



Welcome to a new member, the Republic of Korea, and two new partners: the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the OPEC Fund for International Development. Our [Coalition](#) now includes 98 members, three regional bodies and over 130 partners. We have received new [national commitments](#) from the governments of Benin, Central African Republic, Guinea, Mali, Tanzania and Uganda. To learn how the School Meals Coalition works, watch this [video](#), and share with your networks to amplify.



Republic of Korea joins the School Meals Coalition



Hon. Kim Choon-jin (left), the CEO of the Korea Agro-Fisheries and Food Trade Corporation and Mr. Kim Dongro, Senior Deputy Director for Student Health Policy at the Ministry of Education. Credit: WFP/Seoul

The Republic of Korea (RoK) became a member of the School Meals Coalition and views this participation as a significant opportunity to enhance international partnerships. The government is eager to leverage its extensive expertise in school meal programmes to contribute meaningfully to global initiatives to improve child nutrition and education. Honourable Kim Choon-jin, a former member of parliament who initiated the universal free school meal policy in RoK, emphasized the government's commitment to sharing knowledge and best practices while learning from other countries. The Republic of Korea provides nutritious meals to over five million students in almost 12,000 primary and secondary schools nationwide, supporting 99.8% of the children in both public and private schools.

Read the full story [here](#).

Global leaders unite to advance school meals at special UN forum

On 12 July, leaders from Finland, Brazil, and France, as well as Coalition partners, gathered at the UN Headquarters for the High-Level Political Forum event, *Investment in the Future: School Meals for Sustainable Development*. Discussions galvanized support for school meals and explored new ways to expand and improve quality of programmes. School meals reached 418 million children in 2022, up from 388 million in 2020, with a \$5 billion increase in national budget investments, underscoring their critical importance. [Read more here](#). In another event at the **High-Level Political Forum**, the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations hosted the event, *Just, Healthy, and Green? Exploring the nexus of SDGs 1,2, and 3 and transformative approaches like climate-smart school meal programmes*. It brought together scientists, civil society and policymakers from national governments and multilateral institutions. They explored the transformative potential of cross-sectoral cooperation in initiatives such as school meal programmes, and true cost accounting for food systems, to foster an inclusive and effective SDG acceleration.



Voices from the field

Ghana: Hajia Mohammed, the National Coordinator for the Ghana School Feeding Programme, shares a set of measures the Government of Ghana is taking to extend school meals despite financial constraints.

Nepal: Meet Basanta Singh, who delivers school food on mules in Nepal's hardest-to-reach district of Bajhang.

Please amplify these voices on your digital platforms and connect with us to share what is happening in school meals in your country, as well as experiences in your community.



Quotes of the month

Find quotes of the month, which you can include in your communication and advocacy messages, including social media, supporting school meals.

“We are confident that by developing and enhancing school meal programmes, all countries can achieve similar results. This is especially critical as many nations are currently suffering from an unprecedented food crisis. Significantly, school meal programmes are advantageous across high, middle, and low-income nations, as they support multiple Sustainable Development Goals.”

Mr. Pasi Hellman, Under-Secretary of State for International Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, speaking at the High-Level Political Forum side event: Investment in the Future: School Meals for Sustainable Development.

“It must be recognized that none of our countries has sufficient resources to universalize access for all students to school feeding programmes based on local production. I would like to insist on the political will of our states, without which nothing solid can be achieved.”

Professor Fatou Sow Sarr, ECOWAS Commissioner for Human Development and Social Affairs, at the ECOWAS Stocktaking conference, Dakar, Senegal



Upcoming engagement & initiatives

23-26 July > Summer learning on school meals for ASEAN cities

The [Cities Feeding the Future Initiative](#), in partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), launched the *Spreading Experiences and Knowledge on School Meal Programmes in the ASEAN Cities Project*. Supported by [Parahyangan Catholic University \(UNPAR\)](#) and the Municipality of Bandung, the project will host a summer school in the Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung, Indonesia. This initiative will provide tools for sustainable school meal programmes. To inquire further, contact mufpp.secretariat@comune.milano.it.

