



School Meals Coalition Monthly Newsletter

January 2025



New Members and Partners

Welcome to [the newest members](#) to join the Coalition: the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Yemen and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP).

WELCOME to Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) as the newest members of the School Meals Coalition. Joining the Coalition are also partners: Mercy Corps, Rikolto International, Plant Foods for Climate Campaign (Finland) and the National Foodservice Association of Ukraine.

A warm welcome as well to [our newest partners](#):

- [Comida do Amanhã Institute](#), a Brazilian think tank that supports the transition to healthy, sustainable, inclusive, biodiverse, and culturally integrated food systems.
- [The Indonesian Health and Nutrition Improvement Institution \(YLPKGI\)](#), an organization dedicated to helping Indonesia achieve its national health targets and improving the overall well-being of Indonesians.

The Coalition now stands at **108 Member States**, **6 regional bodies** and **139 partners**.



Highlights

Indonesia joins the Coalition, launches ambitious school meals programme



Lunch time in Sukabumi, Indonesia where a Free School Meal and Milk Pilot supported over 3,500 learners last year. Photo credit: IFSR/Indonesia

Indonesia's new government, led by President Prabowo Subianto, has joined the School Meals Coalition and unveiled an ambitious Free Nutritious Meal Programme (Makan Bergizi Gratis). This groundbreaking initiative aims to provide healthy meals to over 80 million children and pregnant women by 2030. Of these, 78.3 million children will receive meals in schools, fostering the development of a healthier and smarter generation to drive Indonesia's economic growth. In its first year, the government hopes to reach over 19 million school children and pregnant women, with a gradual expansion over the next five years. This programme aligns with President Subianto's commitment announced at the launch of the [Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty](#) in Brazil, to allocate substantial funds to education and prioritize free school meals. [Read more](#).

Portuguese-speaking countries champion school gardens and clean cooking



Left photo: Some seminar participants (from left to right): Mr. Leonvictor Mushumba, Head of Office, WFP; Dr. João Ima-Panzo, Director of Cultural Action and Portuguese Language, CPLP; Ms. Isabel Maria Correia Viegas de Abreu, Minister of Education, São Tomé and Príncipe; Mr. Dulce de Jesus Soares, Minister of Education, Timor-Leste; and Mr. Pacheco Francisco, Secretary of Education for Pre-School and Primary Education, Angola. Photo credit: WFP/ São Tomé and Príncipe.

Right photo: The home-grown school feeding programme in Mozambique. Photo credit: WFP/Ana Mato Hombre.

At the [III International Seminar on Good Practices in School Feeding in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries \(CPLP\)](#), held in São Tomé and Príncipe, stakeholders agreed to forge stronger partnerships, enhance South-South Cooperation, and invest in joint initiatives for sharing good practices in school gardens and clean cooking. The Minister of Education in São Tomé and Príncipe, Ms. Isabel Maria Correia Viegas de Abreu, emphasized robust policies and multilateral partnerships to boost locally produced food in schools.

“School meals are more than a social policy; they are an investment in the future. A dish served in a school canteen is often the beginning of a virtuous circle that guarantees health, promotes education, supports smallholder farmers, values local products, and protects the environment. Success in programmes require innovation, political commitment, and mobilization of resources.”

Dr. João Ima-Panzo, CPLP Director of Cultural Action and Portuguese Language

[Read the CPLP Seminar Outcomes](#)

School meals: A cornerstone of urban food policies in Asia-Pacific cities



The city of Bangkok hosted city leaders from across Asia-Pacific, other government representatives, and partners in a forum that explored the significance of school meal programmes for urban food policies and their integration with urban agricultural practices, strategies to tackle food waste and donations to food banks. Photo credit: Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

The 2nd Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPF) Asia-Pacific Regional Forum, held on 3-4 December in Bangkok, brought together 70 participants from 17 cities across 8 countries under the theme “Nourishing growing cities: Enhancing school meals and supporting local communities.” Highlights of the event included the onboarding of four new cities—Phuket, Surat Thani, Udon Thani, and Vientiane - and the awarding of eight innovative school meal project proposals from cities, such as Bandung, Chiang Mai, Denpasar, Hoi An, Hue, Semarang, Surakarta, and Seberang Perai.

[Read report here](#)



Featured Voices

Brazil: Honourable **Wellington Dias**, Brazil's Minister of Development and Social Assistance, shares how school meal programmes, one of the policies in the [Policy Basket of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty](#), are among the six '2030 Sprints' that will accelerate action in the next five years.

