

**Title of coalition:**

## School Meals Coalition: Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child

**Main objective of the coalition:**

**Goal:** Improve the quality and expand the scale of school meals programmes globally as a platform to reach communities, simultaneously transforming food, education, social protection and health systems.

**What is new with this Coalition and what is different from what is already happening on the ground?**

- i. The quality and efficiency of existing nationally owned school meals programmes will be improved in all countries by ensuring healthy food environments in schools and promoting nutritious and sustainably produced food, diverse and balanced diets, linking to local and seasonal production where appropriate. This will address all forms of malnutrition, improve opportunities for smallholder farmers, create local jobs for women entrepreneurs and add value along the entire supply chain, benefiting local economies. The coalition aims to take existing national programmes to the next level, ensuring that their potential to be transformational is realized.
- ii. We also cannot forget that the pandemic has destroyed national education systems and with them, national school meals programmes. Under this coalition, countries commit to re-establishing school meal programmes and restoring what was lost during the pandemic. The most vulnerable 73 million children in low and lower middle-income countries, that were not being reached even before the pandemic, will be covered. Importantly, the efficiency of programmes in these countries will be improved so they become more sustainable and self-reliant.

**Science based evidence to prioritize this coalition (scientific references):**

Evidence on the systemic impact of school meals programmes across multiple sectors is well documented. This coalition is based on 15 years of research by partners including the World Bank, the Partnership for Child Development of the Imperial College in London, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and WFP.<sup>i</sup>

The latest comprehensive evidence of the outcomes of school meals was published in 2018 by the World Bank in “Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies”,<sup>ii</sup> which establishes that school meals programmes yield benefits through at least five sectoral pathways: education; health/nutrition; gender equality; social protection; and local food systems and economies. Evidence of outcomes can be directly linked to at least six SDG’s (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 12). Thus, this coalition is not just about feeding children, it’s about unleashing the potential of these programmes to be transformative for the entire community.

The coalition has a demonstrated capacity to reach scale and could benefit at least 440 million school-aged children: 370 million children that were covered before the pandemic would be reached with improved programmes<sup>iii</sup> and 73 million vulnerable children in LICs and LMICs that would be reached through expanded coverage.<sup>iv</sup>

In terms of additional multisectoral benefits, there is evidence that the programmes have disproportionate effect on girls, improving their access to education and learning. They also directly create 1,668 new jobs for every 100,000 children fed mainly through catering companies, most of them run by women at the community level.<sup>v</sup> Additionally, a new study of the intergenerational effects of India’s school meal programme finds that stunting among children born to mothers who received



school meals when they were young was lower than among mothers that were not exposed to the programme.<sup>vi</sup>

Harvard University's recent cost-benefit analyses highlight returns of up to US\$9 for every US\$1 invested.<sup>vii</sup> Although the programmes are intrinsically expensive, the value for money resides in the multi-sectoral returns (especially to human capital, safety nets and the local economy) as well as the creation of local agricultural markets and jobs.<sup>viii</sup>

## **Mechanisms of implementation (Global to National levels):**

At the global level, the organization and management of the coalition will be supported by WFP through augmented capacity in its School-based Programmes Division in Rome, which will serve as the coordinating body for the coalition. WFP will leverage its significant presence through country, regional and liaison offices, and work with partners, to support country efforts. It will oversee and coordinate specific initiatives designed to support country level action. Globally, WFP will work with three partners who will provide substantive support and know-how to country efforts:

- The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), which hosts the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition. It will provide an evidence base to optimize the quality and value for money of school-based interventions.<sup>ix</sup> The Consortium, launched in May of 2021, will establish a 10-year research agenda. Evidence will be disseminated widely to support decision making in countries and improve scale and quality of programmes, and to coordinate the efforts of academia, think tanks and research partners.
- The Education Commission, which leads the Financing Task Force for School Health and Nutrition. This initiative will work with governments to find more sustainable sources of financing for their programmes and support the transition towards self-reliance. This will include working with bilateral and multilateral donors to find more effective ways of investing in these programmes, and also working with countries themselves to structure more effective domestic financing mechanisms.
- WFP, together with the African Union (AU) School Feeding Cluster and AUDA/NEPAD, will co-host a database of relevant indicators for tracking and accountability.

Funding to sustain this coordination structure and augment capacity in all four organizations has been secured from donors, including France, Finland and Dubai Cares.

At the national level the coalition will dock into the relevant national Ministry or institution that leads school meals initiatives. In most cases, these are Ministries of Education or Agriculture, although in some countries the responsible entity is in Presidential/Prime Ministerial offices. Over the next twelve months, countries have committed to define measurable national commitments towards the coalition through national dialogues. This is the case of Rwanda, for example, which has defined its national commitments under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, after lengthy consultations with partners in the technical working group. The commitments are now awaiting clearance from the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister's office. Once approved, the national commitments will be implemented by the Ministry of Education with the support from partners. In fact, governments will receive support from at least four UN agencies that have agreed to work together in support of UN Country Teams (WFP, UNICEF, FAO and UNESCO) and other local actors. These commitments will then be translated into policy frameworks at national level and operational roadmaps for action.

