

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



A CHANCE FOR EVERY SCHOOLCHILD

Partnering to scale up School Health
and Nutrition for Human Capital



WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 - 2030



January 2020

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	10
Part I: The Importance of Investing in the Health and Nutrition of Schoolchildren and Adolescents	13
1.1 Optimizing Education Outcomes: The Learning and Inclusion Agenda and its Connections to School Health and Nutrition	14
1.2 Human Capital Development and the Importance of Investing in Children	14
1.3 Food Systems, Diets and Climate Change	15
1.4 The First 8,000 Days: A Growing Call to Rethink the Investment in Health and Nutrition of Schoolchildren	16
Part II: An Evidence-based Integrated Response to the Needs of Schoolchildren	19
2.1 Schools as a Platform for Delivery of an Integrated School Health and Nutrition Package	20
2.2 Why School Feeding?	20
2.3 Unfinished Business: How Many Children are not Receiving School Health and Nutrition Support?	24
2.4 How Much Would it Cost to Scale Up School Feeding and the Integrated School Health and Nutrition Package?	26
2.5 Supporting Middle- and Low-Income Countries to Address Implementation Challenges	28
Part III: WFP's Role and Strategic Response	31
3.1 WFP's Vision	32
3.2 WFP's Response: What it Will Do	32
3.3 Major Strategic Shifts and Organizational Learning Required to Reach the Vision	34
3.4 The Supporting Work Streams of the Strategy	36
3.5 Demonstrating Results and Measuring the Success of the Strategy	39
Appendix - Theory of Change School Feeding Strategy 2020–2030	40
Boxes	
Box 1. The school feeding landscape: the evolution of a policy priority	22-23
Box 2. How Kenya consolidated its national school feeding programme	27
Box 3. Bangladesh: the transition in progress	27
Figures	
Figure 1: Health and nutrition interventions during school years	21
Figure 2: Four major benefits of school feeding programmes	24
Figure 3: WFP estimated operational targets by 2030	32
Map - The 60 countries where the 73 million children in need of school health and nutrition support live	25
Tables - School feeding and school health costs for the 73 million primary school-aged children in extreme poverty without access to national school feeding programmes in low- and middle-income countries	26

Executive Summary

The Importance of Investing in the Health and Nutrition of Schoolchildren and Adolescents

Healthy and well-nourished schoolchildren learn better. Healthy children also have better chances to thrive and fulfil their potential as adults. Ensuring that girls and boys stay in school and are able and ready to learn allows countries to develop their human capital and individuals to achieve their full potential in life. It strengthens community cohesion, stability and productivity, and helps make people and societies more resilient in a rapidly changing world.

Investments in human capital development of children are among the most effective and productive investments that countries can make. Failing to invest in a well-nourished, healthy and educated population undermines growth and economic development: low-income countries in Africa account for 25 out of the 30 countries with the lowest ranking in the World Bank Human Capital Index. For many of these countries, underinvestment in human capital leads to a loss of economic potential ranging from 50 to 70 percent in the long term. Africa's Human Capital Index puts the region at 40 percent of its potential. Its gross domestic product (GDP) could be 2.5 times higher if the benchmarks for health and education were achieved.

The world has made great strides in improving access to education, but learning remains suboptimal and more investment in high quality education is needed. The world is failing its schoolchildren in other important ways that constrain learning. In low- and middle-income countries, about 300 million schoolchildren have anaemia, causing them to lose some six IQ points per child; and about 73 million schoolchildren in low-income countries go to school hungry. These conditions translate into the equivalent of between 200 million and 500 million schooldays lost to ill health each year.

Current approaches to investing in a nation's children are insufficient. While low- and lower-middle income countries invest some USD 210 billion annually in providing basic education for their children (infrastructure, teachers, curriculum), they only invest about USD 1.4 billion to 5.5 billion in ensuring the children have the health and nutrition to allow them to learn: we invest in learning, but not in the learner. There is a growing consensus that there is a need to fix this mismatch. Very simply: sick children cannot attend school and hungry children cannot learn.

World Food Programme (WFP) will champion this neglected issue. In this strategy WFP lays out how it will advocate globally, and work in partnership, to address gaps in guaranteeing a proper school health and nutrition response for children in schools. In many cases WFP may not be the lead agency in tackling specific challenges, but by working with other agencies to shed light on the issue of school health and nutrition and convening different actors, it will help find solutions to the challenges identified. WFP will do this by leveraging its six decades of experience supporting school health and nutrition, its reach and knowledge of the poorest and hardest to reach populations, and its trajectory of working with more than 100 countries on sustainable national school feeding programmes.

This document also explains the new approach to school feeding adopted by WFP, as a pillar of an integrated school health and nutrition response. A key element of this new approach is to transform school feeding into a major driver of a climate change responsive approach to feeding children, for example by reducing the length of supply chains and adopting a zero-tolerance response to waste. It lays out for governments, partners and WFP staff worldwide what to expect from WFP in the next ten years, what its priorities and roles will be, and how it plans to change its way of working to provide more and better support to governments and children.

This strategy presents a broad call to action and vision and a focused operational approach. It asks governments and partners to join in a new multisectoral, multi-actor response that contributes to achieving at least eight of the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty (SDG1), hunger (SDG2), health (SDG3), education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequalities (SDG10) and strengthened partnerships (SDG17).



An Effective Global Response: An Integrated and Multisectoral Approach to School Health and Nutrition

An integrated package of support to schoolchildren and adolescents is needed, at scale. It is important that growing children are fully supported by good health and nutrition during the first 1,000 days of their development, the critical window from conception to 2 years of age. That has been the development focus for the last decade, but we now know that is not enough. If the early gains are to be sustained, and children are to achieve their full potential as adults, then they need to maintain good health and nutrition throughout the vulnerable periods of development that continue through to the early twenties: the first 8,000 days of life. Most importantly, good health and nutrition need to be sustained when children are being educated during school age and adolescence. This is an investment that is necessary for all children and has its greatest returns for the most deprived children and for girls.

WFP estimates that some 305 million children in low- and middle-income countries, about half of all those enrolled, are fed at school every day. Many of these children receive other elements of an integrated package of school health and nutrition, which would likely include deworming, supplementation, vaccination, vision screening, malaria control, menstrual hygiene management, nutrition education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and oral health. But these interventions rarely reach the poorest children who need them the most. WFP estimates that about 73 million primary schoolchildren living in extreme poverty in 60 countries do not have access to national school feeding programmes and are most likely not receiving most of the other essential school health interventions.

A global effort to support governments to reach these 73 million primary schoolchildren is a priority, and one which makes good economic sense. Providing these children with at least one meal a day would have an additional cost of around USD 4.6 billion annually, adding the essential school health package would increase the cost to USD 5.8 billion annually, which represents some 2.5 percent of the current annual investment in primary education. The return on this investment is a benefit–cost ratio estimated at around USD 20 for every dollar invested, and which leverages the greater than USD 210 billion a year investment in learning.

The multiple returns to a school feeding and school health package mean that they can be used as strategic interventions to both mitigate crises and support national development. In times of stability, school feeding promotes education, health and nutrition – in other words, it builds human capital. If linked to local agriculture, additional economic and social benefits can be extended to schoolchildren’s households and their communities.

In hard times, school feeding programmes can rapidly expand their role as a social safety net, ensuring food is quickly and directly available for the communities that need help the most. School feeding programmes supply about 10 percent of household expenditure for each child who participates, providing a substantial resource transfer to the poorest households and serving as an effective safety net. The programmes reach into the heart of poor communities and benefit needy children and communities directly in ways that cash alone cannot. They act as an entry point for other sectoral interventions to reach children and provide a multisectoral platform that bridges both humanitarian and development actions. This focused support during development is essential for all children, and in the poorest and most deprived communities is a game-changer for girls.

WFP's Strategic Response

Responding to the Decade of Action (2020 – 2030), WFP will work with governments and partners to jointly ensure that all primary schoolchildren have access to good quality meals in school, accompanied by a broader integrated package of health and nutrition services. WFP will take a context-specific approach and adapt its roles to the particular country situation, in partnerships with other important players, including governments, United Nations agencies, the private sector, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and focus specifically on ensuring that the 73 million children living in extreme poverty in 60 countries are reached.

WFP will implement this through a context-specific approach:

1. **CONTEXT 1: Crisis or humanitarian settings:**

30 countries have been identified under this category with around 40 million children in need of school feeding.

ROLE 1: WFP will scale up by providing operational support. WFP will scale up its coverage and operate programmes in countries that do not have the capacity to ensure vulnerable children are covered. Currently WFP reaches 10 million children in 27 countries under this category.

TARGET: Increase coverage to 35 million children in 30 countries by 2030 and support governments to reach the remaining 5 million children in need. The organization will aim to raise USD 1.75 billion annually to support this scale up and will progressively increase the capacity of implementation on the ground.

WFP's target for the next ten years

1. Provide school feeding to **35 million children in 30 of the most fragile and low-income countries.** WFP will raise USD 1.75 billion annually to cover the cost of feeding these children.
2. Work with national governments of the **remaining 30 stable, low- and middle-income countries to reach 38 million children** (contexts 2 and 3) by transitioning and scaling up nationally owned programmes. WFP will raise USD 20 million to provide technical assistance and secure transitional funding for operations.

2. **CONTEXT 2: Stable low-income and lower-middle-income countries:** 20 countries have been identified under this category with around 29 million children in need of school feeding.

ROLE 2: WFP will support the transition and scale up of national programmes. WFP will help to strengthen systems and provide technical assistance in countries that have emerging capacities and are working on improving the scale and quality of national programmes. During 2020 and 2021 WFP will engage with national governments to develop time-bound national targets and handover strategies, leading to a gradual decrease of WFP operational beneficiaries in the coming decade. WFP currently reaches 6 million children under this category.

TARGET: Successful hand over of school feeding programmes in 20 countries by 2030. The organization will aim to raise USD 14 million annually to support capacity strengthening activities. Additionally, since transitions will happen progressively in the next ten years, WFP will need to secure funding to cover the children currently under its care, which will progressively decrease.

3. **CONTEXT 3: Middle-income countries:** ten countries have been identified under this category with around 4 million children in need of school feeding.

ROLE 3: WFP will support the consolidation and strengthening of national programmes. In these countries, where the transition has already happened, WFP's assistance has been instrumental in supporting the reform and strengthening of national school feeding programmes. WFP will continue to work with governments to ensure the children in need are integrated in national programmes. It will support governments to innovate and test new approaches. WFP currently reaches 1 million children under this category.

TARGET: Successfully hand over school feeding programmes in all ten countries by 2030. The organization will aim to raise USD 6 million annually to support capacity strengthening activities.



AT THE CORPORATE LEVEL, WFP WILL PUT IN PLACE FOUR WORK STREAMS TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY.



WORK STREAM 1 – Sharing knowledge and best practice globally: Drawing from decades of engagement in school feeding, WFP will document and share global lessons learned, good practices, standards and norms more

effectively to inform national decision making and contribute to high quality programming. A research consortium managed by an academic partner, not by WFP, will be established to ensure evidence work is credible and rigorous. The consortium will set a research agenda for school feeding with partners for the next ten years, based on a mapping of learning needs, to ensure that global gaps in the knowledge base are being filled. WFP will innovate to foster a climate change responsive approach to school feeding.



WORK STREAM 2 – Increasing the investment in school feeding: a new financing model: A new financing model that differentiates between contexts is needed.

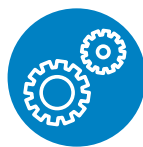
Funding to support low-income and fragile countries with their programmes given their limited fiscal capacity must be increased. In middle-income countries, governments need to move away from a reliance on actors such as WFP and NGOs, into different ways of financing their own national programmes, and WFP needs to identify sources of funding to provide technical assistance and to increase

capacity in a more comprehensive and sustainable way. WFP will work with partners to identify additional and innovative funding alternatives in these different contexts.



WORK STREAM 3 – Acting in partnership to improve and advocate for school health and nutrition: WFP will champion the issue of school health and nutrition globally and advocate for its prioritization in the next

decade of action towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It will work with partners to ensure that the additional elements of the essential integrated package for children, which are not part of the mandate or areas of expertise of WFP but are nevertheless crucial for children, are provided in an integrated way.



WORK STREAM 4 – Strengthening programmatic approaches in key areas: country demand for further guidance and support has been identified in the following areas, which WFP will develop with partners:

nutrition-sensitive approaches; girls’ and adolescents’ education and well-being; food systems and value chains; digital innovation; and the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

What is New?

This strategy is aligned with and supports WFP's School Feeding Policy, which was approved by the Executive Board in 2013. With the implementation of this strategy, WFP will change the way it thinks. For the first time WFP is developing a framework based on the country context to guide the role of WFP and the support it provides in the field. With six decades of experience supporting school health and nutrition, the track record of WFP is well established, but there are no grounds for complacency: consultations for this strategy highlight that organizational learning and change are required if WFP is to be better equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

Three major changes are expected as this strategy is rolled out:

1. WFP will change the way it works and acts in partnership; sharpen its advocacy, convening and influencing capacities; and act as a catalyst and a facilitator of global, regional and country efforts on school health and nutrition.
2. WFP will change the way it works with governments, increasing the sustainability and institutionalization of its efforts through a better understanding of national priorities and challenges, and an approach to strengthening national systems and plans.
3. WFP will change the way it delivers school feeding, ensuring better integration, coherence and quality of programme delivery, a stronger focus on the roles of diet and life style on obesity as well as undernutrition, and an innovative approach to responding to climate change.

