



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lesotho Country Brief March 2023



Operational Context

Lesotho is a lower-middle-income country with a population size of about 2 million. Poverty is widespread, persistent, and deep, especially in rural areas. More than half of the population lives below the poverty line, with the poverty rate at 49.7 percent.

The country is vulnerable to floods, drought, food insecurity and disease outbreaks. Low agricultural productivity, poverty, malnutrition, and the impact of HIV aggravate vulnerability to natural hazards. HIV/AIDS prevalence is high among adults at 22.7 percent, with the rate higher among women at 27.4 percent than among men at 17.8 percent. The country is also experiencing a triple burden of malnutrition – high levels of stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight across all age groups. Agriculture, which contributes seven percent of GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 70 percent of the population living in rural areas. WFP supports the Government's efforts in building the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards,

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1962.



Population: **2 million**

2021 Human Development Index: **168 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

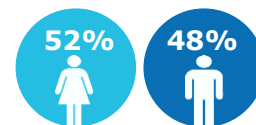
Chronic malnutrition: **34.8% of children between 6-59 months**

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In Numbers

US\$ 10 m six months (April 2023 - September 2023) net funding requirements, representing 67% of total requirements.

79,668 people assisted in March 2023



Operational Updates

Activity 1: Crisis response

- WFP provided food assistance through commodity vouchers to 29,668 people in Berea, Mokhotlong and Thaba-tseka districts. WFP partnered with local retailers across the three districts to deliver the food parcels to the value of LSL 1,100 (equivalent to USD 59). The assistance aims to address the immediate food needs of food insecure households. Over 25 percent of the population remain food insecure and due to the heavy rains and high food prices, the situation is not expected to improve anytime soon
- WFP held a rapid assessment validation workshop with key partners of humanitarian, disaster risk management and social protection systems to discuss and validate findings from the rapid capacity assessment study and to develop a road map on the way forward.

Activity 2: School Feeding

- WFP trained 1,343 participants from Butha-Buthe, Mochale's hoek, Quthing and Leribe districts to build the capacity of the school feeding committees on monitoring and management of the school feeding programme.
- WFP and the Ministry of Education and other partners celebrated Africa Day of School Feeding at Kepi primary school in Berea district under the theme: "Boosting Local Food Procurement Systems and Regional Value Chains: The role of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) for Sustained Home-grown School Feeding and Improved Learning". WFP has been providing technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education and Training since 2016.

Activity 3: Strengthening technical capacity of the Government on early warning systems

- Through the Adaptation Fund project, WFP and the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) facilitated district level workshops in Mafeteng, Mochale's Hoek, Quthing and Thaba-Tseka districts to develop anticipatory action plans with defined triggers, thresholds, and clear actions. WFP engaged district disaster management teams and other stakeholders to gather district level vulnerability information on drought and prioritize actions to mitigate the impact of drought. Anticipatory Action Plans are pre-agreed plans that consolidate information required to deliver timely action ahead of predicted extreme weather events. This includes details on forecast thresholds, triggers, readiness and anticipatory actions, targeted populations, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans, associated internal and partner responsibilities and costs.

Photo: Food parcels being loaded on donkeys at a distribution point in Mokhotlong. WFP/Malehloa Letsie

Country Strategic Plan (July 2019-June 2024)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
123.6 m	50.8 m	10 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Shock affected people in Lesotho are able to meet their food and nutrition needs during times of crisis.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- **Activity 1:** Provide cash and/or food transfers to populations affected by shocks.

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable populations in Lesotho benefit from strengthened social protection systems that ensure access to adequate, safe and nutritious food all year round

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- **Activity 2:** Support the Government in evidence-based planning, design, management and implementation of gender responsive social protection programmes, including by handing over the home-grown school meals programme.
- **Activity 3:** Strengthen technical capacity of the Government in early warning, food and nutrition security monitoring and vulnerability assessment and analysis through forecast-based financing approaches

Strategic Result 3: End Malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations in Lesotho have improved nutritional status, at each stage of the lifecycle, in line with national targets by 2024.

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- **Activity 4:** Provide capacity strengthening to the Government and other actors with regard to multi-sectoral coordination, planning, evidence-building and implementation of equitable nutrition policies and programmes.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable Food Systems

Strategic Outcome 4: Communities in targeted areas, especially women and youth, have resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems by 2024.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- **Activity 5:** Support the design and implementation of assets that are nutritionally relevant to improve and diversify the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households affected by climate change and land degradation.
- **Activity 6:** Provide technical support to smallholder farmers and other value chain actors, particularly women, in climate-smart agriculture, food quality and safety, marketing of nutritious foods and financial services

- WFP's Regional Director for Southern Africa, Mr. Menghestab Haile, participated in a High-Level Forum on Nutrition Financing hosted by His Majesty King Letsie III as the African Union Champion for Nutrition. The event was graced by the presence of African Union Heads of States and governments as well as representatives from international organisations and development partners. The objective of the two-day High-Level Dialogue was to present a draft comprehensive plan of action for the Abidjan Declaration on nutrition and to present available evidence and lessons on nutrition financing and discuss new, innovative, and more effective strategies for private sector investment in nutrition across sectors that can accelerate the positive route on nutrition financing and resourcing. The summit also allowed participants to review progress on the Malabo targets.
- WFP continued to lead the positive deviance trainings for government personnel from the ministries of agriculture, health, social development, and education in Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek districts. The objective of the trainings is to introduce and train stakeholders to use the positive deviance approach as a social and behaviour change mechanism to address malnutrition and equip stakeholders to apply the approach in communities. The trainings resulted in a thorough understanding of roles and responsibilities of various partners in nutrition and in some areas the participants drafted village action plans for nutrition life-skill interventions.

Activity 5: Resilience

- WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil and Conservation held sensitization trainings for 150 Food Assistance for Assets supervisors in Mokhotlong district (Mphokojoane council) to respond to community needs and empower communities to plan and implement appropriate resilience building activities. Topics included supervisory skills, WFP's humanitarian principles, protection and safety of participants, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the complaints and feedback mechanisms.

Challenges

- Due to funding constraints, WFP is not able to provide the required food basket at schools, which is impacting efforts to improve nutrition among children as, for some, the school meal is the only nutritious meal that they receive in a day. WFP needs USD 9.9 million for the next 6 months (April 2023 - September 2023), out of which USD 8.9 million is for the provision of meals through commodity vouchers and USD 1 million for the provision of meals through in-kind assistance.
- WFP needs an additional USD 0.7 million (April 2023-September 2023) to assist 30,920 people through Food Assistance for Assets activities. The funding shortfall negatively affected the establishment of new assets and the maintenance of existing communal assets as these activities had to be put on hold across the 21 project sites in Mafeteng, Mohale's hoek and Quthing districts.

Donors

ECHO, Germany, Japan.