



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Lesotho Country Brief April 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**

2022 Human Development Index: **168 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

## In Numbers

**US\$ 11.5 m** six months (May 2023-October 2023) net funding requirements, representing 68% of total requirements.

**50,000** learners received nutritious school meals in April.



## Operational Updates

### Activity 1: Crisis response

- WFP's 2022/2023 lean season response was planned to end in March 2023, but the rains received in March resulted in postponement of some distributions; the assistance continued into the first two weeks of April.
- People that received the assistance also benefitted from the nutrition education undertaken in partnership with the district nutrition teams. nutrition sensitizations focused on improving women's, men's, boys' and girls' knowledge on nutrition and other practices that contribute to improving household food security and nutritional status.

### Activity 2: School Feeding

- WFP is supporting 50,000 pre-primary school learners in 2,400 schools across the ten districts of the country by providing a breakfast meal of super cereal plus and a lunch time meal of fortified maize meal with canned fish, pulses or vegetables from school gardens. WFP supports schools in establishing vegetable gardens to provide children with fresh vegetables for a more balanced diet.
- WFP continued to support the Ministry of Education and Training to train school feeding committees in Qacha's nek district on how to manage the school feeding programme, reaching 151 parents and 43 teachers.

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

- WFP participated in the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) meetings to discuss the introduction of essential needs indicators – used to determine goods and services required by households for ensuring survival and minimum living standards – in the LVAC assessment. This forms part of WFP's continuous engagement with the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and other government counterparts to provide technical support for annual vulnerability assessments and analysis and ad hoc surveys that include coverage of gender and nutrition issues while also enhancing the Government's capacity to implement an early warning system that is linked to social protection systems.
- WFP through its Southern Africa Drone Hub held a six-day (11-16 April) drone training for DMA and other key partners involved in risk management and disaster response. The training aimed to equip participants with skills on the use of drones for disaster preparedness and response. Following the trainings, WFP handed over 5 DJI Mini 2 drones, along with solar power panels and power banks, to the Government of Lesotho to strengthen the capacity of DMA. The drones will enable the Government through DMA to effectively and responsibly prepare and respond to emergencies, including collecting, processing and analysing data for fast, accurate disaster impact assessment and response.

**Contact info:** 'Malehloa Letsie ([malehloa.letsie@wfp.org](mailto:malehloa.letsie@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Aurore Rusiga

Further information: [www.wfp.org/countries/Lesotho](http://www.wfp.org/countries/Lesotho)

**Photo:** A communal vegetable garden at Mhlakoana project site, one of the 21 FFA project sites. *WFP/Morongoe Masilo*

## Activity 4: Nutrition

- WFP is implementing the nutrition sub-component of the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II with focus on the second objective of the project which aims to enhance community dietary knowledge by ensuring that the acquired nutrition knowledge is practiced within households. Through this project, WFP trained nutrition stakeholders across the ten districts of the country on the use of the positive deviance approach, a community-driven method that promotes social and behaviour change to address malnutrition by empowering communities to adopt sustainable solutions.

## Activity 5: Resilience

- WFP's food-assistance-for-assets (FFA) intervention is supporting 1,428 households in three southern districts (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing) and 1,422 households in Mokhotlong district to improve their food security and resilience to climate change and other shocks. The FFA activities are implemented at both community and household level. Activities at community level include gully rehabilitation, range management, removal of shrubs to restore land, water harvesting structures, communal gardens and orchards, while activities implemented at household level include bee keeping, pig and chicken rearing as well as establishment of keyhole gardens.
- The FFA activities promote nutrition and gender transformative interventions through Advocacy and Social Behaviour Change Communication sessions, which focus on advocating for inclusion of women in decision making positions and challenging existing gender stereotypes and division of labour within households. The sessions also promote good nutrition practices that aim to enhance nutritional status for various audiences.

## Activity 6: smallholder farmers

- WFP was appointed the lead role by the United Nations Country Team to steer national discussions on food systems transformation in Lesotho. WFP coordinated efforts to develop an inclusive and joint proposal on national food systems to implement a multi-stakeholder and multi-scalar programme with the objective to transform food systems and improve food and nutrition security, increasing production and productivity, constructing storage infrastructure to promote sustainable food systems and support for market development and facilitation of market linkages.
- Led by the Ministry of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing, WFP through the Adaptation Fund project 'Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations in Lesotho (IACoV)', conducted a technical support and oversight mission in Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, and Quthing districts to follow up on the progress made by district cooperative staff in sensitizing the communities to understand the value of forming cooperatives for access to markets. The mission also supported the identification of inactive cooperatives that need to be resuscitated, as well as those that could be studied by the emerging study groups.

## Donors

[Adaptation Fund](#), [ECHO](#), [Germany](#), [Japan](#).

## 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	11.5 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

### Activity 3 cont...

- WFP facilitated the engagement of a Egabi mission (geospatial platform developers) with the Office of the Prime Minister and other key government ministries for presenting the geospatial platform which aims to enhance planning across different ministries and generate evidence to inform decision making for interventions in the country.