

# Diversifying school meals with local production

## “Local procurement” in Cabo Verde

### PROJECT PRESENTATION

Implemented from June 2012 to June 2014 in Cabo Verde, the “Local procurement” pilot project aimed at diversifying school meals by systematically supplying school canteens with local products such as fruits, vegetables, pulses and fish. Its originality lies in the alliance of multiple partners, to improve nutrition while stimulating the local economy.

### PARTNERS

The project was developed with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, in the framework of the UN Joint Programme 042 “Support to Food and Nutrition Security in Schools” funded by the Luxembourg Development Cooperation.

It was implemented by the Cape Verdean Foundation for Social Action in Schools (FICASE) in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sport (MED), the Ministry of Rural Development (MDR), the Ministry of Health (MS), the Ministry of Infrastructures and Maritime Economy (MIEM), the Public Acquisition Regulating Authority (ARAP), the Food and Drug Regulation Agency (ARFA) and the Business Development and Innovation Agency (ADEI).

### CONTEXT

Cabo Verde’s school feeding programme was initiated by WFP in 1979 to increase school attendance, fight food insecurity and contribute to students’ nutritional needs. As Cabo Verde became a middle-income country in 2008, WFP progressively withdrew and, since 2010, the government entirely manages the school canteens. However, new challenges arise today: while primary education has become universal, 25% of the population still lives in poverty, almost 10% of children under five are chronically undernourished while 5% suffer from overweight and its consequences, and chronic non-communicable diseases have become one of the main causes of mortality in the country.

The National School Feeding Programme thus aims at improving the quality of school meals, while promoting nutrition education, reducing poverty and stimulating the food and agriculture sector.

### TARGET POPULATION

9000 primary pupils from 31 schools located in urban and rural areas, in 5 municipalities (Praia and Santa Cruz on Santiago island; São Vicente; Porto Novo and Ribeira Grande on Santo Antão island).

### THE INTERVENTION

The “Local procurement” pilot project was carried out in three stages:

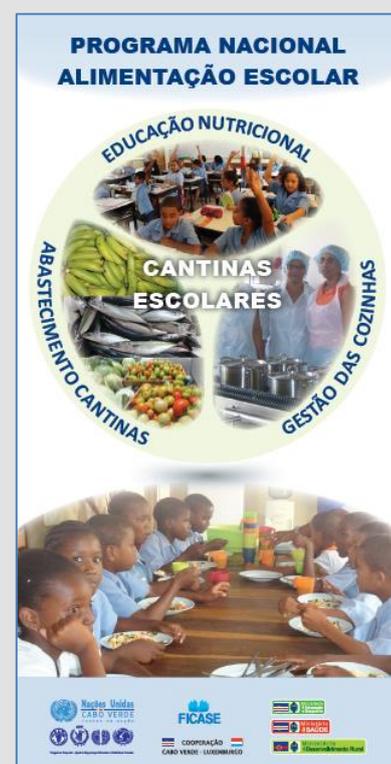
June 2012-March 2013: preparation	April-June 2013: pre-test	July 2013-June 2014: pilot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of procurement models</li> <li>• Menu revision based on locally available foods</li> <li>• Creation of public bidding documents compatible with the public acquisition law</li> <li>• Definition of food safety and quality requirements</li> <li>• Improvement of school canteen conditions</li> <li>• Training of actors involved (producers and intermediaries, school community, institutions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing of procurement models in 17 schools from 3 municipalities</li> <li>• Confirmation in practical and logistical terms and adjustments before the pilot stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation in 31 schools from 5 municipalities</li> <li>• Evaluation of good practices and constraints with stakeholders to plan the upscaling of the project.</li> </ul>

As the intervention was positively perceived by the government, the gradual upscaling of the pilot project to all primary schools and pre-schools of the country is being prepared.



