



Welcome to a new Coalition partner: the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Their expertise and resources will enhance our efforts in children's health, nutrition, and cognitive development through school meals. The Coalition now stands at 97 member countries, 3 regional bodies and 128 partners.



CAR launches School Meals Expansion Initiative



President Touadera launched the National School Feeding Expansion Initiative in Sainte Philomène School in Bimbo, south of the capital Bangui. Left, President Touadera views a nutrition garden. Right, Prime Minister Moloua attends the launch ceremony, and samples fortified soft porridge to taste what the children receive at the school.

This month, President Faustin Archange Touadera of the Central African Republic (CAR) launched the National School Feeding Expansion Initiative to reach 400,000 children by 2027, up from the current 170,000. As a [member of the School Meals Coalition](#), the Central African

Republic continues demonstrating commitment to scaling up school meals. Find the full story [here](#).

School Meals Toolkit for Parliamentarians goes live

The School Meals Coalition is pleased to announce the launch of the School Meals Toolkit for Parliamentarians in the UK Parliament. Developed by the [International Parliamentary Network for Education \(IPNED\)](#) with support from the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition and the World Food Programme, this resource supports Members of Parliament to influence governments to make better decisions on school meal programs and legislation. We encourage you to disseminate the toolkit to Parliamentarians in your country and within your networks. Find it [here](#), and read [this article](#) about its launch.



Quotes of the month

“We are able to collectively get the school community together, give them the tools to begin to cook a lunch meal [...] and also build the community itself - by that, meaning that food being produced now can be sold to the school or sold within the community itself [...]. It gets kids back in school, and they are not hungry [...]. In my humble opinion, I think this is one of the most successful programs I've ever seen anywhere in the world - our school feeding programs.”

Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, at the Milken Institute 27th Annual Global Conference.
[Watch her full interview.](#)



Voices from the field

Vagner do Nascimento, Coordinator of the Forum of Traditional Communities in Brazil, explains how the school feeding program is helping children access traditional meals in the Quilombo do Campinho community. Debbie Field, Coordinator of the Healthy School Food Coalition in Canada, shares her views on the Government of Canada's CAD\$ 1 billion (US\$ 738 million) commitment to launch a national school food program this year. In Sierra Leone, we experience school meals from the voice of a 13-year-old girl, Isatu, her mother, and the head teacher at Holy Cross Primary School. Please amplify these voices within your networks to enrich your discussions.

Brazil: [Shares success story on promoting culturally sensitive school meals](#)

Canada: [A welcome shift in school food](#)

Sierra Leone: [Feeding children's dreams in Kambia district](#)



Event digest

2024: a pivotal year to tackle a lack of clean cooking in Africa

The Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa, hosted by [The International Energy Agency \(IEA\)](#) in Paris, France, successfully elevated the clean cooking agenda to the global level. Financial commitments were mobilized for clean cooking and a roadmap was developed with concrete strategies focusing on policies, financing, and partnerships. The School Meals Coalition is promoting clean energy cooking solutions in school meals and rallying behind Kenya's pioneering of planet-friendly school meal programs. Find more details [here](#).

Spotlighting traditional foods in school meal programs

You can still watch the event, *Towards a Rights-based Approach to School Meals: the role of Interculturalism and Food Sovereignty*, available [here](#) (passcode: U4?6YCUX). Organized by the WFP Indigenous Peoples Portfolio and Indigenous Peoples Organizations in partnership with UN Rome-based agencies, the event focused on the importance of investing in a better understanding of Indigenous Peoples' food systems and the nutritional value impact that traditional foods can have on environmental sustainability and communities' wellbeing. Read about

ongoing efforts to promote an intercultural approach to school meals in this [special report](#).



Upcoming Events and Initiatives

Today > Webinar on latest school meals case studies

The [Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition](#) will present today (3pm-4:30pm UK time) the latest national school meals case studies hosted by the “Good Examples” Community of Practice. In this lively knowledge exchange, you will have the chance to hear perspectives from Benin, Denmark, Togo, Senegal, and others. Register [here](#).

21-23 May > ECOWAS Stocktaking Conference: ways to increase financing for school meals

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is hosting a Technical Stocktaking Conference on homegrown school feeding programs in Dakar, Senegal. Delegates, including ministerial representatives from education and agriculture sectors from all [ECOWAS](#) and non-ECOWAS member states, will participate and share program and finance priorities. ECOWAS will also announce national commitments submitted to the School Meals Coalition by seven countries. For more information, please check [here](#) and contact fdabire@araa.org.

Call to governments to participate in Global Survey of School Meal Programs

The School Meal Coalition Secretariat encourages all governments to participate in the 2024 Global Survey of School Meal Programs. This survey, administered by the [Global Child Nutrition Foundation](#) (GCNF), is the most comprehensive data collection on national and large-scale school feeding programs. Data collection is carried out in May and government-sourced information on the 2022 school year will be gathered. To be connected with a global survey associate and for additional support on this process, please contact info@gcnf.org. To learn more about the survey, visit GCNF's [website](#).



Resources and Publications

Nigeria launches Value for Money study

The Government of Nigeria launched a [Value for Money study](#) to assess the homegrown school feeding program's effectiveness and efficiency in delivering nutritional school meals, its potential for scaling up and how to improve its implementation.

Hunger and learning environment

[Trends in International Mathematics and Science study](#), published by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), highlights students' difficulties to regulating their behavior when hungry. It calls on countries to consider high quality nutrition initiatives aligned with school meals to address children's nutritional needs outside of school hours.

Nordic Council tackles environmental issues in Nutritional Recommendations

In case you missed the latest [Nutrition Recommendations](#) by the Nordic Council of Ministers, you can find them [here](#). The recommendations provide dietary guidelines for public meals including school meals in the Nordic and Baltic countries. To support countries in other regions, the Council has listed considerations that national authorities can take on board when developing their own guidelines.

We would like to hear from you!

The School Meals Coalition (SMC) Secretariat looks forward to receiving your **School Meals Commitments**. We encourage all countries to share their initial commitments or to provide updates on previous ones. The Coalition has issued updated [Commitment Guidelines](#) to support countries in this process. The Secretariat is delighted to serve as a resource for its members and partners, so please don't hesitate to send any inquiries to global.smcsecretariat@wfp.org.

Attention all communications focal points! Are you managing communications on school meals for your government or organization? If so, the Secretariat would like to connect with you! Be part of Team SMC Communications and participate in our collaborative discussions, joint actions, and innovation. For more information, please reach out to tsitsi.matope@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,
School Meals Coalition Secretariat

