



Two minutes to learn about... **School Meals**



WFP's Vision

- **No child should attend school hungry.** This is the vision WFP has set to accomplish for 2015. School meals are a powerful social safety net for children. WFP is working with its government partners, NGOs and donors to achieve this aim.
- WFP calculates that **US\$3.2 billion is needed** per year to reach all 66 million hungry school age children. US\$1.2 billion would allow WFP to reach the 23 million children in Africa.
- Over the past 45 years, 42 countries have **taken over school meal programmes** from WFP, ensuring independence from aid. WFP has developed strategies with more countries to continue WFP-funded programmes on their own and to develop Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes (ones created and run by the government), supported by purchase from local farmers.

Basic Facts

- Studies show that it is **more difficult for children to learn** without adequate food and nutrition. There are **66 million** primary school-age children who attend school hungry across the developing world, with 23 million in Africa alone.
- Currently, 75 million school-age children do not attend school. Poor households are often obliged to **choose between sending their children to school or to the fields.** The family meal of today can take priority over the children's potential for tomorrow.
- A daily school meal **provides a strong incentive** to send children to school and keep them there. An adequate school meal boosts learning by allowing children to focus on their studies and not their stomachs.
- Just US\$0.25 will fill a cup with porridge, rice or beans and give a monthly ration to take home. **With US\$50 a child can be fed for an entire school year.**

What Are School Meals?

- **In-school meals** are one way in which the programmes operate. Children are fed breakfast, lunch or both in school. These meals can be prepared in schools, in the community or be delivered from centralized kitchens. Some in-school meal programmes provide complete meals and while others provide high energy biscuits or snacks.
- **Take-home rations** are another element of some school meal programmes. In this scheme, entire families receive food if their children attend school. The rations are conditional upon school enrolment and attendance of children. In some countries, in-school meals are combined with take-home rations for particularly vulnerable students such as girls or orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, cognitive capacity, and nutrition. Food rations function like conditional cash transfers, their value compensating for the costs of sending the child to school. This is also proven to be a powerful human rights programme for girls, increasing enrollment and attendance even in societies where girls are traditionally denied an education.
- To the maximum extent possible, **food is procured locally** in developing countries, which in turn benefits local development efforts and small farmers.

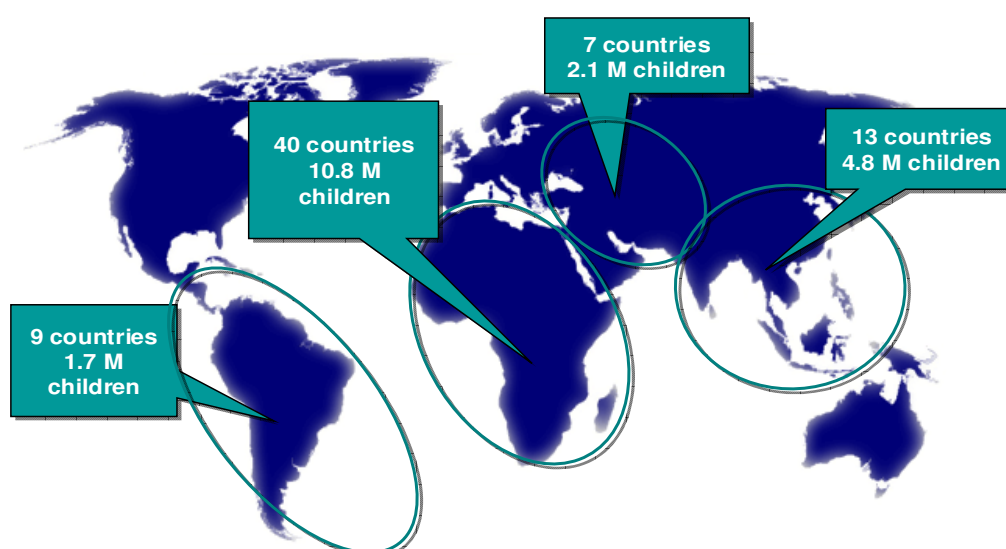
Why School Meals?

- **Nutrition.** When school meal rations are combined with de-worming and micronutrient fortification they offer important nutritional benefits.
- **Social Protection.** School meals can break the cycle of hunger, poverty, child exploitation by providing much-needed food in the world's poorest areas. School meals can also reach children affected by HIV/AIDS, orphans, the disabled, former child soldiers.
- **Education.** School meals encourage poor households to send children to school and helps to keep them there. School meal programmes are often specifically targeted to girls, enabling them to go to school and have an education and a future.
- **Supplementary benefits.** Schools are the centre of many villages and communities. School meals are a highly participatory programme that connects teachers, parents, cooks, children, farmers, and the local market. In some communities, school meals have become the platform for local poverty reduction and development activities.

WFP's presence

- WFP now provides meals to an average of 22 million children in school, about half of whom are girls, in some 70 countries.
- In 2008, WFP provided take-home rations to 2.7 million girls and 1.6 million boys. WFP is also assisting 730,000 pre-school children in 13 countries through school meal programmes.
- As a response to the high food price crisis, in 2008 WFP scaled up its school meals projects for 5 million children and their families in 14 countries: Benin, Central African Republic*, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau*, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia*, Mozambique, Pakistan, occupied Palestinian territories, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, with the largest increases in Haiti, Pakistan, Senegal and Tajikistan.
- In 2008, the value of WFP food commodities procured in developing countries increased to US\$882 million.

WFP School Meals coverage



For more information, please contact the World Food Programme at: www.wfp.org/school-meals.

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