



School Meals Coalition Monthly Newsletter

April 2024



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**Canada commits CAD \$1 Billion to establish
a National School Food Programme**



Meal preparation at a school in Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sets school meals in Canada on a new path. Credit: CBC News.

The Federal Government of Canada this month announced it will spend CAD \$1 billion (US\$738 million) to implement a new National School Food Programme expected to be launched this year. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said Canada will establish a National School Food Programme to deliver school meals to an additional 400,000 children each year for the next five years. Find the [written announcement](#) and [news conference](#).

Canadian provinces, territories and municipalities currently provide more than CAD \$280 million of annual funding for school food programs in one third of Canadian schools, reaching up to 2 million children and youth. The new National School Food Program expected in the 2024-2025 school year, will help provinces, territories, and indigenous partners to expand their existing school food programs. More details about the federal program are expected during Canada's Budget presentation this month. The government is also expected to release a National School Food Policy to guide the development of the national program. The Government of Canada consulted on the development of the Policy throughout 2022 and 2023, and the results of the consultations were shared in its [What We Heard Report](#). The Coalition for Healthy School Food, Canada's largest school food network [welcomed the Government's announcement](#) which saw Canada joining the rest of the G7 and many other countries in the world in recognizing the critical importance of school meals.

Highlights of the Southeast Asia School Nutrition Conference



Participants at the regional conference on school nutrition in Bangkok, Thailand. Over 100 representatives from some ASEAN countries shared their school meals experiences. Credit: WFP/Asia and the Pacific Regional Office.

A high-level regional conference on school-aged children's nutrition and school meals was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 12-13 March. The conference brought together over 100 representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Timor Leste to share experiences and discuss ways to strengthen collaboration in school meals. Find the key highlights [here](#).



Quotes of the month

Please find quotes of the month, which you can include in your communication and advocacy messages supporting school meals.

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H.E. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, speaking during a ceremony to officially announce the Federal Government's \$1 billion CAD investment in the National School Food Programme to be implemented this year.

“There cannot be a dissonance between what is taught in school and what is experienced by our learners. We would like to prevent a situation where on one hand, we teach children to be able to choose the right nutritious food, and become physically active and on the other hand, we fail to avail these nutritious meals and physical activities in our schools.”

Dr. Dexter Galban, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Learner Support Services, Department of Education, Philippines, speaking at the high-level regional school nutrition conference held in Bangkok, Thailand.

“The quality of school meals is something important we need to look at in the ASEAN region, especially where families are poor, and their children are coming to school. School meals offer an opportunity to improve the diets of those children. Financing is going to be very important if we want to change the nutritional value of meals offered in

schools.”

Dr. Purnima Menon, Senior Director for Food and Nutrition Policy at International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) speaking at the high-level regional school meals nutrition conference held in Bangkok, Thailand.



Voices from the field

In this section we showcase a life-changing school meals initiative in the remote parts of Indonesia, the resilience of women supporting school meals in Guatemala and a government determined to expand school meals in Suriname. Please amplify the voices through your communication platforms, and don't forget to also share with us your own school meal experiences.

Indonesia: [New school meals pilot a game changer in Warungkiara District](#)

Suriname: [Govt flexes its muscles to give every child a nutritious meal](#)

Guatemala: [Women taking charge of school meals](#)



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Brazil and France to push for a more sustainable planet



President Lula Da Silva with the French President, Emmanuel Macron, during his visit to Brazil in March.

[French President, Emmanuel Macron visited Brazil on 26-28 March and met with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva](#). They discussed fostering efforts to strengthen ties, expanding joint action to overcome structural inequalities, as well as strategies to achieve a more sustainable planet. Brazil and France are co-chairs of the School Meals Coalition, alongside Finland. President Macron committed to supporting Brazil's ambitious projects, among them, those he will drive during his G20 Presidency, including the resuscitation of the Global Alliance against hunger and poverty, Brazil's actions in environment protection and climate action. The two leaders adopted [Acts committing to strengthen cooperation in promoting a shared vision of the world](#). Find the full press statement [here](#).

Increasing climate action in school meals in Indonesia



Some learners at a school in Warungkiara District, Sukabumi in Indonesia enjoy their lunch meal prepared using locally purchased ingredients.
Credit: IFSR/Indonesia

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Education actors discuss ways to increase funding for education at Global Gateway

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Growing calls for launching of a national school meals programme in Georgia



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U.S. food aid implementing partners and commodity groups interested in hosting a table can contact Theresa Becchi at tbecchi@counterpart.org or Stephanie Grunenfelder at sgrunenfelder@greenfieldstrat.com. Interested participants can register [here](https://www.greenfieldstrat.com/showcase).

New School Meals Coalition Initiative set to transform cities' school meals

The Cities Feeding the Future Initiative of the School Meals Coalition is working to expand support to local governments around the world and has produced a [report that underscores the importance of school meals within urban food policies worldwide](#). Led by the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Secretariat](#) (MUFPF), the initiative was launched in October 2023 at the Coalition's First Global Summit in Paris. Its objectives are to empower cities in establishing and enhancing school meals, facilitate the link with global actors, and support decision-making processes at the local level. More information is available [here](#).

The Impact of school meals in Ethiopia

Join the Research Consortium's **Analytics and Metrics** Community of Practice on Wednesday 24 April from 1:00-2:30 pm UK time to discover what the Consortium is learning about the impact of investing in school meal programmes in Ethiopia. Register [here](#).

Opportunity to shape the UN Summit of the Future

The Coalition encourages its partners to register for the [UN Civil Society Conference](#), to be held 9-10 May in Nairobi and open to all civil society organizations. The Conference will support deliberations of the Summit of the Future, taking place 22-23 September at UN Headquarters in New York, and will launch new, multi-stakeholder ImPACT Coalitions consisting of Member States, civil society, academia, think tanks, foundations, and the private sector. Given the Summit of the Future's focus on the importance of new and more effective multilateral solutions for challenges of today and the future, the Coalition wants to ensure the role of school meals and the model of the Coalition as a form of new multilateralism are part of these important discussions. For partners planning to attend the Civil Society Conference, please reach out to susan.myers@wfp.org to coordinate and for those who would like to register, see [here](#).

Save the Date: 2024 Global Child Nutrition Forum

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Resources and Publications

Across the UK, parents want the government to expand healthy school meals to all children. New polling of over 2,039 parents, conducted by Savanta and released by the Children's Food Campaign to mark International School Meals Day last month, shows overwhelming support for expanding school meals to all children, as well as desire to see healthier and planet-friendly options on school menus. [Among the findings](#), 9 in 10 parents (89%) want to see immediate expansion of free school meals to every child living in poverty. More than 7 in 10 parents (75%) would like all children of all ages to have access to a free school meal, regardless of their background while 8 in 10 (81%) parents support automatic registration for free school meals for all entitled pupils, instead of the current application system.

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Learn what the Food Security Review (IFSR) has learned about Free School Meals and Milk Programme in Indonesia through a publication, "Implementing Strategy of School Meal Programmes Across Countries." It discusses the potential of free school meals and milk programmes in addressing Indonesia's nutritional challenges, examining successes and best practices. Find more information [here](#).



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We would like to connect with all communications and public information focal points in government ministries implementing school meal programmes and in other ministries participating and contributing in any way to school meal related activities. The secretariat would also like to interact with communication focal points of organisations supporting efforts by governments. Be part of the Team SMC Communications to participate in our exciting discussions, joint actions, and innovation. Contact us today at tsitsi.matope@wfp.org.

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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. Please use the same email address if you would like to join the School Meals Coalition.

Yours sincerely,
School Meals Coalition Secretariat

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