

# State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020 Key Takeaways

Foreword  
Key Messages  
Executive Summary



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES



INCLUDING  
A SPECIAL  
REPORT ON  
COVID-19

NO ≈ THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ≈ THE WORLD  
SCHOOL FEEDING AROUND THE WORLD

# Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned our world upside down in recent months, and the social and economic impacts of this global health crisis have been profound. Sadly, as is often the case, children are among those who have been hardest hit as the virus has swept around the globe.

An entire generation has had their education disrupted due to school closures: at the peak of the first wave, around 1.6 billion children and young people were locked out of the classroom. Even today, over 500 million have still not resumed their education.

This is a tragedy in itself. But millions of vulnerable children have also had their long-term health, development and well-being thrown into jeopardy because they have missed out on precious free school meals – the only nutritious food they get each day. Earlier in the year, 370 million children were not able to receive school meals. The virus is threatening to rob these children of their futures.

The World Food Programme is determined to ensure this does not happen. Over the past ten years, a number of studies have shown that school meals combat child hunger, support children's long-term well-being and help them to learn and thrive. This is especially true for girls: where there is a school meals programme running, girls stay in school longer, child marriage rates go down and teen pregnancies fall.

Meals at school are especially important for children living in conflict situations because they contribute to peace and social cohesion. The 2020 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the United Nations World Food Programme is a recognition that ending hunger is a critical first step towards peace. It is also a critical step towards better education and learning. School feeding can become an essential safeguard by contributing to a sense of normalcy and educational continuation. Getting vulnerable children back to school, particularly for children living in emergency situations, requires programmes which help ease the severe financial pressure many families are facing due to the pandemic.



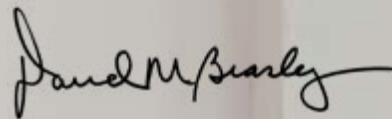
All the evidence shows that school meals programmes, along with other social protection initiatives, are one of the smartest long-term investments any government can make. So WFP's country teams are working with governments worldwide to reopen schools safely and to make sure the health, food and nutritional needs of the poorest children are being met.

The *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020* is designed to support these efforts. It highlights how, over the past decade, countries have massively stepped up their financial and policy commitments to school feeding programmes, and how these efforts have translated into more children receiving meals in school than ever before.

But it also identifies the challenges which lie ahead. Even before the pandemic, WFP estimated that 73 million vulnerable children do not have access to the school meals they need to realize their potential. The report provides up-to-date

data and a global policy outlook to inform and support governments, to enhance national strategies and programmes, and to promote global learning so vulnerable and hungry children have a chance to go to school.

WFP is fully committed to working with our partners to ensure that no child, regardless of where they live, goes to school hungry – or worse, doesn't go to school at all. After the turmoil of recent months, we must seize the opportunity to start building the better world we all want to see. It is time to work together, in partnership, to achieve it.



**David Beasley**  
Executive Director  
World Food Programme

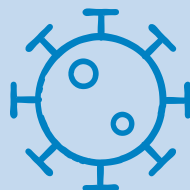


# Key Messages



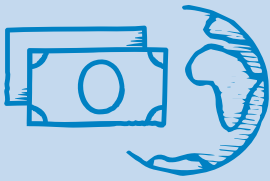
**At the beginning of 2020, national school feeding programmes delivered school meals to more children than at any time in human history, making school feeding the most extensive social safety net in the world.**

- One in every two schoolchildren, or 388 million children, receive school meals every day in at least 161 countries from all income levels.
- Between 2013 and 2020, the number of children receiving school meals grew by 9 percent globally and 36 percent in low-income countries.
- This growth reflects a widespread institutionalization of these programmes as part of government policies for national development: more than 90 percent of the cost of school feeding programmes now comes from domestic funds.
- There is increasing evidence that effective school feeding programmes improve both access to schools and learning, while cash transfers primarily affect access.
- Despite these unprecedented gains, the programmes remained least effective where they were needed most: 73 million of the most vulnerable children were still to be reached.



**The COVID-19 pandemic brought an end to this decade of global growth in school feeding programmes and has sharpened global resolve to restore access to these vital safety nets as a priority.**

- At the height of the crisis in April 2020, 199 countries had closed their schools and 370 million children were suddenly deprived of what for many was their main meal of the day.
- This loss highlighted the importance of school feeding as a social safety net which protected the well-being of the most vulnerable children and supported their future.
- The loss also highlighted the need to expand the concept of education to address the health and well-being of children, and to build back equitable, quality school-based health and nutrition services in every school for every schoolchild.



**In a post-COVID-19 world, school feeding programmes are even more of a priority investment because they help countries to build back better: creating human capital; supporting national growth; and promoting economic development.**

- Effective programmes help countries to support their children not only during the first 1,000 days of life, but also the next 7,000 days leading to adulthood. These 7,000 days are key to sustain early gains; provide opportunities for catch-up; and to address critical phases of vulnerability throughout childhood and adolescence.
- The programmes support the learner as well as the learning, helping build a healthy and educated population, while simultaneously laying the foundations for national growth and development and directly creating 1,668 new jobs for every 100,000 children fed.
- Efficient programmes yield returns of up to US\$9 for every US\$1 invested, creating value across multiple sectors, including: education, health and nutrition, social protection and local agriculture.



**The World Food Programme has renewed its commitment to work with governments to ensure that all vulnerable children are supported, and has launched a new ten-year School Feeding Strategy to strengthen its global strategic role in school health and nutrition.**

- WFP will support governments to reach the 73 million vulnerable children that need school health and nutrition support, including school feeding, in 60 priority countries.
- WFP will support the transition to nationally owned and funded programmes and, wherever needed, will enhance its direct support in fragile or low-income settings.
- WFP will work in partnership with a growing coalition of development agencies, donors, the private sector and civil society organizations to support governments in the scale up of school health and nutrition programmes.
- WFP will promote research on school health and nutrition as a global public good, helping countries to access better evidence for more cost-efficient programmes.