This strategy is built on a theory of change, which will guide monitoring efforts and which will create centralized evaluations to measure progress. At the global, regional and country level, key performance indicators will be developed for all the strategy work streams and actions identifying annual targets, as well as specific targets for 2025 and 2030. Targets will be reviewed annually to ensure adequate responsiveness to implementation realities and country context as the role of WFP evolves and changes within each country.

WFP has undertaken an analysis of internal monitoring systems and has identified the major system bottlenecks. Based on these findings, WFP is developing new approaches to appropriately track planned and actual resources invested in school feeding and link them to results. A plan is being defined to address these challenges progressively in the first three years of the strategy.

In the spirit of United Nations Reform, WFP commits to a new partnership approach in which its contributions to school feeding efforts are part of an integrated package of support to children and adolescents. Through a coalition of partners, the lives of millions of children can be improved, making this a substantive contribution to ending child hunger and poverty, ensuring that every child learns and thrives and achieving the SDGs by 2030.





Introduction

Healthy and well-nourished schoolchildren learn better. Healthy children also have better chances to thrive and fulfil their potential as adults. Ensuring that girls and boys stay in school and are able and ready to learn allows countries to develop their human capital and individuals to achieve their full potential in life. It strengthens community cohesion, stability and productivity, and helps make people and societies more resilient in a rapidly changing world.

Better child health and child learning means that all girls and boys receive adequate nourishment, while being protected against diseases. It means making sure there are no barriers to children's education, especially for girls, children living in fragile contexts and emergencies, children living in poor households and rural areas, and children living with disabilities. These investments in human capital development of children and young people are among the most effective and productive that countries can make in their own future.

However, these investments are far from adequate. While low- and lower-middle income countries invest some USD 210 billion annually in providing basic education for their children¹ (infrastructure, teachers, curriculum), they only invest between USD 1.4 billion and 5.5 billion in ensuring children are healthy enough to learn.² The world invests in learning, but not in the learner. There is a growing consensus that there is a need to fix this mismatch. Very simply: sick children cannot attend school and hungry children cannot learn.

Globally, there is no systematic tracking of the health and nutrition status of the school-age cohort. Although some countries periodically measure certain indicators, there is no global standardized practice. The health and nutrition of schoolchildren does not feature in SDG targets or indicators and we have no comprehensive information on the types of school health services being provided in schools by country or the size of the gaps. WFP will champion this neglected issue.

With this strategy WFP lays out how it will advocate globally, and work in partnership, to address these issues. In many cases it may not be the lead agency in tackling specific

challenges. The organization will work with other agencies to shed light on the issue of school health and nutrition, convene different actors and call for solutions to the challenges identified. WFP will do this by using its six decades of experience supporting school health and nutrition, its reach and knowledge of the poorest and hardest to reach populations, and its trajectory of working with more than 100 countries on sustainable national school feeding programmes.

The new approach to school feeding adopted by WFP is explained in this document, as a pillar of an integrated school health and nutrition response. The document lays out for governments, partners and WFP staff worldwide what to expect from WFP in the next ten years, what its priorities and roles will be, and how it plans to change its way of working to provide more and better support to governments and children.

Consultations for this strategy highlight that organizational learning and change is required to meet the challenges ahead.³ One of the most important challenges for WFP is ensuring the sustainability of its efforts. It needs to work better with governments so that they can smoothly take over the responsibility of managing national school feeding programmes. WFP needs to strengthen its ability to engage and influence policy and decision making, and work with governments to help them secure sustainable sources of funding and increase their institutional capacities for programme management. As a voluntarily funded organization, WFP needs to identify ways to fund these capacity strengthening activities. Lack of funding for technical assistance is a major bottleneck.

In general, a different outlook and approach are needed to handle these development challenges, while sustaining the strong humanitarian footprint and identity of WFP. These issues were highlighted by the 2016 External Audit on the School Feeding Programme and the Strategic Evaluation of Capacity Development.⁴ To be able to achieve change, WFP will need to address these issues at a corporate level.

1 International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. The learning generation: investing in education for a changing world. New York: International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, 2016.

2 Bundy, D.A.P., de Silva, N., Horton, S., Jamison, D.T., Schultz, L. and Patton, G.C., for the Disease Control Priorities-3 Child and Adolescent Health and Development Authors Group. 2017. Investment in child and adolescent health and development: key messages from Disease Control Priorities, 3rd Edition. In: The Lancet, Vol. 391, No. 10121. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32417-0.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(17)32417-0.pdf)

3 This dialogue included external and internal partners. External consultations were held in five partner roundtables in Rome and visits to Washington, DC, Paris, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Ottawa and Brussels. Consultations were held with United Nations agencies and organizations working on school health and nutrition, in a webinar with private sector partners, a meeting with more than 55 NGO partners and presentations at country level to host government officials. Internal consultations took place with all Regional Directors and Country Directors, along with a workshop with regional programme advisers, a global school feeding meeting with all school feeding focal points, three feedback rounds with other divisions and more than 15 country missions.

4 "Report of the External Auditor on the School Feeding Programme" (WFP/EB.A/2016/6-F/1) and "Evaluation Report of WFP Policy on Capacity Development" (WFP/EB.1/2017/6-A/Rev.1).

A CONSULTATIVE PROCESS: PARTNER COMMENTS ON THE STRATEGY

At the same time, increased fragility in some contexts caused by conflict, climate change, migration, violence and food insecurity has led to increased needs in some countries, which requires a concomitantly greater response from WFP. Increased support for schoolchildren and their families and for those that are out of school in countries affected by war and instability, combined with immediate response with strategic investments for the future, is crucial to peacebuilding and to ensuring that there are no “lost generations” without access to education. Yet WFP school feeding programmes in many contexts are chronically underfunded, and the resulting gaps in coverage leave millions of schoolchildren living in extreme poverty without assistance. This strategy lays out how WFP will address these challenges to provide better support over the next ten years.

This strategy presents a broad call to action and vision and a focused operational approach. The first section of this document reviews evidence that the investment in the health and nutrition of schoolchildren is important and it also highlights that it is a systematically neglected issue, especially in low-income countries. The second section lays out an evidence-based integrated response, which goes beyond what WFP or any single actor or sector can do. Therefore, this strategy is also intended for governments and partners, calling for a new multisectoral, multi-actor response to a crucial issue directly related to the achievement of the SDGs. In the third section the document presents the role of WFP and its strategic response to closing the identified gaps, focusing on the shift that is required for the organization to achieve the vision.

In the spirit of United Nations Reform, WFP commits to a new partnership approach in which its contributions to school feeding efforts are part of an integrated package of support to children and adolescents. Through a coalition of partners, the lives of millions of children can be improved, making this a substantive contribution to ending child hunger and poverty, ensuring that every child learns and thrives and achieving the SDGs by 2030.

“We applaud this multi-sectoral, multi-actor strategy for its careful and nuanced treatment of the complex issue of human capital development vis-à-vis the intricate relationship between health, nutrition and education.... Moreover, we recognize this strategy as a continuation of WFP’s critical past role in building evidence to inform context-specific policies and programmes to support governments and children globally”

Roberta Gatti, Chief Economist, Human Development Practice Group, World Bank

“Working together in the spirit of ONE UN, UNICEF and WFP will leverage their respective comparative advantages and their operational capacity on the ground to ensure a meaningful increase in scale and coverage of school health and nutrition programmes. This will allow for a game-changing contribution to reposition school health and nutrition for better education outcomes for girls and boys, and the societies in which they live. UNICEF is fully committed to the partnership with WFP”

Robert Jenkins, Chief Education and Associate Director Programme Division, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

“We greatly applaud WFP’s move to promoting more national-level ownership of school-feeding programs as this aligns with our core values and approach. GPE and WFP share the aim of making quality education and nutrition available to all children, including disadvantaged and vulnerable populations and those currently out-of-school. We also encourage WFP to utilize local partnerships and/or country sector policy coordination mechanisms in moving to this new model in countries”

Stuart Cameron, Equity and Inclusion Thematic Lead, Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

“Overall a strong strategy with some outside of business as usual thinking that is very welcome in the space of School Food and Nutrition”

Nancy Aburto, Deputy Director, Nutrition and Food Systems Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

“The case for increased emphasis on school feeding is made in a compelling way and as such the document will serve as an important map for the way forward in donor and partnership mobilization”

Stefán Jón Hafstein, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Iceland to FAO, WFP and IFAD in Rome





Part I: The Importance of Investing in the Health and Nutrition of Schoolchildren and Adolescents

1.1 Optimizing Education Outcomes: The Learning and Inclusion Agenda and its Connections to School Health and Nutrition

One of the significant achievements of the Millennium Development Goal era was to get more children in school than ever before. But challenges remain. Ensuring an inclusive and good quality education for all is at the heart of the 2030 agenda.

Currently, around 59 million primary school-aged children are out of school, of which half are in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵ In low-income countries, approximately 40 percent of children do not complete primary education. Children in conflict-affected countries are more than twice as likely to be out of school, and girls in conflict-affected countries are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than girls in stable contexts.⁶ Only 63 percent of refugee children have access to primary education, compared with 91 percent globally and only 24 percent of refugee adolescents are in lower secondary school.⁷

For the poorest students, enrolling in school, attending regularly and learning are often made more difficult by illness, hunger and malnutrition. In low- and middle-income countries, about 300 million schoolchildren have iron-deficiency anaemia, causing them to lose some six IQ points per child⁸ and about 73 million primary schoolchildren in low-income countries go to school hungry.⁹ In Ecuador 32 percent of grade repetitions are attributable to undernutrition.¹⁰ These conditions translate into the equivalent of between 200 million and 500 million schooldays lost because of ill health each year.¹¹

About **300 million** schoolchildren have iron-deficiency anaemia, causing them to lose some six IQ points per child.

Bundy, D.A.P., de Silva, N., Horton, S., Jamison, D.T. and Patton, G.C. 2018

Other barriers to education are associated with gender and social norms. In northern Africa and western Asia, there are 132 female adolescents out of lower secondary school for every 100 adolescent boys.¹² Women and girls are more exposed to hunger and malnutrition; they represent 60 percent of all undernourished people in the world.¹³ When girls are out of school they are more vulnerable to forced marriage, early pregnancy and violence. Ethnicity, language, ill health and disability can also be barriers to education in many countries.

There are clear synergies between education and health and nutrition investments and outcomes. Moving forward, efforts and resources must focus on both health and nutrition and education to achieve further gains in human capital development and progress towards the SDGs. Long-term goals in health and nutrition and food security are unattainable without an educated population, and children cannot learn if they suffer from the effects of poor health and nutrition.

1.2 Human Capital Development and the Importance of Investing in Children

Investing in human capital – the sum of a population's health, skills, knowledge and experience – can strengthen a country's competitiveness in a rapidly changing world. Human capital matters for people, economies and societies, and for global stability. And it matters over generations. When countries fail to invest productively in human capital, the costs are enormous, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable people.

Child health and learning is critical for boosting human capital development. A well-nourished, healthy and educated population is the foundation for growth and economic development.¹⁴ Low-income countries in Africa account for 25 out of the 30 countries with the lowest Human Capital Index rankings.

For many of these countries, underinvestment in human capital leads to a loss of economic potential ranging, from 50 to 70 percent in the long term. The Human Capital Index score

- 5 UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2019. Education and Literacy: Out-of-School Children and Youth. Available at: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth>
- 6 UNESCO. 2015. Humanitarian Aid for Education: Why it Matters and Why More is Needed. Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Policy Paper 21. p.2. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233557>
- 7 UNHCR. 2019. Stepping Up: Refugee Education in Crisis. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/steppingup/>
- 8 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.
- 9 Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D.A.P. Forthcoming. How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost? *Frontiers in Public Health* (forthcoming).
- 10 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and WFP. 2017. The Cost of the Double Burden of Malnutrition: Social and Economic Impact. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2017-cost-double-burden-malnutrition-social-and-economic-impact>
- 11 The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. 2016. The Learning Generation. Investing in Education for a Changing World. Available at: https://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Learning_Generation_Full_Report.pdf
- 12 UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2018. One in Five Children, Adolescents and Youth is Out of School. UIS Fact Sheet No. 48. Available at: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs48-one-five-children-adolescents-youth-out-school-2018-en.pdf>
- 13 FAO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/I9553EN/i9553en.pdf>
- 14 Gatti, R.V., Kraay, A.C., Avitabile, C., Collin, M.E., Dsouza, R. and Dehnen, N.A.P. 2018. The Human Capital Project (English). Washington, DC, World Bank Group. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/363661540826242921/The-Human-Capital-Project>

for Africa puts the region at 40 percent of its potential.¹⁵ Gross domestic product (GDP) in Africa could be 2.5 times higher if the benchmarks for health and education were achieved.

While building human capital depends on high quality education, good health and nutrition are also required for children and adolescents to grow and to be able to participate and learn in school. When the health and nutrition of schoolchildren are improved, the rest of their lives are transformed. Children who are well nourished learn better, and as adults they earn more and are more productive. That transformation carries through to the next generation with the improved nutrition and health of their own children, contributing to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and creating a long-term cycle of economic growth and progress.

