



School Meals Coalition Monthly Newsletter

February 2024



In this edition of the Newsletter, please join us in welcoming the Governments of Ghana and Belize to the School Meals Coalition, in addition to new partners Biozid Climate Institute from Bangladesh, Deep Poverty Network from Turkey, Educo from Spain, and Indonesia Food Security Review. The Coalition now stands at 98 member governments and 119 partners.

Burundi to host the Africa day of School Feeding



Students enjoy their lunch meal at Ecofo Gatovu school, Muyinga province in Burundi. Photo: Fredrik Lerneryd/WFP

Burundi will host the 9th Africa Day of School Feeding on the 1st of March. This year's theme, "Investing in Home-Grown School Feeding to transform education systems - for an inclusive, and prosperous future of the African Continent," will advance political commitment pledged by countries at the Transforming Education Summit, African Union Summits, and School Meals Coalition Global Summit to implement comprehensive, national school meal programmes. Discussions will also spotlight ways to increase sustainable financing in education, enhance South-South Cooperation and expand commitments under the School Meals Coalition.

Burundi brings a strong commitment to home-grown school feeding with the goal of [reaching 50 percent of children in pre and primary schools by 2027 and attaining 100 percent coverage in 2032](#). The government aims to provide school meals prepared exclusively with locally sourced ingredients, respecting nutritional standards to ensure that hunger is not a barrier to education. Working with partners, the Government of Burundi aims to extend local procurement to 50 percent by 2027. Find more information about the Burundi school meals programme [here](#).

Suggested messages to support your communication and advocacy around the Africa Day of School Feeding can be found [here](#).



Quotes of the month

"When it comes to school meals financing, every government ministry should see this as an important aspect to the economy, to security and social protection. It's important that the school meals programme is not viewed as a Ministry of Education's challenge or initiative but should be looked at as an entire government undertaking working at a multi-sectoral level and applying inclusive processes."

Honourable Claudette Irere, Minister of Education in Rwanda.

"The School Meals Coalition is a very powerful voice advocating for every country to improve and establish a school meals programme. It is not a job of one country but our collective responsibility to promote health and nutrition in schools to achieve good education outcomes. School meals are a critical pillar that can rapidly promote education especially that of girls while ensuring that the children left behind can also attend school and benefit."

Honourable Awut Deng Acuil, Minister of Education in South Sudan.



Voices from the field

Nigeria: [Nigeria revamping its school meals programme](#)

South Sudan: [School meals promoting access to education in South Sudan](#)

Niger: [Fights for girls' education through school meals](#)



Talk to us

**Homegrown School Feeding: Africa's path to resilience, development, and durable peace.
A strong Africa is not only a win for Africa but a win for the world.**



Ms. Cristina Duarte, Under-Secretary-General and UN Special Adviser on Africa, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, and other UN senior officials, met with students at the Pays-Bas school in Niamey, Niger during a field visit in February 2023.

Credit: UNECA/Daniel Getachew

As we prepare to mark the Africa Day of School Feeding, Cristina Duarte, the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa to the United Nations Secretary-General, highlights the multiplying effects of home-grown school feeding programmes, calling for policy makers in Africa to leverage domestic resource mobilisation as a game changer, energy as a driver, and food systems as sources of resilience to power Africa's socio-economic transformation. Find the full conversation [here](#).



Event digest

The AU Summit: African Union Adopts Education as its theme of the year

At the recent 37th African Union Summit, the AU adopted “Education” as the continent’s theme of the year, 2024, which will promote rolling-out of activities to address gaps in education. The theme: “Educate an African fit for the 21st century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa,” will promote expanded investment towards strengthening education systems and tackle learning poverty, ensuring that every child has access to quality learning. Among the AU’s top priority areas is to mobilise partnerships to scale up and improve the quality of home-grown school feeding programmes. Find more details [here](#).

Donor conference advancing human capital through school meals in Somalia

The Federal Government of Somalia recently partnered with Governments of Finland and France (2 of the 3 co-chairs of the School Meals Coalition, with the third being Brazil) to host a donor conference seeking to advance human capital through school meals. This brought together government ministries, diplomatic missions, the private sector, and development partners to discuss the urgent restoration of school meals to millions of children no longer receiving them, and ways to mobilise more support for a transition to a full-fledged national programme. Find the joint statement [here](#).

School Meals, Diet and Food Systems webinar

The Research Consortium held a webinar, “School Meals, Diet, and Food Systems: Building a Community of Practice,” on 24 January. Researchers from the diet and food systems community of practice shared updates including the recent White Paper ‘[School Meals and Food Systems: Rethinking the consequences for climate, environment, biodiversity and food sovereignty](#),’ and mapped the direction for the community in 2024. Catch up [here](#).

The ECOSOC Partnership Forum 2024

School Meals Coalition partners participated in the ECOSOC Partnership Forum 2024 side event, “[Shaping a Resilient Future for People and the Planet: Transforming Landscapes, Lives, and Livelihoods through Multi-stakeholder Partnerships](#),” hosted by the NGO Committee on Financing for Development on 30 January. It presented an opportunity to share best practices, challenges, and recommendations from the perspective of multi-stakeholder partnerships, where civil society organizations either take the lead or actively contribute to meaningful progress toward achieving SDGs 1, 2, and 13.

NGO briefing on the Coalition in New York

On 21 February, World Vision International and Plan International co-convoked a breakfast briefing with the School Meals Coalition in New York. The briefing facilitated sharing of updates on the Coalition and allowed for sharing of ideas on ways the Coalition’s objectives connect to 2024 events in New York, such as the High-Level Political Forum and the UN Summit of the Future. Maher Nasser, Director of the Outreach Division of the UN Department of Global Communications, also contributed remarks on ways NGOs could engage in the UN Summit of the Future, including the upcoming [UN Civil Society Conference](#) in Nairobi Kenya.

