



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
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LIVES

WFP Benin Country Brief March 2022



Operational Context

The Republic of Benin is a low-income West African country ranked 158 out of 189 countries on the 2020 Human Development Index report. The estimated population of 11.8 million is predominantly rural and juvenile, with an average age of 21 years old. The quality of education and the school environment are poor, and in many rural districts the primary school enrolment rate remains below 50 percent, particularly among girls.

The agricultural sector, predominantly small-fragmented farms with low productivity, employs around 70 percent of the population and contributes to 33 percent of the national gross domestic product.

Households spend on average 63 percent of their budget on food. Food insecurity mostly affects impoverished rural households; worsens during the lean season and increases after natural disasters, such as the heavy floods that affect the country every rainy season. Benin is classified by RISK INFORM as the 36th nation most vulnerable to climate change out of 190 states.

In Benin, as of 4 April 2022, there have been 26,952 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 163 deaths. As of 22 March 2022, a total of 3,333,450 vaccine doses were administered and 20.60 percent of the population was vaccinated (Benin - COVID-19 Overview - Johns Hopkins (jhu.edu)).

WFP has been present in Benin since 1964.



Population: **11.8 million**

Income level: **lower**

2020 Human Development Index: **158 out of 189**

Gender inequality index 2020: **158 out of 189**

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/benin

Photo: Local food purchase at Bembèrèkè.

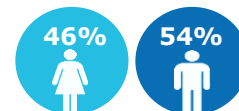
Credit: Makeba TCHIBOZO

In Numbers

1,773 metric tons of food assistance distributed in 3,846 schools in February 2022

USD 0.9 M six months net funding requirements (April-September 2022)

674,487 people assisted in February 2022



Operational Updates

- WFP supported school canteens operations in 3,846 schools and finalized the food allocation plan for the third quarter of the school year. In February, WFP supported 674,487 school children, among which 46 percent of girls and 54 percent of boys.
- In the framework of the school feeding programme extension, the country office monitored 82 casual workers (26 women) recruited to identify new schools that could join the programme. They trained the integrated school feeding management committee in each community and collected data to enable WFP plan food allocation in each school.
- WFP continued bilateral consultations at regional and local levels with the school feeding programme stakeholders on the identification of national capacity strengthening needs. A workshop will be organized to share with stakeholders the summary of capacity strengthening needs and a plan for national capacity strengthening will be developed in April 2022.
- During the month of March, the country office organized different activities to celebrate the 7th edition of the African School Feeding Day. In line with the topic of the celebration "Nutrition and Human Capital Development in Africa through increased investment in home-grown school feeding", WFP Benin developed and shared a short video with all stakeholders of the integrated national school feeding programme (Donors, Ministries, NGO partners, Local authorities). Two messages on the importance of home-grown school feeding and the link with school nutrition were broadcast throughout the month on community radio stations. There was also a celebration at departmental level in 11 schools that are part of WFP's school feeding programme. WFP reached in these schools more than 3,500 participants, including 2,853 children (1,380 girls and 1,473 boys).
- WFP, alongside the Government and other education sector Technical and Financial Partners, actively participated in the National Forum for Accelerating Girls' Education in Benin. School feeding was clearly mentioned as one of the priority strategies.
- On the "Resilience against COVID-19 in Borgou and Alibori (RECOBA)" project, WFP trained 94 farmers, including 30 women, on its requirements, good crops production technics (especially for the maize) and best storage methods.

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2022 Total Requirement (in USD)	2022 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
34 m	18.7 m	0.9 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable population including school-aged children in Benin have adequate access to safe, nutritious food and basic social services all year-round

Focus area: Root causes

Activity:

- Provide integrated and inclusive school meals programmes in targeted communities in a way that relies on and stimulates local production.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable population including children under 5, adolescents and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G) in targeted areas have improved their nutritional status in line with national target by 2023

Focus area: Root causes

Activity:

- Provide specialised nutritious food to children and PLWG to treat malnutrition and prevent risk of stunting and support Benin health services on nutrition education and gender-sensitive behaviour-change.

Strategic Result 3: Institutional capacity-strengthening

Strategic Outcome 3: National and local institutions in Benin have increased capacity to implement an integrated school feeding programme and to achieve food security by 2023.

Focus area: Root causes

Activity:

- Provide technical assistance and policy support, including through South-South cooperation, to local and national institutions in the areas of gender-sensitive school feeding, food security, and emergency food preparedness and response.

Strategic Result 4: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Crisis-affected populations in Benin can meet their basic food and nutrition requirements in the aftermath of shocks.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activity:

- Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations and strengthen the capacity and coordination among national partners in responding to crisis as a contingency measure.

After ensuring 100 mt of maize produced by these smallholder farmers are compliant with WFP's standards, WFP and the Swiss Cooperation organised on 29 March 2022 a ceremony to finalise the local purchase of maize with the cooperative SOMINA of Bembèrèkè. This activity will be undertaken with three other cooperatives in the coming weeks.

Monitoring

- WFP monitored 185 schools that joined the school feeding programme in February 2022 and strengthened the awareness of the communities around the national school feeding programme in new schools. This action accelerated the construction of school canteens in 182 communities and increased community mobilization.
- In 13 schools monitored, WFP noticed low financial contribution, non-compliance with hygiene conditions, and low attendance. WFP organized awareness raising activities on child education and good hygiene practices. The involvement of local authorities in awareness raising encourages increased community ownership.

Challenges

- Due to unfavourable rainfall conditions in 2021 and the impacts of COVID-19, there has been a decline in the local supply of food products. This situation has led to an increase in the prices of food and is delaying local purchases undertaken by WFP.
- The increase of fuel cost on the international market has resulted in a decrease in the availability of fuel at filling stations. This is delaying WFP food delivery operations for the third quarter of the school year and the start of the school feeding programme in the new schools.

Partnership

- Since 2015, Choithram International Foundation has been supporting Benin school feeding programme. Thanks to their financial contribution, for the period 2019-2020, WFP served 533,925 hot nutritious meals to 3,051 schoolchildren (44 percent girls) in 20 public primary schools located in vulnerable rural communities. In addition, in each community they financed the construction of a kitchen, a refectory, a clean water point, a garden, and Income Generating Activities. To appraise the activities implemented, Choithram's Head of Corporate Social Responsibility and WFP Private Partnerships and Fundraising Manager (PPF) for the Gulf organized field visits from 23 March to 26 March 2022. They visited the implemented activities in five communities, engaged with the beneficiaries, and expressed their appreciation for the engagement of the communities and their commitment to use wisely the infrastructures and equipment.

Donors

The top five donors to WFP Benin Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) are the Government of Benin, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and China.