27-29 August > Mexico to host regional forum on school meals

The Government of Mexico and the World Food Programme will co-host the 10th Regional School Meals Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico City. Stakeholders will share and learn from regional programmes, highlighting the need for collaboration to enhance food security and children's health through school meals. Interested in following the discussions?

Contact francisco.mezad@salud.gob.mx or sarah.kohnstamm@wfp.org.

31 July > The role of nutrition in the next 7,000 days after birth

Join the Research Consortium's Nutrition Community of Practice to learn the latest evidence about nutrition during the next 7,000 days after birth. Discussions will investigate why it is critical to prioritize quality evidence to support children to flourish, both at school and beyond. To participate, register [here](#), and for more information, contact kate.morris@lshtm.ac.uk.

Mark your calendar

5-6 October> Ghana to host Regional Consultation on School Health and Nutrition in Africa

A two-day regional event will take place in Accra, Ghana, bringing together sectorial stakeholders to explore strategies for successfully implementing school meal programmes across the region. The discussion is co-convened by the African Nutrition Association, the Research Consortium of the School Meals Coalition, and Catholic Relief Services. Is your area of work in school meals or nutrition and health in West Africa, and want to contribute to this consultation? Please get in touch with kate.morris@lshtm.ac.uk.



Event digest

17-18 June> The power of public food procurement and school meals

In Copenhagen, [the Cities Feeding the Future Initiative](#), the [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#) (MUFPP), the [Municipality of Copenhagen](#) and [Roskilde University](#) hosted the [conference: The Power of Public Food Procurement: The transformative potential of school meals for children aged 1-16 years](#). Part of the [Horizon 2020 Food Trails project](#), this EU-funded initiative involves 19 European partners, including 11 cities, three universities and five organizations, focused on sustainable, healthy and inclusive food policies. The conference gathered 100 participants from over 20 European countries and discussed aligning public food procurement with national goals and the importance of partnerships in school meal programmes. Do you want to know more? Please contact: mufpp.secretariat@comune.milano.it



Resources

School Meals International Donor Analysis Report

Despite the potential of school meals programmes, OECD aid donors only provide

around \$287 million in aid per year – less than 0.1 per cent of total aid. A new report by Fab Inc. and the Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition, 'School Meals International Donor Analysis,' calls for greater transparency and accountability in aid flows. Read the [full report here](#).

The 2024 Global Food Policy Report

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) launched the [Improving Diets and Nutrition through Food Systems: What will it take Report](#) which examines approaches to addressing poor diets through better governance. The report recommends effective public policy decisions, such as school meal programmes, to tackle multiple malnutrition problems facing countries.

FAO-WFP Hunger Hotspots Report warns of acute food insecurity

The June to October 2024 [report](#) identifies 18 critical hunger hotspots facing escalating food insecurity due to conflict, economic instability, and climate shocks. Highlighting the transformative potential of school meal programmes, the report suggests integrating these into relief efforts, particularly in South Sudan, Sudan, Haiti, and Lebanon, as a strategic move towards sustainable development.

World Vision > Ration Cuts: Taking from the hungry to feed the starving

A World Vision report [highlights the severe impact of food ration cuts](#) on children, families, and communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, DRC, Lebanon, Somalia, and Uganda. It underscores that school meal programmes can mitigate these effects by providing nutrition and stability. School meals not only address immediate hunger but also foster long-term development and resilience in affected communities.

Ukraine > Case study

[The Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition's case study](#) highlights Ukraine's efforts to maintain school meals during the 2022 conflict. Despite challenges like displacement and the destruction of over 200 schools, the national programme launched in 2019, adapted to continue supporting children. The study details the programme's organization, funding, and monitoring, emphasizing the vital role of school meals in conflict settings and offering lessons from Ukraine's experience.

Yours sincerely,

School Meals Coalition Secretariat

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 as a member or partner.