



School Meals Coalition Monthly Newsletter

October 2023



The first School Meals Coalition Global Summit

Join the Global Leaders & Partners



Paris, France



18-19 October 2023



- > Progress since 2021
- > New member countries
- > New school meal commitments
- > Next steps



#GlobalSchoolMealsSummit



France to host the first School Meals Coalition Global Summit

The Government of France will host the first School Meals Coalition Global Summit in Paris on 18-19 October, the first one of its kind since the launch of the Coalition in 2021.

The Summit takes place at a time when the world is battling rising hunger and food prices, unsustainable education systems, conflict, and climate change. With the theme: "Investing in Future Generations: Human Capital, Sustainable Food Systems and Climate Change Action Through School Meals", the Summit brings together Heads of States, Ministers, Parliamentarians, local governments, development partners, and academia from across the world to discuss their commitments to the Coalition.

The two-day Summit will welcome new member states, provide a platform for governments to announce new commitments and action plans toward achieving them. Partners will also use the Summit to unveil new initiatives and partnerships that will be catalytic in supporting governments in the next phase of the Coalition's work. Read more on the Coalition's Summit microsite [here](#).

Highlights on School Meals at the 78th UN General Assembly

[Increasing calls for Govts to put more money in school meals at UN General Assembly](#)

Between 17-23 September, world leaders came together at UNGA 78 to explore solutions to ongoing global crises and accelerate actions toward achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The transformative power of school meals was highlighted in several events as a key solution to help advance food systems transformation and promote positive educational outcomes.

Five relevant outcomes have emerged in these areas:

- **Increased calls for investment in school meals to drive education outcomes from the education sector:**

WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain participated in the Global Education Forum (GPE), chaired by Gordon Brown with Ministers from donor countries and multilateral institutions financing education. Participants adopted an Outcome Document that included a call for greater investment in school meals. School meals also featured in conversations of the Education Cannot Wait High Level Steering Group and the GPE High Level Session on “Investing in Education Systems”.

- **Strengthened positioning of school meals as a solution to drive food system transformation and climate action:** On 20 September, The Rockefeller Foundation, World Wildlife Fund and Global Alliance for the Future of Food organized Food Day to drive discussions on food systems transformation in the leadup to COP28. A Call to Action issued by the event identified school meals as a concrete policy entry point linked to food procurement to promote localized solutions.
- **French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna announced a 40 million Euro** contribution to WFP, more than half of it for school meal programmes.
- **Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada announced 45 million CAD for school meals**, as part of ongoing commitments in Haiti.
- **World Vision pledged \$3.4bn to tackle rising child hunger and malnutrition** as part of its new global campaign “ENOUGH”, stating “[...] every child should enjoy ENOUGH nourishing food to thrive” and highlighting school meals as a solution.



Quotes of the month

“When I become the Prime Minister, I would give all children two meals a day because a lunch meal makes students less hungry while studying.”

Chandy, 13-year-old learner at Kor Koh Primary School in Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia speaks in the Children’s Voices video produced to promote the views of children at the School Meals Coalition Global Summit to be held in France

“We are only seat warmers as the children we feed today will be leading us tomorrow. I prioritise school meals because I know that healthy bodies and minds are necessary for strong societies and for economies to flourish.”

Timor Leste President, H.E. Jose Ramos-Horta speaks in the Head of States and Ministers video to highlight the progress made in school meals in Timor Leste.



Country spotlights



The vision that all children in Nepal must eat lunch in school is gaining momentum. Rachana is one of the 3.3 million children receiving a nutritious meal in school every day. Photo: © WFP Nepal/Narendra Shrestha

A Turning Point in school meals for Madagascar

By Jerry Randrianilanona

Director of Basic Education and Early Childhood, Ministry of Education in Madagascar

The Madagascar homegrown school feeding programme is making real progress. Our turning point was when we joined the School Meals Coalition. Through learning from other countries, we adopted a new approach to school feeding, which is based on cash transfers to local suppliers. We liked the idea of having funds allocated for school feeding directly transferred from the public treasury to the accounts of each local suppliers. That was a game-changer! This innovative approach is ensuring we can buy local products at affordable prices. And some may ask: how is that important in these harsh economic times? Find rest of the commentary [here](#).

The writing is on the wall in Nepal

By Neera Sharma in Nepal

In Nepal, the writing is on the wall: The World Food Programme is reducing its footprint of direct implementation and providing technical assistance to the government in managing the National School Meals Programme. While the vision that all children must eat lunch in school is gaining momentum across the country, the government's commitment to make it happen is becoming even more visibly clear with Nepal's decision to join the School Meals Coalition in 2021. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Government prioritized school meals, injecting USD 87 million into the school meals, which translates to about 6% of the total national education budget. Read more [here](#).

Children's Voices

In our efforts to promote the views of children in school meals discussions and programmes, we are pleased to introduce a new

section that will document children as strong champions for school meals. We are inviting contributions from children across the world for us to learn more about what is happening at your school, in your local community related to school meals, and your great ideas on how schools can sustainably provide nutritious meals.