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The procurement process is carried out in several steps:



1. The menu is developed by nutritionists according to local foods and eating habits. It covers around 20% of daily needs for calories, macro and micronutrients.
2. The weekly amount of a product needed per school is calculated by multiplying the amount of product needed per student (in grams) by the number of students per school.
3. A public bidding process is launched at island level to select suppliers.
4. The supplier takes his products to an inspection center, where they are weighed, controlled (to check if they meet quality requirements), labelled and registered.
5. The supplier then delivers the products to schools, where food products are received by the canteen manager and registered.
6. Meals are prepared by school cooks according to the menu developed by nutritionists and are served by teachers in the classrooms.

Thursday	Friday
Corn "cusuz" with milk Banana 	Simple rice Cooked salad Cooked fish Papaya 
<i>ingredients</i>	<i>ingredients</i>
Corn flour-40g Milk- 25g Sugar-10g Banana- 100g	Rice- 50g Oil- 4ml Salt- 1g Fish- 25g Tomato- 4g Onion- 3g Garlic-3g Breadfruit-60g Sweet potato- 46g Papaya- 100g

### CAPACITY BUILDING

During the project, training was provided to the following actors:

- 77 Producers and suppliers, trained on good agricultural and post-harvest practices.
- 430 cooks, teachers and canteen managers, trained on healthy diets.
- 21 Inspectors and auditors, trained on quality standards.
- 214 Technicians, trained on good manufacturing practices along the food chain.
- Jury for public bidding (6 trainings), to choose the supplier.

### RESULTS

About 9000 primary school students benefited from improved school meals, while local smallholders improved their incomes through the supply of 49 tons of local foods for an amount of 7 million escudos (68 000 USD) during 3 months. Local producers and suppliers involved claimed the importance of an assured market to sell their products and felt socially recognized as promoters of better nutrition in schools. An improvement of their post-harvest practices was recorded. Reference documentation on procedures and good practices were produced for the upscaling and sustainable continuity of activities.

### GOOD PRACTICES

- Encourage intersectoral cooperation between Education, Health and Agriculture for a smooth execution of the project and the development of new partnerships.
- Define food safety standards in schools: norms for space and equipment in school kitchens, Standard Operating Procedures for cooks, quality standards for the agricultural products delivered to schools, etc.
- Provide manuals adapted to local context and hands-on training sessions (ex: preparing recipes with local products during the training of cooks).

### CHALLENGES

- The cost of school meals increased by 20%.
- The workload of school staff increased.
- Some schools lack the appropriate infrastructure for fresh food conservation and handling.
- Producers/suppliers are informally organized and not used to quality standards.
- Local transport capacities are inadequate for fresh products.
- Unhealthy foods are still sold to pupils by street vendors in front of schools.

"I cannot always give my children fruits and vegetables. If they receive them at school, it is very good." *Lúcia Oliveira, mother*



"This FICASE programme is an opportunity to put our products on the market. If this continues in the future, it will be a giant step for producers." *Emídio Alves, local supplier*

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO UPSCALE/REPLICATE THE INTERVENTION:

- Create a legal and institutional framework integrating School Feeding and Health. Ex: setup intersectoral coordination units at national and local level, set quotas for local products in supply (ex: at least 25%) and limit street food vendors' activities around schools.
- Ensure sustainable funding sources (government, parents, sponsoring companies). To strengthen participation, raise awareness on the project goals, ensure accountability and allow diverse contributions (ex: money, goods or services).
- Validate the menu and the quality criteria with the participation of the school community to adapt them to local context and habits.
- Support producers/suppliers' entrepreneurial capacities and access to funding, and grant them at least 3 months to plan production.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure and logistics to maintain fresh products' quality, from production to consumption. Ex: warehouses on field to sort and clean products; adequate transport facilities; quality controls; and adequate food conservation equipment in schools.
- Adapt procurement models to the schools' situation. Ex: In production areas, test direct agreements between schools and farmers or provide smallholders with agricultural/fishing inputs in exchange for food products for school meals.
- Raise awareness and train communities on healthy diets. Ex: advertising campaigns on radio and TV.
- Design a monitoring and evaluation system with clear definition of stakeholders' responsibilities.