## **Strategic partners (members, private sector, civil society, academia):**



All members of the coalition have signed a Declaration of Commitment which was discussed and agreed upon in June 2021. To date, 58 countries have signed the Declaration of Commitment, at head of state or ministerial level (see Annex with full set of signatures).<sup>x</sup> The coalition has the backing of President Macron of France, President Sall of Senegal, and President Kagame of Rwanda, among other world leaders. Over 42 partners including major UN agencies, academia, civil society, regional bodies and private sector have signed Declarations of Support to the coalition. WFP, UNICEF, FAO, UNESCO and WHO are signing a specific declaration of support which also specifies how they will work together to support country efforts. The coalition has reached out to groups representing indigenous peoples, women, and youth to ensure that they are well represented.

## Monitoring and Evaluation (clear quantifiable indicators and targets linked to SDGs)

A monitoring and evaluation mechanism is being developed by WFP and partners to track action against the coalition's objectives, and contributions towards the SDGs. A global school meals database is being set up in partnership with Dubai Cares, the Research Consortium, the African Union and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA/NEPAD). Three secondees will be placed in the AU to lead these efforts. WFP will publish the report, "State of School Feeding Worldwide", every two years, which will serve as the reporting mechanism for the coalition, and which will feed into the broader FSS follow up mechanism.

<sup>i</sup> For a summary of evidence published since 2009 please see:

(i) Bundy, D. Burbano, C. et al. 2009 Rethinking School Feeding Social Safety Nets, Child Development, and the Education Sector. Directions in Development. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2634>

(ii) State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013. WFP. 2013 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2013>

(iii) Drake, L.; Woolnough, A.; Burbano, C.; Bundy, D. 2016. Global School Feeding Sourcebook : Lessons from 14 Countries. London: Imperial College Press. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24418>

(iv) Bundy, D et al. Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies". World Bank. 2018 <http://dcp-3.org/schoolfeeding>

(v) Home-Grown School Feeding Resource Framework. FAO and WFP. 2018. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CA0957EN/>

(vi) State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020. WFP. 2020 <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2020>

(vii) How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost? Frontiers in Public Health. 2020

(viii) Comprehensive Economic Evaluation of School Feeding Program Costs and Benefits in 14 Low- and Middle-Income Countries". Economics Working Paper. Harvard School of Public Health. 2020

<sup>ii</sup> Bundy, D.A.P., de Silva, N., Horton, S., Jamison, D.T. and Patton, G.C. 2018. "Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies". Washington, DC, World Bank

<sup>iii</sup> World Food Programme. 2020. "State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020". <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2020>

<sup>iv</sup> Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D.A.P. 2020. "How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost? Frontiers in Public Health

<sup>v</sup> World Food Programme. 2020. "State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020". <https://www.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2020>

<sup>vi</sup> Chakrabarti, S. Scott, S. Alderman, H. Menon, P. & Gilligan, Daniel. 2021. Intergenerational nutrition benefits of India's national school feeding program. Nature Communications. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-021-24433-w>

<sup>vii</sup> Verguet, S., Drake, L.J., Limasalle, P., Chakrabarti, A., Bundy, D.A.P. 2020. "Comprehensive Economic Evaluation of School Feeding Program Costs and Benefits in 14 Low- and Middle-Income Countries". Economics Working Paper. Harvard School of Public Health.

<sup>viii</sup> WFP, FAO, IFAD, NEPAD, GCNF and PCD. 2018. "Home-Grown School Feeding Resource Framework". Technical Document. Rome. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/home-grown-school-feeding-resource-framework>.

<sup>ix</sup> For more information on the Consortium please visit: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/research-consortium-for-school-health-and-nutrition>

## FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT



\* **Countries include:** DRC, Ethiopia, Finland, Honduras, Monaco, Senegal, Sweden, Timor-Leste, African Union, Namibia, Guinea, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Rwanda, Madagascar, Kenya, El Salvador, Germany, Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Somalia, Republic of Congo, Morocco, Denmark, Philippines, Panama, Benin, Norway, Brazil, Nepal, Burundi, Bhutan, Cambodia, Gambia, Pakistan, Iceland, France, USA, Guatemala, South Africa, Turkey, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia, Thailand, Japan, Kuwait, Angola, Egypt, Russia and Japan.

**Stakeholders include:** UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNESCO, UN Nutrition, Education Cannot Wait, AUDA NEPAD, Dubai Cares, AVSI, War Child, University of Leeds, Schools of Food Science and Nutrition, and Psychology/WHO Collaborating Centre for Nutrition Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine/Global Research Consortium, PCD, Canadian Coalition for Healthy School Food, Global Child Nutrition Forum, USA Food Systems for the Future, OSAA – USG Special Advisor Africa Affairs, Chefs Manifesto SDG2Hub, Copenhagen Business School, Plan International, EAT Forum, Andre Food International, Mary's Meals, OXFAM, World Fish Malaysia, Catholic Relief Services, University of Toronto, C40, ADRA, Stop Hunger Foundation, JAM International, City of Milan, DSM, Gain, World Vision, IFAD, The Global Food Banking Network, Kitchen Connection, Northumbria University, Save the Children, International Dairy Foods Association Foundation