We share this first contribution from nine-year-old Miriam Dinaya Manuel Ferreira from Namialo Primary School in Nampula Province, Mozambique.

“Those with a lot of food should share their food with the poor”

By Miriam Ferreira in Mozambique

[An excerpt] – Remember that food is what we eat because it improves our health. It is not just eating because we have a mouth, we eat because we know that this food will be good for us, it will take us far. For example, fruits, vegetables, beans, and fish are particularly good for our health, especially that of children whose families struggle to make ends meet and cannot afford to buy nutritious foods. When they go home, they do odd jobs to contribute to their family income. It is good that they can come to school to eat and learn. Despite our different backgrounds, we eat the same food together and we are all happy. Read more [here](#).



Event digest

Regional conference demonstrates ECOWAS strong commitment to school meals

By Edward LloydEvans in Senegal

More than 70 government officials representing the education, agriculture, gender, and social protection sectors attended the inaugural Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Technical Conference on Homegrown School Feeding on 3-4 October in Dakar, Senegal. Led by ECOWAS with support from the World Bank and the World Food Programme, the two-day conference: “Investing in homegrown school meals to strengthen human capital, women's economic empowerment and contribute to economic development” displayed considerable progress in school meal programmes in the region. A total 22.4 million children are now receiving school meals and investment has increased from \$450 million to \$543 million from 2020 to 2022. Read the full story [here](#).

Govt of Madagascar forges partnerships for school meals backed by local suppliers

By Aina ANDRIANALIZAHA in Madagascar

On 4-5 September, the Ministries of National Education and Agriculture and Livestock, in partnership with the World Food Programme, organised a national forum on school feeding to discuss local produce purchases for school meals in Madagascar. The forum was attended by representatives of Brazil, Honduras, Benin, Malawi, Zambia, DRC, and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), facilitating sharing of best practices in the implementation of a homegrown school feeding programme and acceleration of development of a national school feeding model based on local supplies. Find out more [here](#).

Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition holds Annual Showcase

The Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition hosted its inaugural Annual Showcase between 3-5 October. With six sessions over the course of three days, the event brought together world-leading experts from across the Research Consortium's global network to share what the evidence is saying about the effective design and delivery of school meals programmes. Recordings of the sessions can be found [here](#).



Upcoming events

PARIS SIDE EVENT | Online | “How can research help shape school feeding policy?”

Friday 20 October, 9am-11.30am CEST

The OECD, together with the Research Consortium, will convene this webinar on 20 October. The event will include government representatives, the Inter-American Development Bank, researchers, and academics from L'Institut Agro, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Harvard University. [Register here](#).

PARIS SIDE-EVENT | Online and in-person | “Research activities of French teams in the field of school meals”

Friday 20 October, 2pm-6pm CEST

At the request of the French Permanent Representative to the UN in Rome, the UNESCO Chair "Alimentations du Monde" at L'Institut Agro Montpellier is setting up a network of French researchers working in this field. The RESCO network brings together 70 individuals leading multidisciplinary projects with school meal stakeholders in mainland France, the French overseas departments and territories and several countries in the South. [Register for online participation now](#). [Register for in-person participation now](#).



Talk to us

School meals signal a necessary shift in the food systems

A one-on-one conversation with the Mehrdad Ehsani, Vice President of the Africa Food Initiative at the Rockefeller Foundation.

Ahead of the School Meals Coalition Global Summit, Mehrdad Ehsani explains why The Rockefeller Foundation has invested in the Coalition, citing it as a strategic platform for governments and partners to “up their game” in expanding their school meal programmes to provide more nutritious food to more children and address the effects of climate change. Read the full interview [here](#).



Resources and Publications

Case study on the French school meals: The Government of France’s school meals guidelines guarantee a high level of nutritional quality and recommend a move to 12 out of 20 vegetarian meals, aiming to reduce the carbon impact of programmes by at least 25% and address other environmental impacts without reducing nutritional quality. Read the working paper to learn more [here](#).

The SchoolFood4Change Policy Brief: The EU-funded [SchoolFood4Change](#) consortium (43 partners across 12 European countries, including 16 local and regional governments) recently developed the [SchoolFood4Change policy-opportunity brief](#). This is a summary of joint policy asks underlined by motivational facts and with clear links to relevant and on-going policy processes in Europe.

A discussion on nursery schools and food systems: Researchers from Universidad de Alcalá in Spain recently published a new scientific publication concerning school food systems. The article, a result of collaboration with civil society organizations, Madrid’s Department of Childhood Education and the local city government, provides an in-depth look at how nursery schools are actively fostering healthier and more sustainable food systems for their students. Read it here: [Fostering Healthy and Sustainable Nursery School Food Systems: The case study of Madrid City](#).

We Would Like to Hear from You!

The Coalition is working on the next iteration of its website, [schoolmealscoalition.org](#) which will include new content from the field to harness the voices and work of its members and partners. All partners are encouraged to contribute stories, videos and pictures highlighting their key activities and events and to share what content would be helpful to have featured on the website. Please share thoughts [Here](#).

As the Coalition celebrates its second anniversary, 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 and the secretariat can serve as 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,

School Meals Coalition Secretariat