1.3 Food Systems, Diets and Climate Change

The challenges facing the global food system are piling up. Recent decades have been characterized by rapid changes: increasing globalization; increasing inequality; consumption changes; increases in conflict, post-crisis, and fragile contexts; exponential growth in energy use and new technology; urbanization and climate change.¹⁶

Increases in climate variability are already having effects on agricultural systems and these will intensify in the future; rising carbon dioxide concentrations are being linked to decreases in micronutrient densities of some staple crops; and increasing frequency of floods, droughts and extreme heat are having serious repercussions for human well-being and health. Globally, agricultural production has fallen by 1–5 percent each decade for the past 30 years, with tropical regions the hardest hit.¹⁷

Today, 3 billion people have low-quality diets.¹⁸ In many countries the majority of the population simply cannot afford nutritious foods: in certain regions of Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique and Pakistan, more than 70 percent of households cannot afford a nutritious diet.¹⁹ In low- and

middle-income countries, over half of the young women and adolescent girls are not meeting their micronutrient needs.²⁰ Finally, the prevalence rates of overweight and obesity are increasing in every region and most rapidly in low- and middle-income countries.

Low-income countries in Africa account for **25** out of the **30** countries with the lowest Human Capital Index rankings.

World Bank. 2019

In 2014, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition released its technical brief: *How Can Agriculture and Food System Policies Improve Nutrition?*²¹ In it, the Panel recommends the implementation of policies across the food system to reduce undernutrition and growing overweight, obesity and other diet-related non-communicable diseases. Some of the policy recommendations are: making better use of existing public food distribution programmes such as school feeding programmes, ensuring that they are agriculture-supportive and nutrition-sensitive;²² integrating nutrition education into all available national services reaching consumers; expanding agriculture-supportive targeted social protection programmes; and improving the diets of adolescent girls and adult women as a priority.

Today's food systems are too focused on food quantity and not enough on quality. They are not helping consumers to make healthy and affordable food choices consistent with optimal nutrition outcomes. The multiple forms of malnutrition will not diminish unless policymakers and private sector business leaders work together to reshape food systems in ways that will advance the goal of healthier and sustainable diets for all.

15 World Bank. 2019. Africa Human Capital Plan. Available at: <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/562231555089594602/HCP-Africa-Plan.pdf>

16 CCAFS. Forthcoming. Food Transform XI. Levers to Transform Food Systems under Climate Change (in progress). Wageningen, the Netherlands, CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

17 Loboguerrero, A., Birch, J., Thornton, P., Meza, L., Sunga, I., Bong, B.B., Rabbinge, R., Reddy, M., Dinesh, D., Korner, J., Martinez-Baron, D., Millan, A., Hansen, J., Huyer, S. and Campbell, B. 2018. Feeding the World in a Changing Climate: An Adaptation Roadmap for Agriculture. Rotterdam, Global Center on Adaptation and Washington, DC, World Resources Institute. Available at: https://cdn.gca.org/assets/2018-10/18_WP_GCA_Agriculture_1001_Oct5.pdf

18 Haddad, L., Hawkes, C., Waage, J., Webb, P., Godfray, C. and Toulmin, C. 2016. Food Systems and Diets: Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century. London, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.

19 Global Nutrition Report 2018. Available at: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/global-nutrition-report-2018/>

20 Haddad, L., Hawkes, C., Waage, J., Webb, P., Godfray, C. and Toulmin, C. 2016. Food Systems and Diets: Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century. London, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.

21 Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. 2014. Summary Brief: How can Agriculture and Food System Policies Improve Nutrition? Available at: https://www.panita.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/panita_international_9.pdf

22 In 2015, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition published a policy brief entitled Healthy Meals in Schools: Policy Innovations Linking Agriculture, Food Systems and Nutrition. The Panel finds that "evidence from around the world on locally-sourced school meals reveals a multiple-win opportunity for policymakers with important benefits for school achievement, employment and national economic growth" (Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. 2015. Healthy Meals in Schools: Policy Innovations Linking Agriculture, Food Systems and Nutrition. Policy Brief No. 3. London, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. Available at: <https://www.glopan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HealthyMealsBrief.pdf>)

1.4 The First 8,000 Days: A Growing Call to Rethink the Investment in Health and Nutrition of Schoolchildren

The 3rd edition of the World Bank publication *Disease Control Priorities (DCP3)*, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, confirms the importance of investing in the first 1,000 days, the critical window from conception to 2 years of age, but also highlights the neglect of investment during the next 7,000 days (or up to age 21). The findings of Volume 8, entitled *Child and Adolescent Health and Development*,²³ have led to the realization that there is a need to move towards a new 8,000-day paradigm.

Just as babies are not merely small people – they need special and different types of care from the rest of us – so growing children and adolescents are not merely short adults; they, too, have critical phases of development that need specific interventions. Attention is required in three phases: the middle childhood growth and consolidation phase (5–9 years), when infection and malnutrition constrain growth, and mortality is higher than previously recognized; the adolescent growth spurt (10–14 years), when substantial physical and emotional changes require good diet and health; and the adolescent phase of growth and consolidation (ages 15 to early 20s), when new responses are needed to support brain maturation, intense social engagement and emotional control.

The DCP3 publications call for research and action on child health and development to evolve from a narrow emphasis on the first 1,000 days to holistic concern over the first 8,000 days; from an age-siloed approach to an approach that embraces the needs across the life cycle.

A USAID report entitled “Maximising Human Capital by Aligning Investments in Health and Education”²⁴ joined the increasing calls for better alignment of investments in health and education, especially by investing in school health and school feeding programmes during school age and adolescence.

The role of schools in investing in children was emphasized by the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition in 2017, in a statement entitled *Schools as a System to Improve Nutrition*.²⁵ A publication prepared by the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education entitled “Optimizing Education Outcomes: High-Return Investments in School Health for Increased Participation and Learning”²⁶ took this a step further. The report emphasizes the need to fix the almost complete mismatch between investments in the health of children, currently almost all focused on children under 5 years of age, and investment in education, mostly between 5 and 21 years of age.

23 Bundy, D.A.P., de Silva, N., Horton, S., Jamison, D.T. and Patton, G.C. 2017. *Child and Adolescent Health and Development (with a Foreword by Gordon Brown)*. Volume 8. In D.T. Jamison, R. Nugent, H. Gelband, S. Horton, P. Jha, R. Laxminarayan and C. Mock, eds. *Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition)*. Washington, DC, World Bank

24 Schultz, L., Appleby, L. and Drake, L. 2018. *Maximising Human Capital by Aligning Investments in Health and Education*. Discussion Paper of the Health, Finance and Governance Project of the United States Agency for International Development. Washington, DC, USAID.

25 Oenema, S., ed. 2017. *Schools as a System to Improve Nutrition*. Rome, United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN Secretariat).

26 Bundy, D.A.P., de Silva, N., Horton, S., Jamison, D.T. and Patton, G.C. 2018. *Optimizing Education Outcomes: High-Return Investments in School Health for Increased Participation and Learning*. In D.T. Jamison, R. Nugent, H. Gelband, S. Horton, P. Jha, R. Laxminarayan and C. Mock, eds. *Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition)*. Washington, DC, World Bank.







Part II: An Evidence-based Integrated Response to the Needs of Schoolchildren

2.1 Schools as a Platform for Delivery of an Integrated School Health and Nutrition Package

Many of the health conditions that are most prevalent among students that are disadvantaged have significant effects on education – causing absenteeism, leading to grade repetition or dropout, and adversely affecting student achievement – and yet are preventable and treatable.

The school system represents an exceptionally cost-effective platform through which to deliver an essential integrated package of health and nutrition services to schoolchildren, as has been well documented in high-income countries.²⁷ The education system is particularly well situated to promote health among children and adolescents in poor communities without effective health systems. There are typically more schools than health facilities in all income settings, and rural and poor areas are significantly more likely to have schools than health centres.

An integrated package of support through schools can also have specific benefits for girls. Some of the most common health conditions affecting education are more prevalent in girls, and gender inequalities and exclusion can place girls at greater risk of ill health, neglect and hunger.²⁸ For example, women and girls are, for physiological reasons, more likely to experience higher rates of anaemia, than are men and boys.²⁹ Evidence shows that where families undervalue education for girls, increasing other values of schooling, such as providing food or health services, has a disproportionately positive impact on their attendance and enrolment.³⁰

DCP3 Volume 8 proposes cost-efficient health and nutrition intervention packages, one delivered through schools and one focusing on later adolescence, which, combined, provide phase-specific support across the life cycle, securing the gains of investment in the first 1,000 days, enabling substantial catch-up from early growth failure, and leveraging improved learning from concomitant education investments (see Figure 1).

2.2 Why School Feeding?

School feeding is the costliest element of the integrated package but is cost-effective because of the multiple benefits it achieves.³² Cost-benefit analyses carried out across 18

countries by WFP, assessing both WFP and national school feeding programmes, found that every USD 1 invested in school meals programmes yields an economic return of USD 3-10 from improved health, education and productivity.

Preliminary results of an ongoing cost-benefit analysis in 14 low- and middle-income countries carried out by the Harvard School of Public Health finds an even higher economic return of USD 20.³³ This represents a substantial return on investment, comparable in magnitude to several of the best-buy interventions analysed by the Copenhagen Consensus exercise.³⁴ This large scale of benefit reflects the additive returns on investment to multiple sectors: education – through human capital development; local economy – through local procurement and local employment; and social protection – through substantial resource transfer to the household. Other returns, for example to gender equality and peacebuilding, have yet to be estimated but are likely to make substantial additional contributions to the overall rate of return.

Every USD 1 invested in school meals programmes yields an economic return of up to USD 20 from improved health, education and productivity.

Verguet, S., Drake, L.J., Limasalle, P., Chakrabarti, A.; Bundy, D.A.P.. Forthcoming

In practice, school feeding has emerged as the main intervention for children in schools around which other elements, such as deworming or supplementation, are delivered. This is because it is the most widely implemented element of the integrated package – almost every country in the world provides food to its schoolchildren at some scale – reaching about 368 million children worldwide (see Box 1 on the evolution in thinking on school feeding).³⁵ Communities more often than not prioritize this over any other intervention in schools. This is true even for the poorer countries, and a recent assessment of school feeding coverage in low- and middle-income countries suggests that 305 million children are now fed in school daily, 47 percent of all the children enrolled.³⁶

27 Shackleton N, Jamal F, Viner R M, Dickson K, Patton G, Bonell C. 2016. "School-Based Interventions to Promote Adolescent Health: Systematic Review of Reviews." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 58 (4): 382-96.

28 Bundy, D.A.P. 2011. *Rethinking School Health: A Key Component of Education for All*. Directions in Development; Human Development. Washington, DC, World Bank.

29 Bundy, D.A.P., Schultz, L., Sarr, B., Banham L., Colenso, P. and Drake, L. 2018. *The School as a Platform for Addressing Health in Middle Childhood and Adolescence*. In D.A.P. Bundy, N. de Silva, S. Horton, D.T. Jamison and G.C. Patton, eds. *Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition): Volume 8, Child and Adolescent Health and Development*. Washington, DC, World Bank.

30 A meta-analysis of school meals programmes across 32 sub-Saharan countries showed on-site meals combined with take-home rations increased the enrolment of girls by 12 percent (Snilstveit et al., cited in Chapter 12 of Bundy et al. 2018. *Re-imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies*. *Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition)*, Volume 8. Washington, DC, World Bank).

31 Available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/school-based-health-programs-money-well-spent>

32 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.

33 Verguet, S., Drake, L.J., Limasalle, P., Chakrabarti, A.; Bundy, D.A.P. . Forthcoming. *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 (in process).

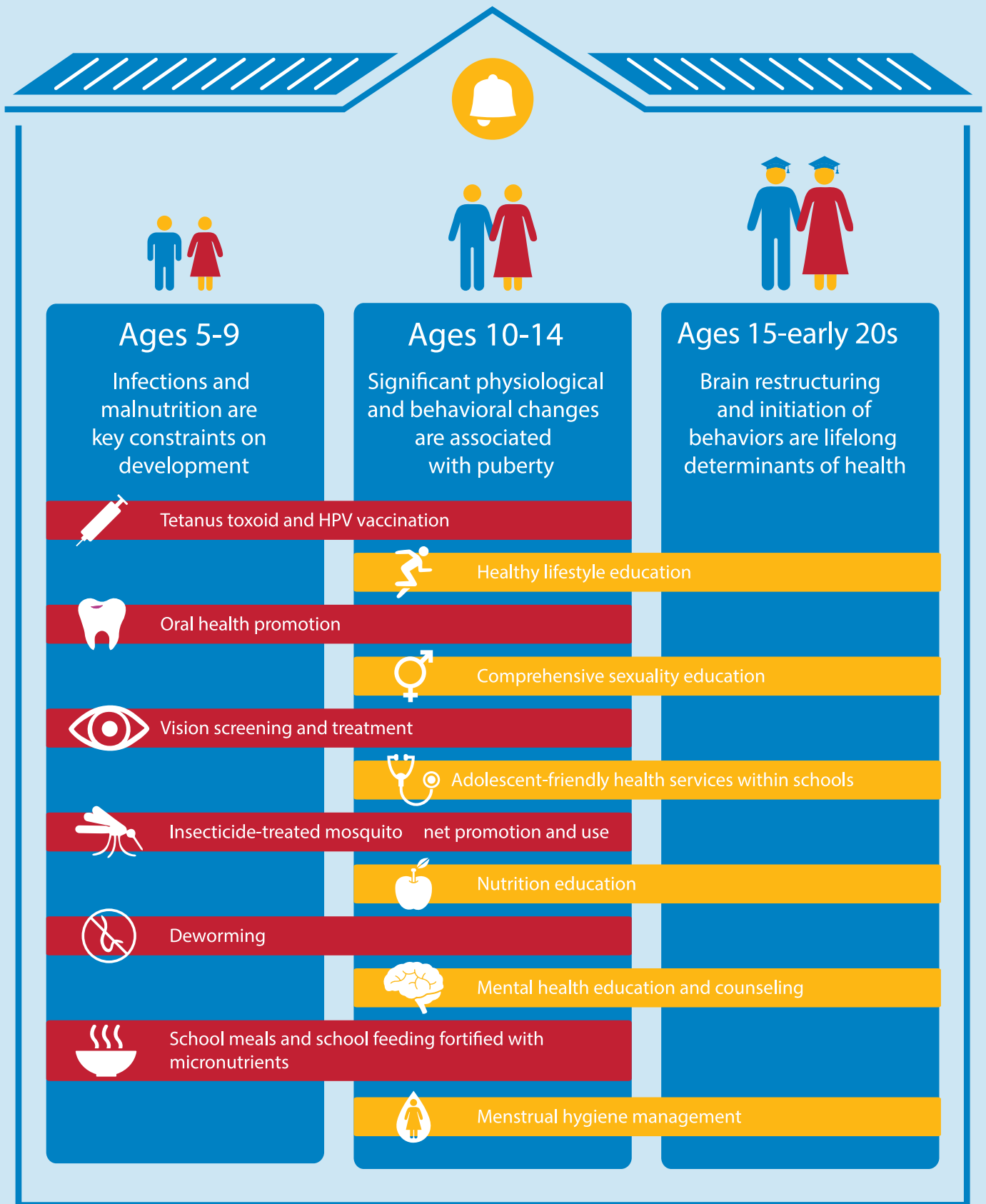
34 Copenhagen Consensus Center: <https://www.copenhagenconsensus.com>

35 WFP. 2013. *State of School Feeding Worldwide*. Available at: <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2013>

36 Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D. Forthcoming. *How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost?* *Frontiers in Public Health* (forthcoming).

