



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Benin Country Brief September 2024



Operational Context

Benin remains a relatively stable country with a culture of peaceful transition of power since 1990. Nonetheless, it faces the spill-over effects of the conflict in Central Sahel and organized transnational crimes. This has led to population displacements both towards and within Benin, with asylum seekers and refugees increasing from 3,357 at the end of 2022 to 25,927 in August 2024 (UNHCR), and potentially reaching 33,000 by the end of the year. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) now number approximately 13,452, mainly in the Atacora and Alibori departments. This influx of nearly 26,000 forcibly displaced persons places immense pressure on already scarce food resources for host communities. Additionally, internal displacements disrupt agricultural production as people abandon their livelihoods for safety due to increased incursion of non-state armed groups, increasing malnutrition risks among vulnerable groups such as pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBW) and children. Recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS, 2023) show worsening nutritional status among children under two, with stunting at 36.5 percent, severe stunting at 14.8 percent, underweight at 21 percent, and wasting at 8.3 percent. Post-COVID-19 and the onset of the Ukraine crisis have driven up staple food prices, with maize prices increasing by 45 percent and tubers by 20 percent. Food insecurity prevalence has worsened in 2023 with 1.9 million people living in IPC Phase 2. The Cadre Harmonisé results from March 2024 indicated that more than 108,000 people in 15 communes of Atacora and Alibori alone were projected to face food insecurity from June to August 2024.



2023/2024 Human Development Report: **173 out of 193**

2022 Gender Inequality Index: **152 out of 170**

Income level: **Lower middle income**

Population: **13.7 million**

In Numbers

18,873 mt of food distributed since January 2024

79 smallholder farmer organizations delivering foods for the National School Feeding Programme and directly supported by WFP.

Operational Updates

School Meals Programme and Capacity Strengthening

- The 2024-2025 school year officially began on 16 September 2024, with 99.9 percent of the 5,615 opened schools successfully operating their canteens during the first few days. A total of 1,034,144 students, including 496,723 girls (48 percent), benefited from the school feeding program in the first week. This number is expected to increase in the coming weeks linked to delayed school openings and late student registrations. In line with the roadmap, the transfer of school canteens to the *Agence Nationale de l'Alimentation et de la Nutrition* (ANAN) is ongoing, while WFP continues to manage 400 schools with an integrated package of activities across eight communes. Additionally, a cash-based transfer (CBT) pilot is underway in 10 schools.
- A few canteens experienced operational delays, primarily due to factors such as the absence of students or teachers (including headmasters), ongoing classroom renovations. Additionally, some schools were inaccessible due to heavy rains that caused flooding and limited access. Some schools were not opened due to insecurity in the north.
- Several field visits were conducted throughout September to ensure the smooth start of the school canteens: From 26 August to 12 September, ANAN, in collaboration with WFP, organized a mission to assess, coordinate, and finalize preparations for the school canteens' successful opening. On 16 September, WFP's Resident Representative officially launched the 2024-2025 school canteen activities at EPP Metohoue, located in the Toviklin commune, Couffo department. The event was attended by the Prefect of Couffo, the Mayor of Toviklin, parliamentary members and local education officials. On 25 September, a delegation from the Netherlands visited EPP Zadakon in Djidja, Zou department. The purpose of the visit was to better understand the operations of school canteens, assess water access issues, and explore ways to improve the nutritional quality of school meals.

Nutrition

- WFP supported the Government in finalizing a National Nutritional Plan aimed at eliminating all forms of malnutrition, with a focus on the most vulnerable areas. Additionally, WFP collaborated with the Government and Nutriset and planned out the co-development of specialized nutritious foods for school feeding and emergency programs.

Photo Caption: ©WFP/ Edouard Gbozo

Contact info: Lisa Muszynski (lisa.muszynski@wfp.org)

Country Director: Ali Ouattara

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

WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2027)	
Total Requirements (US\$)	Total Received (US\$)
386.4 million	129.6 million
2024 Requirements (US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (Oct 2024 -Mar 2025)
81.4 million	0 million

SDG target 1: Access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: People affected by shocks in Benin can meet urgent food and nutrition needs before, during and after shocks, by 2027.

Focus area: *Crisis response.*

Activity 1: Provide food and nutrition assistance to shock-affected people, including school children, to meet their needs and technical assistance to national institutions and local actors to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacities.

SDG target 1: Access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: School-age children and communities in Benin have access to affordable, nutritious diets and basic social services because of the leveraging of the school feeding programme as an entry point for the achievement of enhanced nutrition, health, and education outcomes, by 2027.

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activity 2: Provide nutritious school meals to schoolchildren through an integrated and inclusive programme that benefits the community.

Activity 3: Provide technical assistance to targeted food value chain actors to improve the availability of locally produced nutritious food products, especially for school canteens.

SDG target 9: Capacity building

Strategic Outcome 3: Targeted institutions and systems in Benin have strengthened capacity to implement school feeding and other inclusive programmes to promote food security and nutrition, by 2027.

Focus area: *Root Causes*

Activity 4: Provide technical assistance to national institutions to enable them gradually to take operational ownership of the national school feeding programme.

Monitoring and Assessments

- As schools reopened after the summer vacation, WFP conducted extensive monitoring to ensure that all the 5,615 opened schools in the school meals program had received the necessary commodities for canteen start-up on 16 September.
- Monitoring efforts included verifying the availability of water, plates, cups, and functioning cookers in schools. Thanks to these efforts, 99.9 percent of schools successfully launched their canteen activities on the first day of the new academic year.

Communications, Advocacy and Marketing

- WFP organized an information workshop for 11 community partner radios in Parakou to promote awareness of the Integrated School Feeding and Nutrition Project (PiASN) and other WFP interventions. Additionally, WFP coordinated the official launch of the school feeding program on 16 September, at Métohoué public primary school in Toviklin. The event, attended by local authorities and media representatives, received coverage in local publications ([read here](#)).

Resilience

- In September, WFP trained 2,605 producers, including 1,032 women, in northern Benin on agricultural practices such as using Neem-based biological insecticides, local seed production, and cultivating crops like soybeans, maize, and vegetables. Training also covered bio-fertilizer production and livestock farming techniques. Equipment deliveries for creating assets and biopesticides were initiated, with plans to establish community gardens in Tanguiéta and Banikoara.
- Support was provided to vulnerable households in Banikoara, where 30 households received fruit tree seedlings and planting assistance, while 26 households were given improved cooking stoves to reduce firewood use. Additionally, 165 women involved in agricultural processing were empowered through training on associative life to strengthen networks and collaboration. In the context of implementing CBT for the school feeding program, a guide was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure the quality of food purchased for school canteens from producer organizations.

Donors:

Donors to the WFP Benin Country Strategic Plan (2023 – 2027) include Australia, *Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit* (BMZ), Brazil, Government of Benin, China, Choithrams Foundation, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Rockefeller Foundation, SODEXO.

Contact info: Lisa Muszynski (lisa.muszynski@wfp.org)

Country Director: Ali Ouattara

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