



**WFP BRAZIL
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
— AND —
THE AFRICAN UNION
PARTNERSHIP**

PROMOTING HOME-GROWN
SCHOOL FEEDING ACROSS AFRICA



BACKGROUND

From 2012 to 2014, the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil (CoE BRA) hosted several national delegations from African Union (AU) member states and organised many regional and international events in Africa. The aim of these activities was to foster countries' discussions and interest in school feeding, as well as its linkages to rural development¹. Due to this mobilization, in 2015, the WFP Centre of Excellence brought a high-level delegation to Brazil, with leaders from the AU Commission and ministers from African countries. The delegation exchanged knowledge with the Brazilian government and learned about Brazil's Zero Hunger Strategy. Special attention was given to the Brazilian home-grown school feeding programme. Sensitised by the Brazilian experience and by the ongoing advancement of school feeding in AU member states, the AU Commissioner of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) decided to:

1 Include home-grown school feeding programmes in the Continental Education Strategy;

2 Promote an AU formal resolution, seeking member states' commitment to school feeding; and

3 Produce evidence to advocate for home-grown school feeding programmes across Africa.

¹ School feeding programmes connected to rural development, especially smallholder farming, are known as home-grown school feeding programmes.



A CONTINENTAL MOVE FOR SCHOOL FEEDING: THE EDUCATION STRATEGY

In 2016, the AU approved the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25), a strategic framework for education aligned with Agenda 2063 – a continental document – and the global 2030 Agenda. CESA 16-25 aims to set up a “qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources (...)”. The Strategy is designed to be implemented through a coalition of stakeholders, among which the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil is featured.

CESA’s Strategic Objective O2 establishes a focus on creating healthy and conducive learning environments in schools, to expand access to quality education. In light of this objective, and with WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil’s policy advice, in 2016, the African Heads of State (Assembly/AU/Dec 589) identified home-grown school feeding as a valuable opportunity to advance education, boost local economies, promote smallholder agriculture, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals. This decision also set the 1st of March as the African Day of School Feeding and established a Multidisciplinary Committee of African Experts on School Feeding to facilitate the implementation of this agenda.





PROMOTING AND CELEBRATING SCHOOL FEEDING: THE AFRICAN DAY OF SCHOOL FEEDING AND THE PAN-AFRICAN NETWORK

The African School Feeding celebration stimulated AU member states to treat school feeding as a priority. Following this trend, during the first school feeding celebration, in Brazzaville, in March 2016, Senegal proposed to create a network for the Multidisciplinary Committee of African Experts in partnership with the African Union and the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil. Effectively, in 2016, the Pan-African School Feeding Network (REPANS) was established and an online knowledge platform was developed and launched. The WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil sponsored the first actions of the network and handed it over to the AU Commission in 2018. Since then, REPANS officials and members kept meeting during the African Day of School Feeding, annual AU/WFP Workshops on Home-Grown School Feeding, Global Child Nutrition Fora and WFP Regional Workshops on School Feeding.





EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING: THE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL FEEDING ACROSS THE AU STUDY

In 2016, the AU Commission was requested to develop a research on school feeding's impacts on inclusive, quality education in AU countries, and on how school feeding can facilitate progress across a range of sectors, including education, nutrition, health, agriculture and local development. The AU Commission invited the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil and the WFP Africa Office to convene the study.

One central idea for the continental study in school feeding is to conceptualise and develop policy-relevant knowledge for advancing CESA's strategic objectives. The WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil sponsored and conducted with an African research institution the Sustainable School Feeding across the African Union Study. Overall, the study synthesises the outcomes and multi-sectoral benefits of school feeding in AU member states. It relied on both secondary sources, as part of a structured desk review, and primary data, as qualitative research to build a scenario of the state of school feeding in the AU. The study then took the evidence and best practices revealed by the desk review and primary research to develop a conceptual framework for sustainable school feeding that operates from a systems approach, and to generate entry point recommendations for the multi-stakeholder committee.

This study that was launched in 2018, during the African School Feeding Day, in Harare. Complementary to it, a report with 20 case studies on selected AU member states will be released to promote further reflection on the diversity of and innovations within school feeding programmes across the continent. This material will be prepared and published by the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil throughout 2019 and 2020. To ensure equitable representation of school feeding programmes, the focus countries for these case studies were selected in accordance with the AU's five geographic regions and in proportion to linguistic representation of the AU's official languages.



WORKING TOGETHER TO LINK RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL FEEDING: THE CONTINENTAL SCHOOL FEEDING CLUSTER

In 2017, the African Union Commission took the initiative to transform most of the Multidisciplinary Committee of African Experts into active and organized groups. For that, the Commission established thematic clusters to implement specific CESA objectives, for example: Education Planning, School Feeding, Peace and Education, among others. The clusters act as an AU forum where stakeholders from the education sector have access to technical information on the design and implementation of school feeding programmes. They also provide a space to organise joint actions to support advocacy and resource mobilization in this area. This operational structure for policy dialogue supports the spread of school feeding information across the AU. Recommendations issuing from studies, like the Sustainable School Feeding across the AU, should guide and inform all clusters' workplans and instruments.

For the school feeding cluster, the AU, UN agencies, NGOs, and stakeholders - including AU Member States - appointed a coordinating team to manage the work of the cluster. This increased alignment and harmony among stakeholders and facilitated the identification and deployment of governance synergies for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness. The School Feeding Cluster was launched in 2017 during the meeting of the 'Third Continental Consultation of the AU and the WFP on Home-Grown School Feeding'. The initial members of the cluster were multi-sectoral technical experts in school feeding from AU Member States, the WFP Africa Office, the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil, FAO, UNESCO-IICBA, and UNICEF. During the launching ceremony, the WFP Africa Office and the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil were invited to be the coordinators of the cluster.





WAYS FORWARD: TOOLS TO PROPEL THE HGSF CLUSTER

In 2018, the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil chaired an AU HGSF Cluster meeting in the Global Child Nutrition Forum, in Tunis, to deliberate on the need of specific tools to move forward with the group. In that occasion, participants agreed on the need to have consistent documents with the Cluster's Terms of Reference, Strategy and Monitoring and Evaluation System. The WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil and the WFP Africa Office joined forces to design this material. In 2019, during the 4th African Day of School Feeding, in Abidjan, the group approved the CESA School Feeding Cluster Instruments, with the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil's support. The instruments serve to guide the School Feeding Cluster's actions, and to devise a strategic and operational plan for achieving CESA's vision and mission over the next three years.