Figure 1. Health and nutrition interventions during school years

Source: Global Partnership of Education, based on Disease Control Priorities 3rd edition, Volume 8³¹



Box 1. THE SCHOOL FEEDING LANDSCAPE: THE EVOLUTION OF A POLICY PRIORITY

MAKING A STRATEGIC CHANGE FROM SUPPLY CHAIN TO DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT: NOT JUST PROGRAMMES THAT DELIVER FOOD

During most of the twentieth century, the typical view of the development community was that school feeding was simply about delivering food aid. New strategic thinking across multiple sectors changed that perspective dramatically. In the 2000s, the education sector drove some of this change, most notably with the launch of the FRESH Framework (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) as part of the Global Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal. The FRESH Framework was supported by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP, WHO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other development partners, and helped provide a policy context for school-based health interventions, including school feeding.

The role of the agricultural sector became more prominent in school feeding in the 2000s. For example, in 2003 nine African governments decided to include school feeding programmes that sourced food locally from smallholder farmers in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The adoption by countries of this "Home Grown" agenda has grown and evolved dramatically since those early days, with significant support from FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other development partners.

RETHINKING SCHOOL FEEDING AS AN INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE AND A PRODUCTIVE SAFETY NET: THE MULTIPLE BENEFITS HAD BEEN UNDERVALUED

In 2009, there was a marked increase in country demand for school feeding in response to the global food, fuel and finance crises. The World Bank, WFP and the Partnership for Child Development worked together on an in-depth analysis to understand the motivations of those countries better. The analysis published as "Rethinking School Feeding" concluded that countries had recognized the multiple returns to school feeding and were using the programmes as strategic interventions to mitigate the ongoing global financial crisis and to support national development.

In times of stability, school feeding could be viewed as promoting health, nutrition and education – what we now call building human capital. If linked to local agriculture, additional economic and social benefits could be extended to schoolchildren households and their communities.

In hard times, school feeding programmes could rapidly expand their role as a social safety net, ensuring food is quickly and directly available for the communities that need help most. It was estimated, for example, that school feeding programmes supply about 10 percent of household expenditure for each child who participates, providing a substantial resource transfer to the poorest households and serving as an effective safety net. This analysis helped define a new and more effective way forward for school feeding, leading to the approval of WFP's first Global School Feeding Policy in 2009 (updated in 2013).

BRINGING THIS NEW STRATEGIC THINKING INTO THE POLITICAL ECONOMY: BIG CHANGES IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICY

In 2015, the adoption of the 2030 agenda helped provide an appropriate multisectoral framework for the new generation of school feeding programmes. School feeding yields results directly related to the sustainable development goals addressing poverty (SDG1), hunger (SDG2), health (SDG3), education (SDG4) gender equality (SDG5), economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequalities (SDG10) and strengthened partnerships (SDG17). This alignment was accompanied by a realization that school feeding offers programmatic benefits that had previously been undervalued. The programmes reach into the heart of poor communities, they benefit needy children and communities directly in ways that cash alone cannot. They act as an entry point for other sectoral interventions to reach children, and provide a multisectoral platform that bridges both humanitarian and development actions.

These changes in thinking have been matched by a noticeable upturn in government interest and demand for school feeding. Today, more than half of the world's schoolchildren receive food at school, the largest number and proportion ever. This is partly because of the expansion of existing national programmes, but in addition around 30 countries have started their own school feeding programmes while 20 have formalized their processes in the long term by adopting national school feeding policies. These country-led changes have been supported by new global public goods, including WFP's Center of Excellence Against Hunger, established in 2011 in partnership with the Government of Brazil, and by the annual school feeding forum of the Global Child Nutrition Foundation.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly all countries are now providing school feeding. In the Middle East, interest is growing thanks in large part to the Middle East and North Africa Initiative for School Meals and Social Protection launched with the support of WFP. In Asia school feeding programmes have been introduced by most countries, with exceptionally large-scale programmes in China and India.

In Africa, where the need is greatest, and the programmatic response has traditionally been weakest, there has been a renaissance. During the African Union Summit in 2016, 54 Heads of State committed to promoting nationally owned home-grown school feeding programmes and they are working to operationalize these commitments. In West Africa alone, governments are investing some USD 500 million per year on school feeding, and in 2019, a new Center of Excellence in Côte d'Ivoire has been inaugurated to support South-South efforts across the African continent.

When linked to nutrition and education, well-designed, equitable school feeding programmes contribute to child development through increased years of schooling, better learning and improved nutrition. School feeding provides consistent positive effects on energy intake, micronutrient status, school enrolment and attendance of children.³⁷ The effects are particularly strong for girls. School feeding programmes have demonstrated effects on reducing anaemia in primary school-aged children and adolescent girls.³⁸ As illustrated by the Finnish national core curriculum, in addition to providing nutrition, the mealtime also contributes towards education by raising awareness of the importance of healthy diets and nutrition in food-related education.³⁹

In its 2016 report, the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, chaired by Gordon Brown, identified 13 non-teaching interventions as “highly effective practices to increase access and learning outcomes”; these included three health programmes: school feeding, malaria prevention and micronutrient intervention.⁴⁰ A recent United Nations agency review of evidence finds that school feeding is among the two interventions with the strongest evidence of impact on equity and inclusion in education (the other one being conditional cash transfers).⁴¹

School feeding is one of the most common safety nets, providing the daily support and stability that vulnerable families and children need, and was shown to be one of the first social protection solutions that poor countries turned to during the social shocks of the 2008 financial crisis.⁴² Particularly when integrated into national social protection systems, school feeding can contribute to prevent and protect people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their life cycles. Associating school feeding with other social assistance programmes such as scholarships, unconditional transfers and public works provides opportunities to address the multidimensional social and economic vulnerabilities faced by children and their families and helps to reinforce the impact of these programmes.⁴³

Finally, well-designed school feeding programmes that procure food locally can offer additional benefits for smallholder farmers, supporting local food production and economies, and promoting sustainable local markets for diverse, nutritious foods.⁴⁴

Local procurement creates employment opportunities for women smallholder farmers or jobs in the school canteens for women and improves the livelihoods of the communities near the schools; therefore contributing to women’s economic empowerment and decision making.⁴⁵

37 Jomaa, L.H., McDonnell, E. and Probart, C. 2011. School Feeding Programs in Developing Countries: Impacts on Children’s Health and Educational Outcomes. *Nutrition Review* 69: 83–98.

38 Adelman, S., Gilligan, D.O., Konde-Lule, J. and Alderman, H. 2019. School Feeding Reduces Anemia Prevalence in Adolescent Girls and Other Vulnerable Household Members in a Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial in Uganda. *The Journal of Nutrition*, Volume 149, Issue 4, April 2019, Pages 659–666. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/nxy305>.

39 Pellikka, K., Manninen, M., Taivalmaa, S. 2019: School Meals for All. School feeding: investment in effective learning – Case Finland. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Finnish National Agency for Education.

40 International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. 2016. *The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World*. New York, International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity.

41 Mundy, K. and Proulx, K. 2019. *Making Evaluation Work for the Achievement of SDG 4 Target 5: Equality and Inclusion in Education*. UNESCO, NORAD, World Bank Group, UNICEF.

42 Bundy, D.A.P., Burbano, C., Grosh, M., Gelli, A., Jukes, M. and Drake, L. 2009. *Re-thinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development, and the Education Sector*. Directions in Human Development. Washington, DC, World Bank Group.

43 “Update of Safety Nets Policy: The Role of Food Assistance in Social Protection” (WFP/EB.A/2012/5-A).

44 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>. The resource framework defines Home-Grown School Feeding as follows: HGSF constitutes a school feeding model that is designed to provide children in schools with safe, diverse and nutritious food, sourced locally from smallholders. “Sourced locally from smallholders” means that HGSF programmes: (1) maximize benefits for smallholder farmers by linking schools to local food production; (2) strengthen the capacities of smallholder farmers and communities to produce food; and (3) contribute to rural transformation.

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

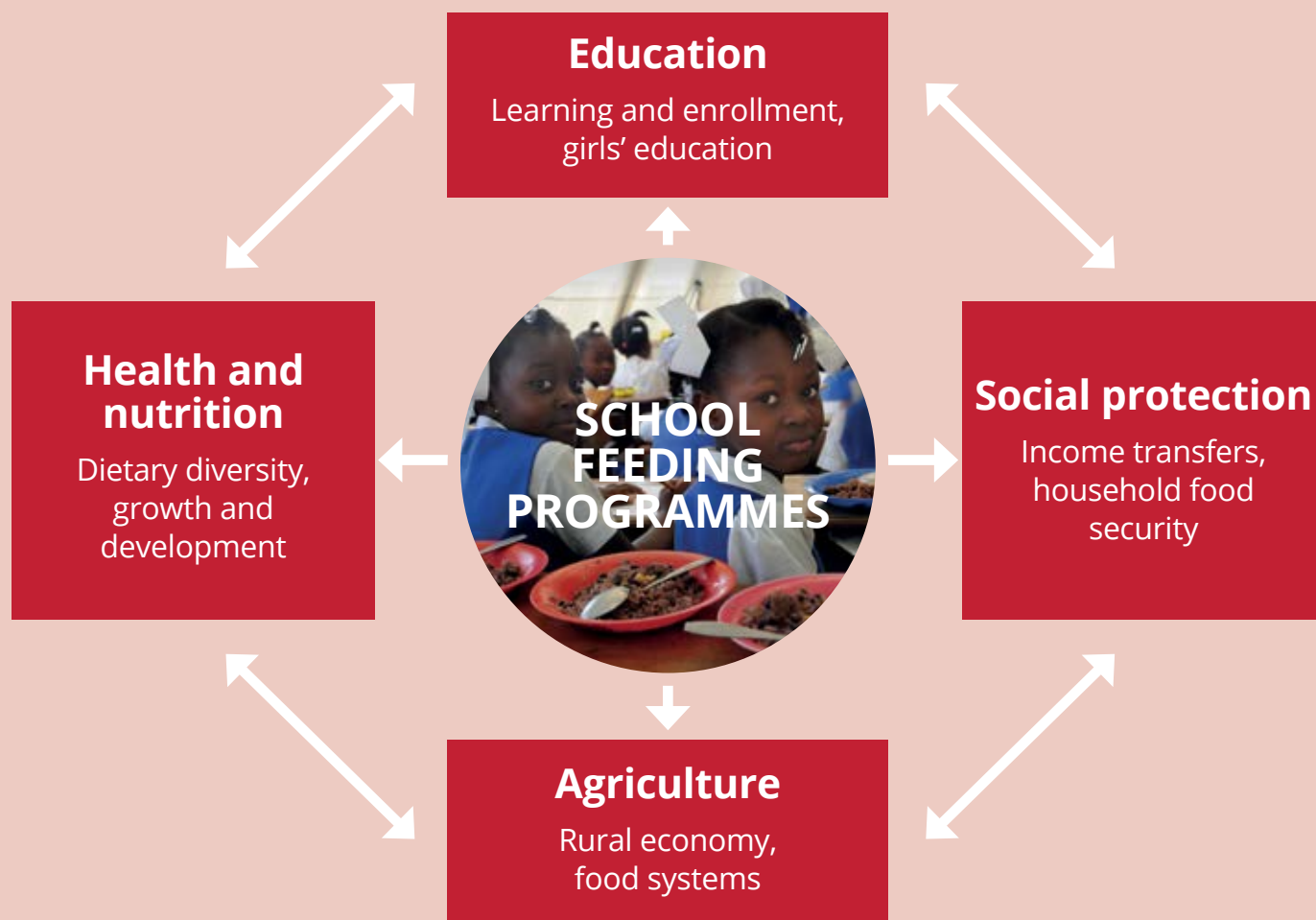
Figure 2 illustrates the multiple benefits, showing that the single intervention of school feeding has consequences for at least four different sectors. These effects often operate across sectors and the effects are interconnected: the returns to human capital development, through health, nutrition and education, and the returns to investment in the community, through social protection and local agriculture. For example, social protection helps promote social stability, and a stable community enhances the effects on education outcomes and opportunities for employment. It is these multiple and potentially multiplicative benefits that make well-designed school feeding programmes a particularly worthwhile investment.

