WFP Somalia shifted modality of school feeding from in-kind food assistance to home-grown school feeding using value vouchers. This was driven by the need to increase the diversity of foods provided beyond the traditional in-kind assistance. WFP reached 90,000 school children and supported local markets through enhanced linkages between the local producers and schools. A total of USD 3 million was injected into the local economy.

## Nutrition sensitive School Feeding in Sudan

Through its partnerships with the Federal and State Ministries of Education, WFP initiated scale-up of nutrition-sensitive school feeding activities to crisis-affected areas across nine states in Sudan with further roll-out planned for 2021. The use of micronutrient powders to fortify school meals and use of high energy biscuits in school meals was piloted in 2020. Based on successful pilot activities, the products will be incorporated into the design of school feeding programme in 2021.

In some locations of Red Sea and Kassala states, where girls face significant barriers to education, distribution of alternative take-home rations were supplemented with cash-based transfers. As part of the support, SBCC messages on nutrition were developed and delivered together with the cash-based transfers to encourage purchase of diverse and nutritious foods for a healthy diet.



## Support to Government and Capacity strengthening

To enhance transition to national government ownership, WFP supported capacity strengthening efforts with focus on improving capacity of national institutions, policy environment, government financing, and advocacy efforts for school feeding.

In 2020, WFP handed over the school feeding programme **in Djibouti** to the Government. This is a significant milestone, with WFP now shifting from direct implementation to upstream technical assistance and capacity strengthening. The quick transition stemmed not only from WFP funding constraints, but also from the capacity built over the years through continuous technical assistance.

**In Ethiopia**, the Ministry of Education leveraged on WFP's expertise in policy and strategy during drafting of the National School Feeding Strategy which is expected to be finalized in early 2021. In partnership with Ministry of Education and FAO, WFP also trained smallholder farmers on food safety to improve supply chain, reduce costs and enhance efficiencies.

WFP supported government of **Rwanda** in designing of low-cost kitchens and menu modelling to guide procurement and food preparation activities. In 2021, WFP will provide technical assistance and staff secondment to support the establishment of the first school feeding unit.

Similarly, WFP collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education (MOECHE) of Galmudug in **Somalia** to establish a school feeding unit and trained staff on school feeding policy, stock management, coordination and monitoring and evaluation, and SCOPE registration. This will contribute to the effective implementation of the school feeding programme with the long-term goal of transitioning to government ownership.

**In Sudan**, WFP has expanded the school meals programme to 90 schools in South Kordofan, adding 12 schools in Blue Nile, to cover approximately 60,000 children in response to a rapid interagency assessment conducted in December 2019.

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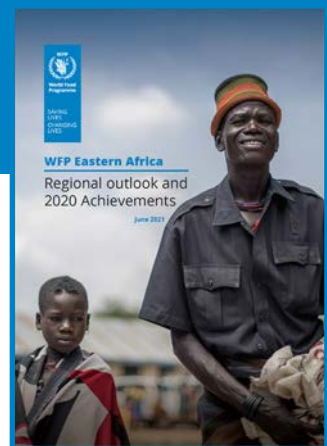
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Photo page 3: WFP/Hugh Rutherford

Photo page 5: WFP/Leni Kinzli

## Endnotes

1 Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda



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