World Vision: **Mary Njeri**, Global School Meals Director, highlights efforts to deliver school meals in conflict zones. Through the [ENOUGH campaign](#), World Vision aims to feed 5 million children in 3 years, building on the 1.8 million children supported since the launch of the [Global Hunger Response](#) in 2022.

Feel free to amplify these voices on your digital platforms and [connect with us](#) to share what is happening in school meals in your local community and country.



Fact of the month

Ghana: Cash or school meals?

Nearly **8 out of 10 parents** surveyed in Ghana reported preferring their children to receive school meals than either take-home rations or cash. Read the Centre for Global Development report [here](#).



In country action

Kenya: School gardens initiative promote iron-rich Nyota beans

St. Francis Kiptulon Secondary School in Kenya, supported by HarvestPlus, has planted iron-rich Nyota beans on a 1.5-acre plot to enhance school meal nutrition. The biofortified [bean varieties](#), developed by HarvestPlus, are high in iron and high-yielding and favored for their agronomic, taste, and cooking qualities. Are you curious about how high-iron beans are transforming school meals in this community? [Read more](#) or watch HarvestPlus' [Podcast](#).



Coming up

28 February – 1 March > Africa Day of School Feeding (ADSF), Bangui, Central Africa Republic

This year's theme, "A decade of nourishment: Celebrating the past, securing a just future," highlights the significance of these programmes in achieving Africa's Agenda 2063. [Learn more](#).

27-28 March 2025 > Nutrition for Growth Summit, Paris, France

The [N4G summit](#) will serve as a multi-stakeholder platform advocating for ambitious financial and political commitments, fostering dialogue amongst stakeholders on nutrition to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

The School Meals Coalition Secretariat looks forward to amplifying any events or reports from your organization. Please send to SMC.communications@wfp.org.



Event digest

The Global Child Nutrition Forum:

Mapping interventions to improve the quality of school meals

The 24th [Global Child Nutrition Forum](#) gathered 408 participants from 82 countries in Osaka, Japan, to discuss progress, challenges and

opportunities in school meal programmes from 2022 to 2024. Participants emphasized the need for increased resources to develop sustainable, resilient systems that provide nutritious school meals and foster multistakeholder collaboration. To learn more about the Forum's recommendations, find the full [communiqué](#) and contact emily@gcnf.org.

European Child Guarantee:

A meeting to ensure protection and well-being for every child

On December 10-11, in Brussels, the European Commission and the School Meals Coalition co-hosted a meeting of the [European Child Guarantee](#) Coordinators to take stock of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Child Guarantee [recommendations](#), namely access to healthy meals and nutrition. During the G20 Summit in 2024, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen highlighted the upcoming Anti-Poverty Strategy, including a plan to strengthen the implementation of the Child Guarantee. The Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition shared evidence on benefits of school meal programmes. [Read more](#).

Bridging Science and Policy:

Insights from the SAIN4 and SHGBEE3 Conference

The joint Conference held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on 19-22 November, provided a platform for harnessing the synergy of sustainable agricultural intensification practices and biodiversity for food and nutrition security related to school meal programmes. Learn more about the plenary session "[Food systems transformation through school feeding](#)" including representatives from Coalition members and partners: [Dr. Dexter Galban](#), Assistant Secretary Bureau of Learners Support Services Department of Education, Philippines and [Dr. Danny Hunter](#), Principal Scientist at the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. Learn more about [School-plus-Home Gardens cum Biodiversity Enhancement and Enterprise \(SHGBEE\)](#) and Searca's [School-plus-Home Gardens Program \(S+HGP\)](#).



Resources and publication

Rwanda unveils new National School Meals Policy and Financing Strategy

The Government of Rwanda has endorsed the updated [National Comprehensive School Feeding Policy](#) and Strategic Plan, and a [Financing Strategy](#), initiatives aimed to improve the provision of nutritious, locally sourced school meals in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition: 2024

The Research Consortium reflects on last year's achievements in the blog [Discover the six key areas that drove this progress in 2024](#). The Research Consortium's 'Planet-Friendly School Meals' research programme has been selected for the longlist of the [Food Planet Prize](#), the world's biggest environmental prize rewarding initiatives that support a healthy planet while feeding the world. The shortlist and winner of the \$2 million prize will be announced later this year. See the [award longlist](#).

We would like to hear from you

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to be on our regular mailing list, please [visit here](#). If you would like to join the School Meals Coalition, you can signal your interest in signing the Declaration of Commitment (as a government) or Declaration of Support through contacting the same email address.

Yours sincerely,

School Meals Coalition Secretariat

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