2.3 Unfinished Business: How Many Children are not Receiving School Health and Nutrition Support?

It is difficult to find a country that is not attempting to provide school health services at some level, although the coverage is often limited.⁴⁷ However, currently there is no comprehensive database with information of the scale and types of interventions provided in schools. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 450 million schoolchildren – more than half of the target population – are dewormed annually through school-based programmes in nearly all lower-middle-income countries,⁴⁸ although these largely public efforts are variable in quality and coverage.

Figure 2. Four major benefits of school feeding programmes

Source: Bundy et al. 2018⁴⁶



46 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.

47 Sarr, B., McMahon, B., Peel, F., Fernandes, M., Bundy, D.A.P. Banham, L., Gillespie, A., Tang, K.C., Tembon, A. and Drake, L. 2017. The Evolution of School Health and Nutrition in the Education Sector 2000–2015. *Frontiers in Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2016.00271>.

48 Bundy, D.A.P., Appleby, L., Bradley, M., Croke, K., Hollingsworth, D., Pullan, R., Turner, H.C., and de Silva, N. . 2017. Mass Deworming Programs in Middle Childhood and Adolescence. In D.A.P. Bundy, N. de Silva, S. Horton, D.T. Jamison and G.C. Patton, eds. *Child and Adolescent Health and Development. Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition)*, Volume 8. Washington, DC, World Bank.

Detailed information on the coverage of school feeding programmes is available thanks to 15 years of WFP research and documentation in this area. More work is needed from the research community and partners to estimate the coverage and the coverage gaps of the other elements of the school health and nutrition package.

Recent analysis shows that today nearly half the world's primary schoolchildren in low- and middle-income countries (305 million) will sit down to eat a meal at school.⁴⁹ Almost all high- and middle-income countries have between 80 and 90 percent coverage, meaning they provide food to almost all children enrolled in primary school.⁵⁰ India now feeds 100 million children; Brazil 42 million; China 37 million; and South Africa and Nigeria 9 million each.

Despite this progress, there are still some significant challenges. While coverage of school feeding programmes is adequate in high- and upper-middle-income countries (reaching 80 percent of school-aged children in most contexts), it is unacceptably low in low-income countries (reaching only 18 percent of school-aged children).⁵¹

WFP has explored the scale of need for school feeding in low- and middle-income countries globally. Of the 663 million primary schoolchildren enrolled in school, 338 million live where the coverage of school meals is inadequate (below 80 percent). Of

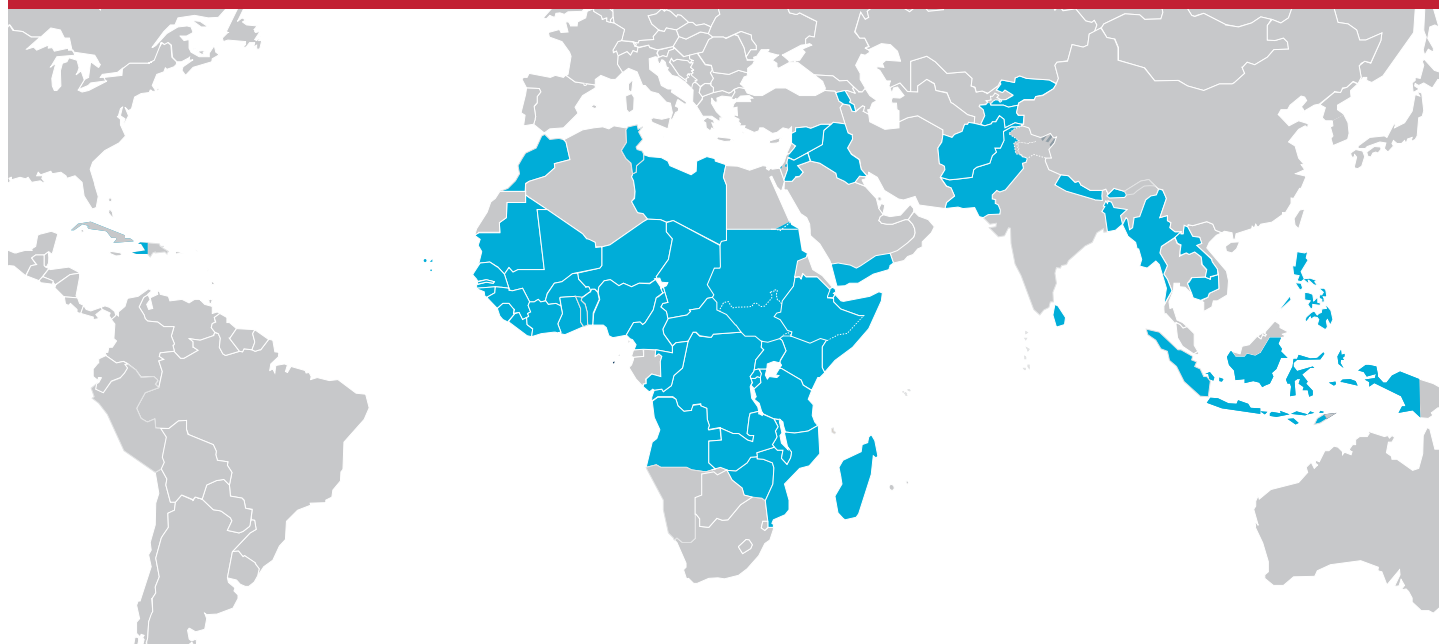
these, 251 million children live in countries where there are significant nutrition challenges, including 20 per cent stunting in children younger than 5 and anaemia among women. Of the 251 million children living in countries with poor nutrition, 73 million live in extreme poverty (with less than USD 1.85 per day) in 60 countries and 84 percent of them live in Africa; 15 percent live in Asia and 1 percent in Latin America.⁵²

73 million primary schoolchildren living in extreme poverty in 60 countries do not have access to national school feeding programmes.

Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D.A.P. 2019

Supporting governments to reach these 73 million primary schoolchildren in 60 countries with nutritious meals and other school health interventions is a priority, and clearly a focus on Africa is needed. Bridging this gap will require supporting governments to expand coverage in countries with existing school feeding programmes and initiate school feeding programmes in countries that lack those (see Map 1).

Map 1. The 60 countries where the 73 million children in need of school health and nutrition support live (threshold: children living in extreme poverty not receiving school feeding) ⁵³



49 WFP has spent more than 15 years studying the school feeding landscape worldwide. The most recent and comprehensive database of school feeding coverage was presented in 2013 in a WFP publication called *State of School Feeding Worldwide*. Thanks to these and other efforts by partners, data on school feeding is highly reliable, making it one of the areas of school health and nutrition that has been better studied and quantified in terms of coverage, costs and implementation approach (Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D.A.P. Forthcoming. *How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost?* *Frontiers in Public Health* (forthcoming)).

50 While the service is provided to all children in high-income countries, not all countries provide free school meals to all children. In certain countries, some households pay full or subsidized prices for the meals, while children from poor and vulnerable households receive the meals for free. See *State of School Feeding Worldwide* for a description of the different targeting mechanisms used by countries and what the pros and cons of these are. <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2013>

51 WFP. 2013. *State of School Feeding Worldwide*. Available at: <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2013>

52 Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D.A.P. Forthcoming. *How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost?* *Frontiers in Public Health* (forthcoming).

53 Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Chu, K., Lazrak, N., Singh, S., Ryckembusch, D., Burbano, C. and Bundy, D.A.P. Forthcoming. *How Many Poor Children Globally Could Benefit from New Generation School Feeding Programmes, and What Would be the Cost?* *Frontiers in Public Health* (forthcoming).

2.4 How Much Would it Cost to Scale Up School Feeding and the Integrated School Health and Nutrition Package?

As mentioned above, there are 73 million primary schoolchildren most in need of school feeding programmes,⁵⁴ based on the inadequacy of current provision, the prevalence of indicators of poor nutrition, and the relative lack of financing for the countries to implement the programmes themselves. The majority (66 percent) of these children live in low-income countries, but there is also a substantial minority who live in pockets of poverty in middle-income countries.

The cost of feeding these children in need was calculated based on benchmark costs for low- and middle-income countries (see Table 1).

Table 1 shows that the cost of covering 73 million children in need of school feeding is USD 4.7 billion, an average of USD 64 per child per year. Benchmark costs of school feeding are taken from Disease Control Priorities 3rd edition, Volume 8.

Adding the other interventions of the school health package for children aged 5–14 years in Table 1 would cost about 29 percent more, or USD 618 million, in middle-income countries and 20 percent more, or USD 507 million, in low-income countries.

The total cost of the integrated package would therefore be USD 5.80 billion annually, with around half that amount for low-income countries alone. Middle-income countries have

resources, often substantial resources, that could help close this gap, as illustrated by the cases of Kenya and Bangladesh (see Boxes 2 and 3). Further analyses are under way to explore how this might be accomplished through a combination of transition and co-financing arrangements.

Current investment in basic education is USD 210 billion per year, much of which is from the public sector and is intended to provide pre-primary, primary and secondary education in Low- and lower-middle income countries free at the point of delivery, although some countries still charge fees for education.⁵⁶ The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity calls for governments to increase domestic public expenditures to support universal provision of primary education in low- and lower-middle-income countries by 2030. This requires an increase from 4.0 to 5.8 percent of GDP, which is equivalent to an annual rate of growth in public education spending of 7 percent over a 15-year period.⁵⁷

In contrast to these very large public expenditures for education, the incremental cost of the integrated school health and nutrition package, including school feeding, is 2.76 percent.

The cost of covering **73 million** children in need of school feeding is USD 4.7 billion, an average of USD 64 per child per year.

Table 1 – School feeding and school health costs for the 73 million primary school-aged children in extreme poverty without access to national school feeding programmes in low- and middle-income countries

	Countries	Enrolled children in need (million)	Cost of school feeding per child per year (USD) ⁵⁵	School feeding budget (USD millions)	Additional school health budget (USD millions)	Total integrated package of support (USD millions)
Middle-income countries	32	26	82	2 132	618	2 750
Low-income countries	28	47	54	2 538	507	3 045
Total	60	73	-	4 670	1 125	5 795

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Costs of school feeding include costs associated with food procurement, transportation and storage, and monitoring of implementation. They were drawn from a sample of 74 low-, middle- and high-income countries. These estimates are standardized for several parameters to support cross-country comparability, including the number of kilocalories in the ration and the number of days school feeding was provided. Source: Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Aurino, E., Kiamba, J., Giyose, B., Burbano, C., Alderman, H., Mai, L., Mitchell, A., and Gelli, A. 2018. School Feeding Programs in Middle Childhood and Adolescence. In D.A.P. Bundy, N. de Silva, S. Horton, D.T. Jamison and G.C. Patton, eds. Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies. Washington, DC, World Bank.

⁵⁶ These estimates are from The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. 2016. The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World, p. 37. Available at: https://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Learning_Generation_Full_Report.pdf. They estimate current public sector spending on basic (primary-level) education in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

⁵⁷ 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.

Box 2. HOW KENYA CONSOLIDATED ITS NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

Starting in the 1980s, the Ministry of Education, together with WFP, has successfully implemented a school meals programme targeting the most food-insecure areas with the lowest enrolment and completion rates, and high gender disparities. This programme included all primary schools in the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya and in the unplanned urban settlements of Nairobi.

In 2009, the Government of Kenya made a bold move to start the first national Home-Grown School Feeding (HGFSF) Programme in Africa taking on board an initial 540,000 children from the WFP-supported programme. The Ministry of Education and WFP agreed on a gradual handover strategy, which was completed in June 2018. Today, the Government's programme, guided by the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy (2017-2022), reaches over 1.6 million children in arid and semi-arid counties, exceeding the coverage that was achieved when WFP provided operational support, by more than 400,000 children. Funding from the government increased from USD 8.5 million in 2009 to USD 24 million in 2018.

The case of Kenya illustrates how government commitment can transform a programme from relying on donor support to full government financing and national ownership. The school meals programme in Kenya has become one of the strongest in Africa.

The Government of Kenya will continue to work with WFP and other partners to strengthen the programme. Currently, the priorities are to:

- strengthen the data and management information system through digitization of HGFSF processes to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and accountability;
- provide training on implementing and managing the school meals programme for education officers, teachers and parent representatives;
- strengthen coordination structures at national, county and school levels; and
- take advantage of South-South collaboration to strengthen its programme and share experiences with other countries.



Box 3. BANGLADESH: THE TRANSITION IN PROGRESS

Currently, the School Feeding Programme, which started with WFP support in 2001, is transitioning from an externally supported programme towards full government ownership. As stated in the new National School Meal Policy (NSMP) approved by the Prime Minister in August 2019, the aim is to reach all primary schoolchildren with locally produced meals by 2030. The NSMP will be implemented in a phased approach with technical support provided by WFP. During the transition the number of children reached will increase. The government plans to deliver school feeding to all students in Government Primary Schools by 2024.

