



The State of School Feeding and the road ahead

On March 21, the World Food Programme along with the African Union and the governments of Finland, France, India, and Brazil launched the **State of School Feeding Worldwide 2022 Report**, laying out the current state of play on school meals coverage around the world and clarifying the mission ahead for the 78 member countries and 87 other organizations who have put their weight behind the Coalition.

The picture was mixed, with the overall number of children receiving meals having bounced back from the damage done by school closures during COVID-19 and now exceeding pre-pandemic levels, at 418 million children compared to 388 million in early 2020. This development is of course good news for the Coalition, given its first objective to restore what was lost during the pandemic. Yet, those who need the critical safety net school meals programmes provide the most – children in low-income countries – had the lowest levels of coverage at just 18%.

The report also highlights that governments have stepped up their level of domestic investment in school meals programmes, perhaps surprising during this constrained fiscal environment, with low-income countries increasing their investment by 15%. This is a good outcome of the mobilization of political will the Coalition supports and a response to the strong evidence underpinning the value of these investments. Globally, investment increased by USD 5 billion to a total of USD 48 billion – 99% from domestic financing.

Yet, despite this progress, donor funding for school meals programmes moved in the opposite direction, again leaving those who need these programmes the most without the critical infusions of external support that allow them to ensure these social safety nets and eventually, make the transition toward government ownership.

The Coalition and its Sustainable Financing Initiative will focus on restoring these losses and increasing these investments as top priorities.



As we heard from several of the speakers during the launch event:

“The State of School Feeding Worldwide report is an important reminder of the game-changing power of school meals at the system level and it calls on all of us to work together...”

His Excellency Ville Skinnari, Minister of Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Finland

“Another reason for the success of the Coalition is that we have really based our work on Partnerships – it’s an innovative form of multilateralism ... we’ve involved a diversity of actors: civil society, international organisations, countries and researchers.”

Her Excellency Céline Jurgensen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France

“Home-Grown School Feeding is not just a concept; it is also a commitment.”

His Excellency Haladou Salha, AU-NEPAD Senior Technical Advisor to the Group of Rome-based African Ambassadors

“There are several factors that are contributing to the success of the (school meals) programme:

Strong political government commitment & commitments of successive governments; The scheme is governed and backed by legislative decisions; Participation of community, as well as other stakeholders.”

Her Excellency Dr. Neena Malhotra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India

“(The Brazilian school feeding programme) has a long learning curve and its success is due to specifically one aspect of governance (...): we built it from strong and robust partnerships between the federal government, local governments, local farmers, family farmers, and schoolteachers and families.”

Her Excellency Carla Barroso Carneiro, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil

“The School Meals Coalition is so special because I cannot think of any other international initiative that has been so successful in mobilizing political support at the highest level (...) and at the same time achieving very tangible concrete results on the ground and at the country level.”

Ms Tanja Grén, Permanent Representative of Finland

The road ahead is clear if the Coalition is to achieve its objectives: donors and external partners need to help

low-income countries fund their programmes through building sustainable financing strategies, finding new types of funding and establishing a strong compact between donors and countries to support the path for all countries to be self-reliant. Given the growing threat of climate change and the imperative to transform food systems, the Coalition also needs to support governments in developing policies that leverage the power of school meals as a catalyst for these overlapping agendas.

You can find the full report [here](#). If you didn't manage to join the launch event, you can watch the online recording [here](#).

The Coalition encourages stakeholders to continue the discussion online and at key events throughout 2023! You can find a link to the social media toolkit [here](#) and a summary presentation with key messages [here](#).



Country spotlights

This month we are highlighting **Burkina Faso's** national commitment to school meals, which includes:

- Provide equitable access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food for schoolchildren by increasing the share of local food products in school canteens, by developing menus adapted to the nutritional needs of schoolchildren and by promoting health, hygiene and nutrition activities in schools.
- Increase capacity building of actors involved in school food and nutrition by promoting nutrition education and by strengthening the capacities of communal actors in the management of school canteens.
- Increase the sustainability of school meal programmes by promoting the consumption of local food products.
- Strengthen the legal framework and governance of school canteens and encourage mayors to formulate recommendations and strong commitments to support the functioning of school canteens.

The Coalition was also pleased to welcome **South Africa** as the most recent country to sign the Declaration of Commitment.



Event digest

SAVE THE DATE: The Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition will launch the **Early Career Researchers and Young Scholars Network** on May 4 (Time TBD). This newest Community of Practice, for individuals interested in research careers related to school health and nutrition, will connect them with training, mentorship, and other opportunities to build research and communication skills. To register your interest in joining the launch, please email SHNConsortium@lshtm.ac.uk.



Resources and publications

In case you missed these recent events hosted by Coalition partners you can find below links to recordings from:

- A [webinar](#) hosted by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, "**A Measurement Maze: Defining School Meal Coverage.**"
- A [webinar](#) from the Research Consortium's **Analytics & Metrics Community of Practice**, where you will hear from researchers and practitioners on the effective measurement of school meals and school health programmes, with a focus on improving learning and development outcomes.

The **School Food Global Hub**, launched by FAO and WFP, now includes 23 country profiles with information about the nutritional value of school meals in different countries, and how they incorporate food and nutrition content into their school systems. Check them out [here](#). You can also still share your views to inform how the Hub's technical exchange section can be most helpful to your work; see the survey [here](#).

As part of WFP and FAO's joint project [School food nutrition guidelines and standards for safeguarding children and adolescents' right to food](#), the interactive story "[Making school meals tasty: Celebrating the work of school foodservice staff](#)" was recently launched. Have a look and learn from foodservice staff worldwide how, with some simple tricks, they ensure that the children in their schools do not only eat but also enjoy their school meals.

Finally please see "[UN: School Meal Programs more than just a plate of food,](#)" by VOA News for news coverage of the *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2022 Report*.



How to get engaged

The Coalition is making plans for its **Global Meeting in October** in Paris and would like to make sure all Coalition members and supporters are represented. If you have signed the Coalition's Declaration of Commitment or Declaration of support, please keep an eye out for an email from the Coalition requesting details to ensure you receive an invitation (and please note that non-transferable invitations will be sent to Governments at the Ministerial level and partners at the CEO/Principal level only).

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to be on our regular mailing list, please contact us at global.smcsecretariat@wfp.org. If you would like to join the School Meals Coalition, you can signal your interest in signing the Declaration of Commitment (as a government) or Declaration of Support through contacting the same email address.

Yours sincerely,
School Meals Coalition Secretariat