The **report on the School Meals Coalition Global Summit** is now available!

Discover all the commitments and announcements made during the 18-19 October 2023 event [here](#).



Upcoming Events and Initiatives

International School Meals Day: Share your events and initiatives

This year’s International School Meals Day will be celebrated on Thursday 14 March with a series of events and initiatives lined up in many countries. With this year’s theme “Innovation in School Meals: New routes to sustainable nutrition,” the commemoration presents an opportunity for supporters of school meals to connect with learners and talk about the food they eat in school and reinforce the role that nutritious food plays in their daily lives and studies. Find out what children from different countries have to say about school meals [here](#) and the experiences of children from Tajikistan [here](#).

Join open discussions on the future of food systems and school meals

During 11-13 March at the “Open Food Conference” in Leuven, Belgium, the EU will take stock of what has been achieved through the Farm to Fork Strategy and multiple other initiatives related to school meals. The EU-funded SchoolFood4Change will host two events to champion school meals, highlighting their catalytic role in addressing food inequality. Through the “Food Inequality: Whole School Food Approach” on 11 March, participants will explore the whole school food framework to underscore the benefits beyond provision of nutritious school meals. The second event on 12 March will focus on public procurement’s role in cultivating healthy, just, and sustainable food systems. Register to attend the conference [here](#).

Join the Young food changemakers challenge

Three NGOs from Central Europe invite students, young food changemakers, and their teachers to employ their imagination, passion, and hard work to generate [ideas addressing current challenges in the food system](#). Find details [here](#). Schools are expected to start implementing their projects on 22 April and upload their project summaries on [this online platform](#) through 3 May 2024.

Call to Action advocates for more school meals to tackle hunger

Hungry for Action has launched a “Call to Action” urging the African Union to prioritise solutions, including the scaling up of school meal programmes, to address the current food crisis. Among other recommendations, the Call advocates for more political commitment and increased resources to tackle hunger; find it [here](#).

Governments invited to participate in the 2024 Global Survey of School Meal Programs

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs, administered by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF), is the most comprehensive data collection on national and large-scale school feeding programs. The resulting data fills a critical knowledge gap by creating and maintaining an up-to-date global database of standardized information on school meal programs. The survey collects data directly from government sources. To learn more visit GCNF's [website](#).



Resources and Publications

International Day of Education, 24 January: Through the theme “Learning for Peace” the International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNED) issued an Advocacy Brief to strengthen parliamentarians' efforts to mobilise more support for increased school meals in their countries. Find the full brief [here](#).

Case study on homegrown school meals in Muyinga province, Burundi: Find out [here](#) how World Vision is working with the Government of Burundi, the host of this year's Africa Day of School Feeding, to strengthen production by smallholder farmers to supply locally-produced food currently feeding 132,000 students in schools.

Case study on Ethiopian School Meals: The Ethiopia Home-grown School Feeding Programme shares lessons learnt and best practices on how the programme is integrating health and nutrition services to address malnutrition among children, improve learning capacity and enhance delivery of quality education. Find the working paper [here](#).

The Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition (SFI): has released a brief on their offer of support, aimed at helping countries identify multi-year financing opportunities for school feeding programmes, titled "[Developing Sustainable Financing Strategies for National School Feeding Programs](#)." Find more information [here](#).

World Vision International: has produced a series of videos looking at School Meals through a Humanitarian-Development-Peace lens. [The most recent video](#) focuses on the connection between climate and school meals, and a special [view piece](#) discusses the impacts of this type of approach when supporting girls and boys, especially in regions experiencing conflict and climate disasters.

The Swedish Food Agency: has now published its National Guidelines for School Meals in English. The guidelines include a holistic view of school meals called ‘the meal model’ which includes the following six areas: 1) tasty, 2) safe, 3) nutritious, 4) eco-smart, 5) pleasant and 6) integrated as part of education. Find the guidelines [here](#).

Investing in school systems – conceptualising returns on investment across the health, education, and social protection sector: BMJ introduces a comprehensive value-for-money framework for investments toward school systems that acknowledge the return to a common delivery platform—schools—and the multisectoral returns emerging from the rollout of school-based programmes. Find the article [here](#).

New profiles and updates on the School Food Global Hub: The country profiles of Colombia and Dominican Republic were added to the FAO-WFP School Food Global Hub, and new information was included in the existing United Kingdom profile. Visit the [Hub](#) to find out more.

The Program for International Student Assessment: reveals an alarming teen food poverty finding in 38 OECD countries, noting that 8% of 15-year-old adolescents skip meals due to family financial constraints. This underscores the crucial role of school meals in addressing hunger among children. Find the full report [here](#).

A research post by Sage Journals: investigates the effects of the National School Lunch Program in efforts to reduce stigma experienced by poor students, impact nutrition and health, and create more equitable schools in the U.S. Read the full post [here](#).



We Would Like to Hear from You!

International School Meals Day is around the corner!

We would like to also celebrate your achievements, follow you, and showcase your ideas, innovation, and prospects for the future of school meals, in your organisation and country. Share your activities, events, and pictures of the day with us for others to learn how you are impacting children in your community. Contact us at tsitsi.matope@wfp.org.

With regards to the submission of commitments, all countries are encouraged to submit their initial commitments or to provide updates on previous commitments. The Coalition has issued updated [Commitment Guidelines](#) to support countries in this process. The secretariat is happy to be a resource as needed. Please send any inquiries to global.smcsecretariat@wfp.org.

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,