The food provided will gradually shift from fortified biscuits to diverse hot meals. Currently the government allocates USD 75 million per year to the programme. The costs after full implementation of the National School Meal Policy is estimated at USD 910 million a year, which the government has committed to cover.

2.5 Supporting Middle- and Low-Income Countries to Address Implementation Challenges

The low fiscal capacity of low-income countries for school feeding is the first and most important challenge to the scale-up and transition to national programmes. While programmes in high- and middle-income countries are almost exclusively financed by internal revenues (taxes and other sources), programmes in low-income countries rely largely on donor support. In these countries, external sources of funding cover about 83 percent of the current programmes.⁵⁸ Thus, exploring transitional and permanent sources of funding for school feeding in low-income countries is a priority.

High- and middle-income countries have recognized that school feeding is a multisectoral intervention; consequently they have created multisectoral budgeting and governance arrangements which support the implementation of this large national safety net. In low-income countries the education sector is still expected to bear most of the costs and responsibility and accountability for management, which clearly limits the scope given the reduced education budgets and capacity of these countries to begin with.

Countries that have recently successfully transitioned and scaled up national school feeding programmes (for example Kenya, Bhutan and El Salvador) have done so by recognizing that school feeding contributes to many sectors (education, social protection, health and nutrition, gender equality, agriculture). In these cases, the costs are borne by the national budget rather than the education sector budget alone although the implementation may still rest with the education sector. Thus, helping countries to situate these programmes within national development plans (and education and social protection sector plans) and to establish multisectoral budgeting arrangements is a priority.

In general, all countries struggle with the following implementation challenges:

1. Ensuring adequate nutritional value of the food to prevent malnutrition in all its forms (including micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity) and to allow optimal physical and cognitive development. Specifics include paying attention to the type, quantity and quality of the food (that is, if the food is fortified, if it meets the age and sex-specific nutritional requirements of both boys and girls and the diversity of the meals, compliance with nutritional and food safety guidelines, etc.).
2. Deciding on where the food comes from: the more local the better in general (although this might not always be the case, as in very arid and low-producing areas).

Attention should be paid to local consumption patterns and preferences, benefiting the local economies and challenges in value change arrangements (storage, processing and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and infrastructure).

3. Containing the cost to ensure affordability and coverage of as many vulnerable children as possible.
4. Monitoring and evaluating the management and impact of the programmes.

There are clear trade-offs between the first three issues and finding the right balance is not easy but is the key to good quality and sustainable programmes (see the 2013 School Feeding Policy for a complete analysis of the trade-offs).⁵⁹

In some contexts, especially in middle-income countries, governments are reforming their programmes in response to rising overweight and obesity among schoolchildren and adolescents. They are emphasizing quality over quantity of food and promoting nutrition-sensitive⁶⁰ approaches by strengthening the health and nutrition education component of the programmes, through innovative digital tools, understanding food habits, behaviours and the food environment, and promoting physical activity. The latest Global Nutrition Report (2018) states that 30.3 percent of school-aged children do not eat any fruit, yet 43.7 percent consume soda every day.⁶¹

In countries where assistance is also provided to preschool-aged children and adolescents, the challenge is tailoring the programmes to the differences in nutritional needs for various age groups and sexes and finding new and better ways to provide the right support to adolescent girls to improve their nutritional status and provide incentives for them to stay longer in school. For all age groups school feeding needs to be paired with social and behaviour change communication to change food and nutrition behaviour; it is also an opportunity to address social cohesion, violence and gender issues, among others.

There has been great success at implementing HGSF programmes – those that make an intentional effort to provide children in schools with safe and diverse food produced and sourced locally, particularly from smallholder farmers – in some countries, but scale remains a challenge. The main impediments include ensuring a stable supply of food to schools and controlling and ensuring food safety, especially when purchases are done at the local level.

However, there is evidence that when smallholder farmers are required to produce higher quality food and strengthen their capacities to meet food safety standards, they not only grow

58 WFP. 2013. State of School Feeding Worldwide. Available at: <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2013>

59 The WFP revised school feeding policy is available at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/wfps-revised-school-feeding-policy>

60 Nutrition-sensitive approaches are defined by programmes taking place in sectors complementary to nutrition and are designed to address some of the underlying and basic determinants of malnutrition.

61 Global Nutrition Report 2018. Available at: <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/global-nutrition-report-2018/>



better food, but can also achieve higher prices when selling surplus in formal markets.⁶² HGSF allows the inclusion of fresh produce in the meals and is thus directly related to improving the food diversity of children, strengthening the nutrition-sensitive approach of the programmes.

HGSF approaches significantly shorten the supply chain of school feeding programmes, reducing the carbon footprint of the transport, storage and distribution operations. Promoting local food contributes to generating lifelong food habits among children that support a low energy demand profile throughout life. Local purchase may also reduce the amount of packaging-related waste. In addition to climate change mitigation, HGSF can also promote climate change adaptation in vulnerable ecosystems. When linked to “green” food value chains and systems, schools can purchase food from local producers that utilize climate-smart agricultural practices, thereby increasing community resilience to climate change in areas where food insecurity is caused by or exacerbated by climate drivers.

A review of the costs of school feeding programmes in 2012 found that there are significant opportunities for cost containment, especially in low-income countries.⁶³ On the institutional side, the governance of school feeding programmes is still challenging, including quality assurance, supply chain and procurement arrangements that mitigate risks of corruption and leakage and improve monitoring and accountability. The capacity of national institutions to manage these programmes and coordinate multisectoral action is very strong in certain countries and still nascent in others, which is why South-South cooperation has been such a critical element in allowing country learning to take place.

There are also significant infrastructure challenges in many countries, including access to proper kitchen facilities and equipment, running water and sanitation. Shifting to cleaner and more efficient cooking solutions for school meal preparation reduces fuel costs and the time spent collecting fuel by children and their families, decreases the incidence of respiratory diseases caused by indoor air pollution, and reduces adverse effects to the environment such as deforestation. Sustainable energy solutions can help to preserve and process food (refrigeration, drying, smoking, milling). Such solutions nurture innovation that can spread from the school into surrounding communities, extending clean and efficient energy solutions to household and commercial uses.

Supporting governments to address these challenges will be at the centre of WFP efforts over the next ten years. Tackling these issues is important to ensure that children are getting the best support possible in their early years of development and countries are getting the best return on their investments. As the lead agency supporting school feeding programmes for over 50 years, WFP is well placed to support this agenda.

62 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>.

63 Gelli, A., Cavallero, A., Minervini, L., Mirabile, M., Molinas, L. and de la Mothe, M.R. 2012. New Benchmarks for Costs and Cost-Efficiency of School-based Feeding Programs in Food-Insecure Areas. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* 32(4): 324–332.



Handwritten text in a non-Latin script, possibly Hindi or Urdu, at the top of the chalkboard.

Handwritten numbers and a horizontal line on the chalkboard, possibly representing a calculation or a list of items.



Part III: WFP's Role and Strategic Response

3.1 WFP's Vision

Responding to the Decade of Action (2020 – 2030), WFP will work with governments and partners to jointly ensure that all primary schoolchildren have access to good quality meals in school, accompanied by a broader integrated package of health and nutrition services. Building on its six decades of experience, WFP will advocate globally and nationally to ensure that the issue of school health and nutrition is prioritized. WFP will work to ensure that programmes are scaled up to ensure that the 73 million children living in extreme poverty in 60 countries are reached.

WFP will build on its existing operations in countries and leverage its expertise, tools, systems and partnerships to support countries to achieve their human capital objectives through increased investments in nutrition, quality of learning, gender equality and healthy growth. WFP does not aim to meet the needs of all 73 million primary schoolchildren directly or on its own. It will take a context-specific approach and adapt its roles to the particular country situation, in partnerships with other key players, including governments, United Nations agencies, the private sector, international financial institutions and NGOs.

This vision is aligned with and supports WFP's School Feeding Policy, which was approved by the Executive Board in 2013. In fact, this strategy is meant to operationalize the objectives, principles and goals of the 2013 policy, putting in place a framework for action at the country, regional and global levels.

Over the last ten years, WFP and partners such as UNICEF, FAO, UNESCO, World Bank, NGOs, regional organizations such as the African Union and NEPAD, and community and civil society groups, have helped change the landscape of school feeding worldwide in support of government efforts. Generous support

from donors has helped to ensure coverage and allowed WFP to move towards a new generation of sustainable school feeding programmes. This strategy is designed to build on that joint work to deliver more and better support for children and governments.

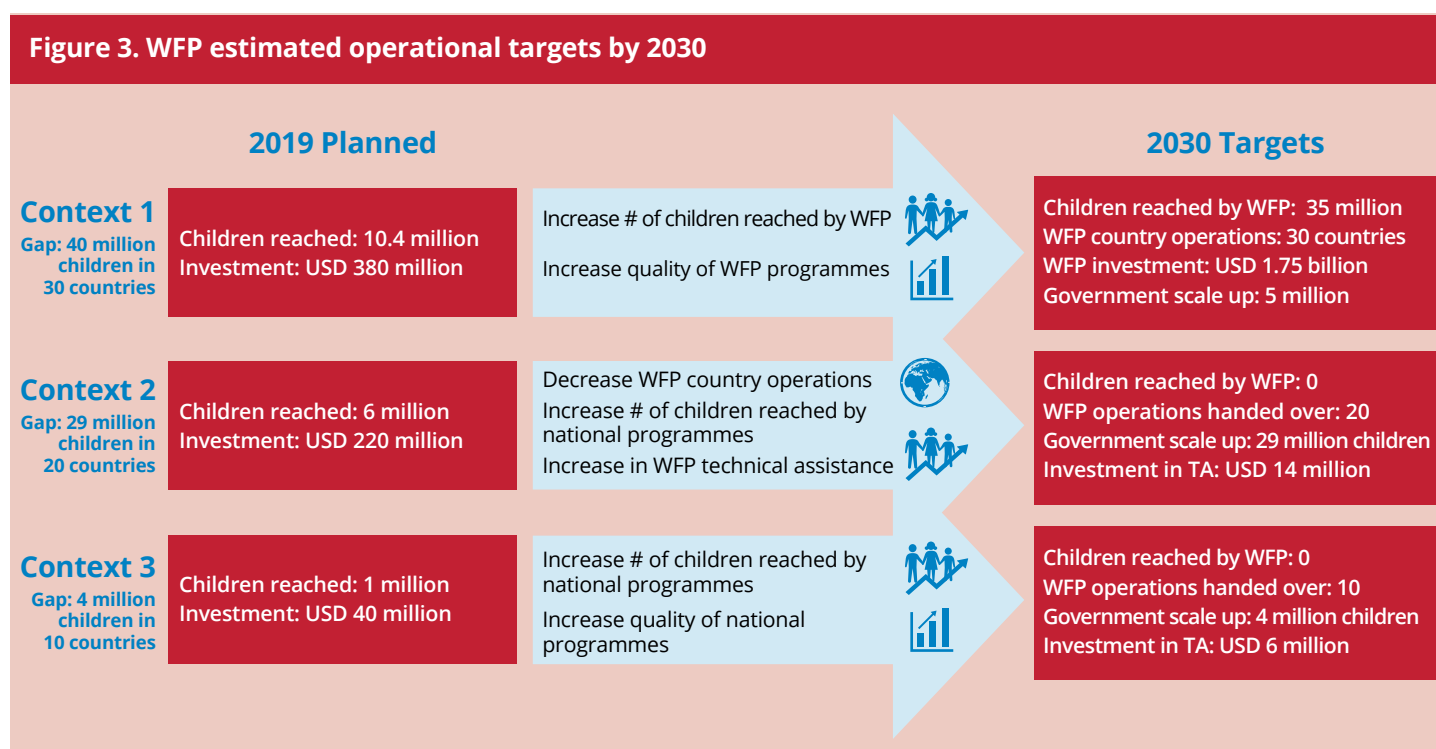
3.2 WFP's Response: What it Will Do

WFP's vision of ensuring that 73 million primary schoolchildren have access to meals will be addressed in various ways:

- by operating programmes in countries that do not have the capacity to ensure vulnerable children are covered;
- by focusing on strengthening systems and providing technical assistance in countries that do have the capacity but are working on improving the scale and quality of national programmes;
- by working with partners, donors, regional groups and blocks, and communities to build coalitions of support for children in schools; and
- by working with communities of experts to document the evidence and continue to make the case for investment in school health and nutrition interventions.

Thus, WFP aims to meet the needs of 73 million primary schoolchildren by enabling and convening action with other partners, and by adapting its roles to the particular context.

To achieve the vision, WFP will put in place a strategic framework including three roles at country level and four work streams that support a corporate effort to rally support for children in schools (see Figure 3).



CONTEXT 1: Crisis or humanitarian settings:

30 countries have been identified under this category with around 40 million children in need of school feeding.

- ▶ **ROLE 1: WFP will scale up by providing operational support.** In countries affected by fragility, low capacity, conflict or recurrent shocks, WFP will support the implementation of high quality school feeding programmes. WFP will aim to increase the coverage and quality of cost-effective and nutrition-sensitive programmes in these contexts, enabling the organization to reach as many vulnerable children as possible, while laying the foundations to build national capacities. Currently WFP reaches 10 million children in 27 countries under this category.

