Operational Context

The Republic of Benin is a low-income West African country ranked 166 out of 191 countries on the 2021/2022 Human Development Index report. The estimated population of 11.5 million is predominantly rural and juvenile, with an average age of 21 years. 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 30 percent of the national gross domestic product.

Benin is faced with various shocks, including floods, pockets of drought, rising prices, security challenges from the Sahel and the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors increase the vulnerability of the population to food insecurity and malnutrition, which represents the greatest risk factor for mortality and morbidity among young children in Benin.

Food insecurity, which 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.

Population: 11.5 million
Income level: lower middle
2021 Human Development Index: 166 out of 191
2021 Gender inequality Index: 152 out of 170

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Country Director: Ali OUATTARA
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/benin
Main Photo: Participants to the consultation workshop for the elaboration of the law on school feeding in Benin, 18 October 2022
Credit: WFP Benin

In Numbers

1,104,854 people assisted in October 2022
3,695,37 mt of food assistance distributed in October 2022
USD 14.9 m six-month net funding requirements (December 2022 - May 2023)

Operational updates

- WFP continued to support the drafting of the national law on school feeding in Benin. The drafting process started several months ago and has been conducted in an inclusive and participatory manner in accordance with the validated roadmap.
- WFP has planned in its Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023) to support the Government of Benin in the development of the school feeding law. That is why, as the government’s operational arm on this major social project, the institution is involved in this process that will result in a draft law on school feeding in Benin.
- On 18 October, WFP participated in a national consultation workshop for the elaboration of the law with the Ministry of Maternal and Primary Education. The workshop was supported by the Regional Center of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition (CERFAM). It brought together more than 30 participants, representing the stakeholders involved in the National Integrated School Feeding Program (PNASI).
- It enabled the identification of supply chain constraints and the need to strengthen capacity at all levels until the Government assumes ownership of the school feeding programme, with WFP in an enabling advisory role.
- This will entail mapping out steps for the piloting and implementation of a decentralized school meals model, exploring ways of providing cash-based transfers (CBTs) to schools, linking school meals to local production. sustainable school meals programme in Benin. The validation of the draft law is planned for the second half of November 2022.
- An initial discussion was organized under the joint coordination of the Government and WFP on 28 October to examine the existing national policies and strategies on school feeding, the functioning of the program including local purchases, the composition and adaptation of the food basket, and the financing of the programs. Discussions will continue online and a joint action plan will be developed in the months ahead.

Development of strategic partnerships

WFP Benin signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNFPA in September. Building on the extensive relationship developed over the past years, the two parties have agreed to design a results framework establishing indicators and focal points in each agency for the operationalization of the partnership. The main objective of this MoU is to use school canteens as a gateway to disseminate messages on gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, and life skills for children. This will enable the creation of spaces of protection and a lever for girls’ empowerment as well as for youth employment, especially for young women and the community.
**WFP Country Strategy**

**Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2022 Total Requirement (in USD)</th>
<th>2022 Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34 m</td>
<td>47.8 m</td>
<td>14.9 m</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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 (PLWG) in targeted areas have improved their nutritional status in line with national target by 2023.

**Focus area:** Root causes

**Activity:**
- Provide specialized 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 behavior-change.

**Strategic Result 5: Countries strengthened capacity**

**Strategic Outcome 3:** National and local institutions in Benin have increased capacity and improved inclusive systems to achieve SDG 2 including for integrated school meals and 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 1: 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, during and after crises.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activity:**
- Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations and strengthen the capacity of national partners on emergency response and coordination.

**Donors**

Top five donors to the WFP Benin in 2022 include the Government of Benin, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and the Choithram Foundation.

**WFP Benin Country Brief**

November 2022

**WFP Regular Programmes**

**School Feeding**

- Benin hosted the 23rd edition of the Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) from 24 - 27 October with over 250 participants from 44 countries. The participants visited six schools with canteens and focused on community involvement, nutrition activities, and partnerships with the private sector.

- On the sidelines of the Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) held in Benin from 24 - 27 October, the delegations from Haiti, Ghana, and Madagascar expressed interest in having more in-depth exchanges with school feeding stakeholders in Benin. The objective was to learn from Benin’s experience in the implementation of the PNASI.

- WFP Benin also supported the launch of the Fill the Nutrient Gap (FNG) analysis, which identifies a nutritious basket for school feeding, based on local products and the needs for the different country’s areas. This was done in coordination with the Permanent Secretariat of the Food and Nutrition Council (SP/CAN), a body under the supervision of the Presidency of the Republic.

**Nutrition**

- A workshop for launching the “Fill the Nutrient Gap” (FNG) Analysis was organized in September, under the coordination of the SP/CAN and with the participation of Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, InStaD, UNICEF, FAO, CARE International, Research and Academic Institutes (FSS, IRSP, FSA, UNA). The FNG analysis identifies barriers to adequate nutritional intake and proposes solutions to improve the availability of nutritious foods, as well as their physical access and affordability, particularly for the most vulnerable populations. The representatives of FNG stakeholders met in October to review the specific objectives of the analysis and define the parameters of the Food Cost Analysis in Benin.

**Capacity Strengthening**

- Following the training sessions on logistics and monitoring tools for NGO agents organized in September, WFP Benin developed and shared with all stakeholders a report presenting key figures and recommendations, with regard to the number of enrolled and active learners, the participation of NGOs, the success rate, and the results of the satisfaction evaluation.

- At the request of the National Institute for Training and Research in Education (INFRE), WFP provided school canteen management documents (such as guides, booklets, monthly and annual monitoring forms, distribution reports), and technical support for the training of 30 trainers, who will, in turn, be responsible for instructing nearly 700 new teachers and school headmasters on school canteen management.

**Emergency**

- WFP is implementing the “Emergency food assistance to Benin in response to COVID-19 and natural disaster” project which supports 50,000 beneficiaries with food assistance. A special support, in the form of enriched flour, was provided to children from 6 -24 months. Around 3000 kilos of flour for complementary feeding were distributed to 1237 children of Grand Popo and Athiémé after a nutrition status evaluation and cooking demonstration.