TARGET: Increase coverage to 35 million children in 30 countries by 2030 and support governments to reach the remaining 5 million children in need. The organization will aim to raise USD 1.75 billion annually to support this scale up and will progressively increase the capacity of implementation on the ground.

CONTEXT 2: Stable low-income and lower-middle-income countries:

20 countries have been identified under this category with around 29 million children in need of school feeding.

- ▶ **ROLE 2: WFP will support the transition and scale up of national programmes.** In stable contexts with emerging government capacity, WFP will respond to the increasing government demand for nationally owned and operated school feeding programmes. WFP will help to strengthen systems and provide technical assistance in countries that have emerging capacities and are working on improving the scale and quality of national programmes. During 2020 and 2021 WFP will engage with national governments to develop time-bound national targets and sustainable handover strategies, leading to a gradual decrease of WFP operational beneficiaries. In these countries, WFP will work on a new funding model to support its work in strengthening and enabling systems. WFP currently reaches 6 million children under this category.

TARGET: Successful hand over of school feeding programmes in 20 countries by 2030. The organization will aim to raise USD 14 million annually to support capacity strengthening support.⁶⁴ Additionally, since transitions will happen progressively in the next ten years, WFP will need to secure funding to cover the children currently under its care, which will progressively decrease.

CONTEXT 3: Middle-income countries: ten countries have been identified under this category with around 4 million children in need of school feeding.

- ▶ **ROLE 3: WFP will support the consolidation and strengthening of national programmes.** In these countries, where the transition to national ownership has already happened, WFP's assistance has been instrumental in supporting the reform and strengthening of national school feeding programmes. WFP will continue to work with governments to ensure the children in need are integrated in national programmes. In most of these countries, governments self-finance national programmes and receive WFP technical assistance and capacity strengthening on demand. Thus, WFP is able to deploy its expertise, best practices and knowledge in stable, middle-income countries and facilitate South-South triangular cooperation for the benefit of vulnerable children. WFP currently reaches 1 million children under this category.

TARGET: Successfully hand over school feeding programmes in all ten countries by 2030. The organization will aim to raise USD 6 million annually to support capacity strengthening activities.

WFP's overall targets for the next ten years

1. Provide school feeding to **35 million children in 30 of the most fragile and low-income countries.** WFP will raise USD 1.75 billion to cover the cost of feeding these children.
2. Work with national governments of the **remaining 30 stable, low- and middle-income countries to reach 38 million children** (contexts 2 and 3) by transitioning and scaling up nationally owned programmes. WFP will raise USD 20 million to provide technical assistance and secure transitional funding for operations.

⁶⁴ This figure is based on the 2019 planned budgets in WFP Country Strategic Plans. Budgets of a representative sample of countries were used to estimate the total needs per role. This is a rough estimation and will be reviewed and updated based on more in-depth analysis of country capacity strengthening needs during the development of regional implementation plans.

3.3 Major Strategic Shifts and Organizational Learning Required to Reach the Vision

ROLE 1 – Providing operational support. Challenge: ensuring consistent delivery of high quality school feeding

WFP will work in low-income and crisis-affected countries to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace nexus,⁶⁵ to which school feeding can contribute. WFP will deploy its available resources, programmatic know-how and operational capacities to ensure no child is left behind. WFP will work with other education partners to ensure the delivery of an integrated package of support and consider innovative mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of crisis-affected children and refugee children whose education has been disrupted.

While ensuring scale up in these contexts, WFP will strengthen its programmes to meet all quality standards. This will in a later stage facilitate the handover to national programmes. A review of country strategic plans, audits and evaluations has highlighted shortcomings in design and integration and has identified some needs to be addressed.

STRATEGIC SHIFTS:

- ▶ **A focus on quality and integration will entail:**
 - better programming, including improved analysis, design, implementation, monitoring and controls;
 - more diversified and nutrient-dense food baskets that meet schoolchildren's nutrition requirements in different contexts;
 - inclusion of nutritional education to promote healthy eating habits;
 - explicit and intentional link to local purchase;
 - consistent service delivery throughout the school year;
 - gender integration throughout the programme cycle; and
 - better collection of sex and age disaggregated data.

- ▶ **A stronger partnership approach:** WFP can only provide a part of the integrated school health and nutrition package and needs to work with partners to ensure the focus on high quality education. In these countries stronger multisectoral partnerships with key partners will be sought to reduce the funding gap, to lay the foundations for moving towards national programmes where possible, and to ensure the delivery of well-integrated packages. WFP will work on a corporate

initiative with UNICEF to provide joint support in schools. Key additional partners include: governments, United Nations system (FAO, WHO, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), Education Cannot Wait, Global Partnership for Education, World Bank, the private sector, and new donors, civil society organizations and NGOs.

WFP will continue to focus on primary school-aged children as the main target group for its operations, in line with the 2013 policy. However, in certain contexts and with the right partners, WFP will aim to provide support to pre-primary and secondary schoolchildren, including finding new ways to reach adolescent girls and address their particular barriers to education. WFP will address current gaps in programming in emergency contexts with new guidance documents and tools (for example guidelines for school feeding in refugee settings). Wherever possible, WFP will work with governments at the national and decentralized levels and with local actors to build national capacities and lay the foundations of a transition to a national programme.

ROLE 2 – Transitioning to national programmes. Challenge: learning to let go successfully

In stable low-income and lower-middle income countries, WFP will shift to an enabling role. This approach implies a deeper strategic and operational shift for WFP and will thus need time for change and learning to take place. To support the transition to national ownership WFP needs to become good at supporting others to do the job, which means fully embracing a facilitating role rather than an operational role.

While WFP is increasingly aware that this shift is needed and the organization has learned from evaluations and new approaches, operationalization is still a challenge. In this sense, the implementation of the school feeding strategy is a good opportunity to tackle some of these systemic issues and continue learning from ongoing transition processes, which could then inform corporate approaches more broadly. While transitions will happen progressively, WFP will need to ensure high quality programmes and review its implementation arrangements and cost structures to ensure they are designed to support the transition to government programmes.

STRATEGIC SHIFTS:

- ▶ **Time-bound transition plans with governments:** WFP estimates it will hand over its programmes in 20 countries by 2030. Transition strategies will be negotiated and approved at the highest levels, ensuring national resources are committed to this before a WFP transition. Complementary transition strategies may need to be drafted for those country strategic plans where transition plans are insufficiently articulated.

⁶⁵ Humanitarian-development-peace nexus refers to the efforts to bridge immediate response operations with sustainable development programmes. Also referred to as the "triple nexus".

- ▶ **Stronger capacities for systems strengthening and upstream policy work:** school feeding and school health and nutrition more broadly need to be embedded into national education, health and social protection sector plans, and to support this WFP needs stronger engagement in these processes at country level. Staff capacities and systematic guidance will be strengthened to understand the national and subnational systems within which school feeding programmes are embedded, including the national supply chains, information management systems, policy, planning and budgeting processes, the administrative set up, and accountability and reporting mechanisms of governments. WFP will also strengthen its advocacy and political engagement capacities to generate political will and secure necessary budgets at national and subnational level (see work stream 3).

WFP will support regional groups that have prioritized school feeding in continental discussions. Support to the African Union will be a priority, as will partnerships with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as it seeks to increasingly support regional efforts and ownership. These partnerships will be strengthened to build accountability mechanisms within the regions and transfer technical assistance capacities to regional bodies. Expert technical and policy advice will be provided in social safety nets and protection, food security and nutrition with specific emphasis on reaching goals that promote gender equality. South-South cooperation approaches will be critical to achieve this objective. The WFP Center of Excellence in Brazil will play a leading role in the implementation of this objective, in partnership with other Centers in China and Côte d'Ivoire, and Regional Bureaux.

A multisectoral approach and the identification of new financing tools and mechanisms to strengthen and develop further partnerships with government partners, international financial institutions and the United Nations system, among others, will be sought for school feeding initiatives in support of the transition to national programmes.

ROLE 3 - Consolidating and strengthening national programmes. Challenge: taking a regional approach to country support

To date, 44 countries are operating national school feeding programmes that began with WFP support decades ago, illustrating the strong WFP legacy in this area. These are middle-income countries where the transition to national ownership has already happened (for example Peru, Dominican Republic, Indonesia) and where WFP's technical support has been instrumental in improving specific parts of the national programme at the request of the governments by showcasing best practices and testing new approaches. For example, in India WFP's support has ensured that millions of children receive fortified rice as part of the National Mid-day Meal Programme. Currently, WFP provides technical



assistance and strengthens capacities together with its operational support in 61 countries; in 10 countries WFP provides technical on-demand support. In many of these countries WFP helps facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation, showcasing good examples and fostering cooperation between governments.

WFP will continue to leverage and deploy its organizational expertise in these countries, and it will strengthen its ability to document and disseminate its achievements.

STRATEGIC SHIFTS:

- ▶ **Adopting a regional approach to country support:** a new approach is needed for WFP in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia where countries are requesting specific support to improve existing programmes. High level technical assistance by experts is needed for assessments, studies and evaluations of national programmes that inform policy decisions or reforms. This capacity can be shared across countries through rosters of regional experts, for example, which would make the assistance more efficient. Support will be provided to regional school feeding networks and institutions to facilitate dialogue between countries, document what is happening regionally at countries' request, organize and host regional events, and provide technical support on demand. Stronger partnership engagement will be sought with global, regional and national research entities, international financial institutions, the private sector, academia and think tanks.

3.4 The Supporting Work Streams of the Strategy

At the corporate level, WFP will put in place four work streams to support the implementation of this strategy. These will be rolled out in the form of working groups led by the relevant departments or divisions in the organization. External organizations will also be invited to join as appropriate. At regional level the strategy will be supported by regional implementation plans, which will define effective and context-specific measures to ensure country alignment.



WORK STREAM 1 – Generating and sharing knowledge and best practice globally

As it did in 2009, WFP will work with partners to establish a research agenda for school feeding for the next ten years, based on a mapping of

learning needs, to ensure that global gaps in the knowledge base are being filled. A research consortium will be set up and managed by an academic partner, not by WFP, to ensure evidence work is credible and rigorous.

Future areas of research include:

- ▶ nutrition and diet quality of school-aged children;
- ▶ development of indicators to measure the impact of school feeding on nutrition status of schoolchildren;
- ▶ the contribution of school feeding to human capital, costs, cost-benefit and cost drivers of national programmes;
- ▶ the impact of school feeding on girls' education and adolescents;
- ▶ analysis of how countries have transitioned from external support to country financing and management of programmes;
- ▶ the cost-effectiveness of using school feeding programmes as a platform for the delivery of other services (health and nutrition, protection, etc.); and
- ▶ the contribution of school feeding to peace and stability outcomes as well as cognition and learning outcomes.

As the leading international agency supporting school feeding, WFP has the responsibility to house and make available global knowledge so that countries can use that information to improve programmes and provide adequate support to vulnerable children. Drawing from decades of engagement in school feeding, WFP will support the development of global public goods such as a comprehensive school feeding database and will document and share global lessons learned, best practices, standards and norms more effectively.

In recent years, new decentralized approaches are emerging on knowledge sharing, including South-South exchanges, knowledge hubs and other initiatives at the regional level. These approaches need to be supported in order to create

more of a networked approach to knowledge rather than a centralized one. However, better coordination is needed between all these initiatives to ensure coherence.

WFP will work with the World Bank and other relevant partners to document the results of almost five years of implementation of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) and to update the tool for further use as part of the new Universal School Health and School Feeding Strategy of the World Bank. An operational tool will be developed by WFP to assess national capacities for school feeding more effectively and to provide technical assistance. WFP will work with partners such as the Global Child Nutrition Foundation on a global school feeding survey. A periodic flagship publication will consolidate and report back on the state of school feeding worldwide. Better outcome indicators to document and track results of school feeding operations will be developed, in particular those related to nutrition and capacity development.



WORK STREAM 2 – Increasing the investment in school feeding: a new funding model

A new funding model that differentiates between the contexts is needed. Low-income and fragile countries that do not have the same fiscal capacity as middle- and high-income countries (countries in role 1 as described above) continue to rely on operational support from WFP, which in turn relies on a limited set of donors, making funds unpredictable and the operations unsustainable. To finance its operations WFP needs to establish a new compact with donors. A multisectoral approach is needed, bringing on board donors that have traditionally not been involved in funding school feeding programmes, blending funding from different sectors, and combining humanitarian and development funding streams. Also, new multilateral funds, especially in the education sector, and innovative financing mechanisms are available that need to be explored.

In more stable and developed countries (role 2 as described above), governments need to move from relying on actors such as WFP and NGOs to financing their own national programmes. Countries could, for example, allocate funding from bilateral partners, negotiate debt swaps, introduce specific domestic taxes or levies, or work on corporate social responsibility projects with the private sector. WFP will learn to engage with governments in designing and implementing innovative fiscal policy approaches to finance national and regional school feeding programmes. The challenge for WFP is to support governments to increase access to these funds while also securing funding for capacity strengthening activities. An additional need will be for WFP to strengthen its ability to manage, implement and account for funding coming from development sector partners.

International financial institutions such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank as well as

thematic funds such as the Global Partnership for Education and others will be crucial to enable this transition to national ownership and sustainability by channelling financing to national programmes. Funding for technical assistance and capacity development work would need to be secured for WFP to continue playing its enabling role. Private sector support has been instrumental in mobilizing resources, advocating and providing technical assistance to strengthen school feeding programmes. WFP will continue to work closely with the private sector and identify avenues to expand that cooperation through innovative financing mechanisms and individual giving, to contribute to the reduction of the funding gap, especially in fragile contexts.



WORK STREAM 3 – Acting in partnership to improve and advocate for school health and nutrition

WFP will champion the issue of school health and nutrition globally and advocate for

its prioritization in the next decade of action towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It will work with partners to ensure that the additional elements of the integrated package for children, which are not part of mandate or areas of expertise of WFP but are nevertheless crucial for children, are provided in an integrated way. Joint approaches are proving to be more effective and cost efficient, including joint advocacy and communication strategies.

In July 2019, an inter-agency meeting co-organized by UNESCO and WFP highlighted the importance of better United Nations agency collaboration in the context of the United Nations Reform and the need for a more effective, efficient and integrated new multi-agency school health and nutrition approach.⁶⁶ Under the leadership of UNESCO, WFP will support this new partnership opportunity at the global, regional and country levels.⁶⁷

WFP will update its bilateral partnerships with agencies including UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, Global Partnership for Education, World Bank and Education Cannot Wait through new memorandums of understanding or action plans as appropriate. WFP will launch a joint initiative with UNICEF to provide an integrated package of school feeding and health, WASH and nutrition interventions. WFP is currently working with FAO on sustainable Home-Grown School Feeding approaches, with the view to improve linkages between local farmers and school feeding programmes. Support will be provided to regional bodies such as the African Union to strengthen their leadership on school feeding.

At the regional and country level, WFP will work with governments as key stakeholders and with United Nations agencies and NGOs to:

- ▶ improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes and to provide better and more information to decision makers at the right time;



- ▶ engage and reposition school health and nutrition in national policy discussions at the right level and with the right capacities; and
- ▶ support upstream decision making by pointing out key trade-offs, best practices and solutions to governments.
- ▶ WFP will foster multisectoral approaches at national levels, convening across ministries, government structures and regional groups.

NGOs have clearly asked WFP to review its approach to partnering with them on school feeding through the consultations for this strategy. At the country level, there is an opportunity to develop shared platforms for knowledge sharing, development of indicators and coordinated support to governments. This may include jointly strengthening monitoring systems and transition plans. At the regional and international levels, this engagement provides a basis for joint advocacy to increase the profile of school feeding and for global coordination and sharing of research, lessons learned and best practice. WFP will establish an NGO advisory board at global/HQ level and include NGOs in various work streams of this strategy, including the new research agenda.

The private sector – including multinational, national and local profit-making enterprises, foundations and individual giving – has been a strong player in school feeding particularly in stable contexts where it has supported transition strategies with governments. Support in the form of funding, advocacy and technical support for the design and development of national school feeding programmes is being increasingly leveraged. Here, an area of growth will be the development of new partnerships with national private sector companies who can and should be part of country level advocacy and policy platforms to strengthen the quality and sustainability of school health and school feeding interventions.

⁶⁶ Inter-agency meeting for a new joint approach to school health: UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, World Food Programme. 2019. Promoting Health to Strengthen Education Outcomes. Final Report. 2 July 2019. Paris.

⁶⁷ WFP has seconded a staff member to UNESCO to support the coordination of different United Nations agencies on the issue of school health and nutrition.



WORK STREAM 4 - Strengthening programmatic approaches in key areas

WFP has identified six thematic focus areas that will be further strengthened. All these areas require integrated, multisectoral approaches.

- ▶ **Girls' (including adolescents) education and well-being:** Helping girls stay in school, especially into adolescence, is an effective way of preventing early marriage and of delaying the first pregnancy, both of which can trap women into poverty, social exclusion, violence and chronic ill health. A multitude of gender inequalities hinder the access of children, especially girls, to schools.⁶⁸ In some countries WFP has successfully operationalized approaches with partners such as UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women to address some of these barriers through integrated platforms, which need to be supported and scaled up.
- ▶ **Nutrition-sensitive school-feeding⁶⁹:** In the face of the triple burden of malnutrition⁷⁰, priorities for school-aged children are promoting healthy diets through nutrition education, physical activity and behaviour change communication, addressing and preventing micronutrient deficiencies, and tackling the specific needs of adolescent girls and other vulnerable groups. WFP will issue new nutritional guidelines for governments on how to design the best models based on their situation, nutritional needs and challenges, while promoting links with other health, hygiene and nutrition-related activities.
- ▶ **School feeding and the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus:** School feeding is part of an essential package to bridge immediate response and long-term development efforts. For children living in fragile and conflict-affected areas and refugee settings,



school feeding can become an essential safeguard by contributing to a sense of normalcy and educational continuation. A robust conflict/context analysis needs to underpin WFP programmes to ensure that assistance is conflict-sensitive and does not result in protection risks for children. The contributions that school feeding might make in improving the prospects for peace on different levels need to be further researched.

- ▶ **School feeding, food systems and value chains:** Despite over a decade of work, Home-Grown School Feeding programmes are still not implemented at scale. WFP will deploy its significant expertise in this area to ensure that the connection between school feeding and local agricultural production is a reality. This includes market analysis and supply chain support, links to local food systems and smallholder farmers' groups, access to energy, support of cash-based programming, shock-responsive programmes, and improved monitoring and traceability solutions for local procurement to governments. Strengthening partnerships with Rome-based agencies and specialized international and national NGOs and farmers' organizations will be important.
- ▶ **Data and digital innovation:** WFP is developing a school feeding digital platform to increase near real-time data availability from operations and enable better and quicker decision making. Eventually these solutions can be linked with national reporting and monitoring systems in support of government-led programmes. Digital solutions for attendance tracking, monitoring of meals served, and stock management in schools will be fostered. Integrated dashboards will support country offices to improve their programme quality where needed. Digital platforms to train school feeding actors on nutrition education, food quality and safety and promote healthy eating habits will be further developed. Furthermore, the school meal optimization tool PLUS School Menus will help to improve menu design, focusing on nutrition, local sourcing and cost optimization.
- ▶ **Local communities:** A variety of community-based actors contribute to school feeding programmes including school management committees, parent teacher associations, teachers, parents, traditional authorities, village leaders, women's groups, farmer organizations and, of course, students. Local communities have an important role to play in the implementation of school feeding activities in fragile and stable contexts, with increasing importance in their ownership of school feeding in stable contexts. WFP will strengthen the engagement of local communities in school feeding to ensure the sustainability of activities, children's attendance, community members' contribution to school feeding through in-kind or financial assistance, and parents and teachers' leadership in the management of the daily activities.

68 WFP and Anthrologica. 2018. Bridging the Gap: Engaging Adolescents for Nutrition, Health and Sustainable Development. A Multi Country Study. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2z7489K>

69 WFP's 2017 nutrition policy frames the engagement towards improving nutrition in all WFP interventions.

70 WHO: "The double burden of malnutrition is characterised by the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity." Source: <https://www.who.int/nutrition/double-burden-malnutrition/en/>



3.5 Demonstrating Results and Measuring the Success of the Strategy

Monitoring and Evaluation of WFP's Operations

While school feeding monitoring systems provide output and outcome measurements for education, more work is needed to ensure improved measurements across all outcome areas identified in the school feeding policy including nutrition, safety nets and capacity strengthening. WFP will update its existing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework so that programme results under those areas at impact, outcome and output level are better demonstrated and to make it more gender-responsive. In close linkage with the school feeding research agenda, the school feeding M&E framework will:

- 1) pilot-test new quantitative and qualitative indicators to provide standardized measures for key programme results;⁷¹
- 2) enhance monitoring systems, data collection and reporting at the country level, for WFP and national programmes;
- 3) leverage new technologies to effectively monitor and evaluate school feeding programmes; and
- 4) partner with other United Nations agencies to align a common set of indicators to demonstrate progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

The updated M&E Framework will feed into the next Corporate Results Framework (2021). On the programme evaluation side, WFP will dedicate resources at the global and regional level to ensure school feeding evaluations planned under the country strategic plan (or in response to donor funding requirements) have a rigorous design and are able to produce reliable evidence of impact that fills evidence gaps for programmes. Thematic syntheses will highlight programme results, lessons learned and operational best practices. Syntheses will ensure that conclusions and recommendations of evaluations systemically feed into school feeding policy, guidance and practice.

This strategy will benefit from the implementation of WFP Corporate Evaluation Strategy (2016–2021), which will allow WFP to generate the evidence and knowledge it needs to

achieve its goals; and the Corporate Monitoring Strategy (2018–2021), designed to strengthen WFP monitoring systems and capacities.

Measuring the Success of this Strategy

The implementation of the school feeding strategy is summarized in the theory of change shown in the appendix. The regular monitoring and centralized evaluations of the strategy will be based on this theory of change.

At the global, regional and country level, key performance indicators will be developed for all the strategy work streams and actions, identifying annual targets, 2025 targets and 2030 targets. Data will be disaggregated by sex and age. Targets will be reviewed annually to ensure adequate responsiveness to implementation realities and country context as the role of WFP evolves within each country.

WFP has done an analysis of internal monitoring systems and has identified system bottlenecks that limit appropriate tracking of planned and actual resources invested in school feeding and make it more difficult to link them to results. A plan will be defined to address these challenges progressively in the first three years of the strategy.

The School Feeding Strategy (2020–2030) identifies the following instruments and channels for internal and external reporting at the global level:

- Annual update to the Executive Board through the WFP Annual Performance Report and annual informal updates/round tables.
- Annual update to the WFP leadership group through the thematic global school feeding report.
- Periodically, the flagship publication State of School Feeding Worldwide and other publications will provide an update to global partners.

⁷¹ New indicators include: child nutrition and diet quality and diversity of targeted children (nutrition); households' income economy through school feeding resource transfer (safety nets); governments' progress in establishing sustainable school feeding system (capacity strengthening and advocacy), including reporting on beneficiaries reached through WFP's support to national systems.

Appendix. Theory of Change School Feeding Strategy 2020-2030

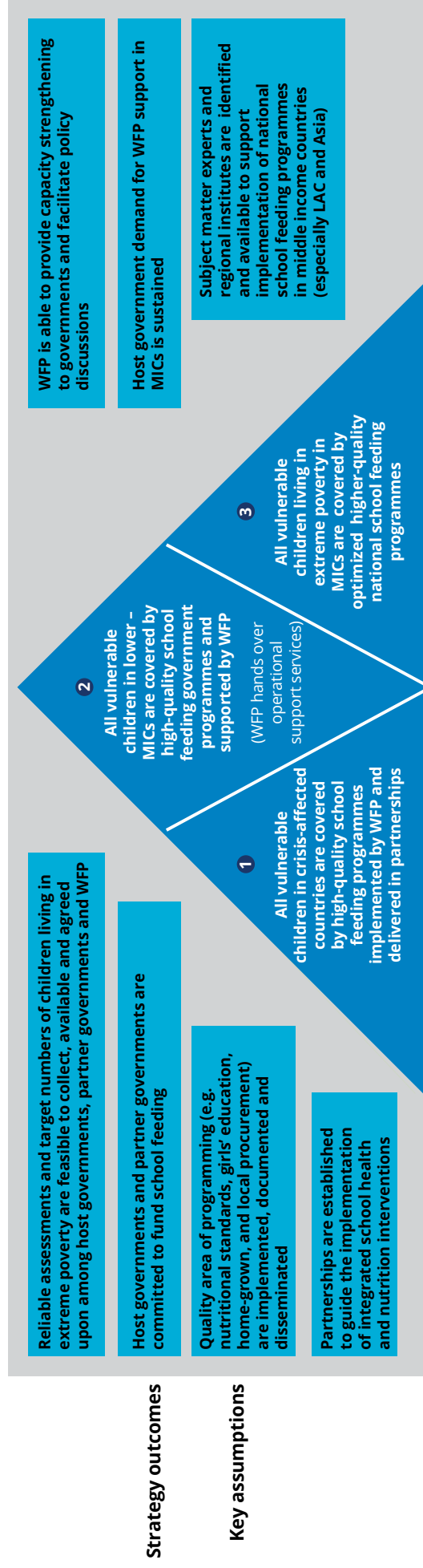


Vision

All vulnerable children are free from hunger and are well nourished and healthy, so they can learn and reach their full potential, thus benefiting their own development and wellbeing, and that of their families and communities

Purpose

All children have improved access to school feeding as part of the essential school health and nutrition package contributing to increasing human capital and economic growth, education and learning, food system vulnerable ems and healthy diets



Note: MICs: middle-income countries

Photo Credits

Cover Photo: WFP/Evelyn Fey

Photo page 5: WFP/Raul Saenz

Photo page 7: WFP/Martin Karimi

Photo page 9: WFP/Marwa Awad

Photo pages 12-13: WFP/Nyani Quarmyne

Photo page 15: WFP/Lilu KC

Photo page 17: WFP/Fauzan Ijazah

Photo pages 18-19: WFP/Jessica Lawson

Photo page 24: WFP/Alejandro Lopez-Chicheri

Photo page 27: WFP/Ratanak Leng

Photo page 29: WFP/Rami Osman

Photo pages 30-31: WFP/Rein Skullerud

Photo page 35: WFP/Laura Morris

Photo page 37: WFP/Vilakhone Sipaseu

Photo page 38: WFP/Ratanak Leng

Photo page 39: WFP/Zuha Akkash

For more information contact:

World Food Programme
Via Cesare Giulio Viola, 68/70
Parco dei Medici
00148 Rome, Italy

www.wfp.org/school-feeding

Cover Photo: WFP/Evelyn Fey