### **The 2020 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the UN World Food Programme**

The 2020 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the United Nations World Food Programme “for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict” (Norwegian Nobel Committee, 2020).

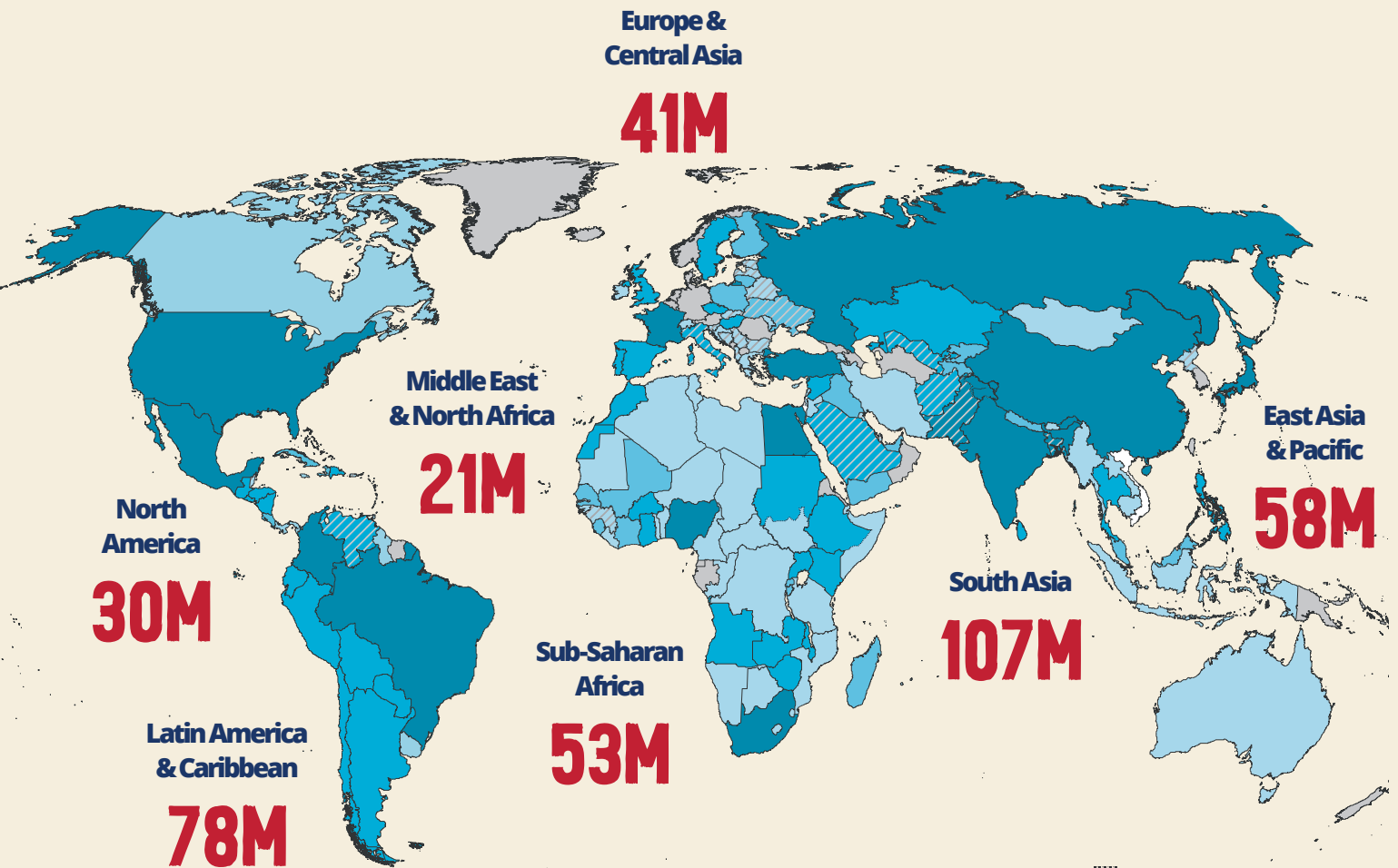
## Focus areas for 2021 and 2022

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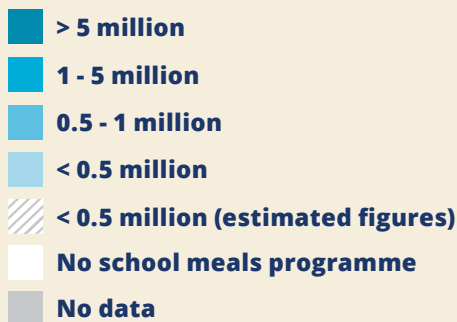
- **The most immediate priority is to help countries re-establish effective school feeding programmes.** How can we accelerate global efforts to safely reopen the schools closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and at least return to the situation as it was at the beginning of 2020?
- **Before the pandemic, school feeding programmes were least present where they were needed most.** Can innovative approaches to financing bring new hope to the 73 million children who are most in need? Filling this gap will require new financial instruments such as social investment bonds and pooled investments across sectors, including in health, education and agriculture.
- **The available data on school feeding focus on public-sector programmes in low and lower middle-income countries.** What more might we learn from programmes managed by the BRICS countries, high-income countries and the private sector? Creating a robust global database of school feeding programmes would help provide a more informed understanding of the variety of programmes and would widen the scope of learning opportunities.
- **School feeding programmes that are connected to the local purchase of food (commonly known as home-grown school feeding programmes) have proven their worth in middle-income countries.** How can low-income countries scale up home-grown school feeding efforts as part of their national programmes? The largest school feeding programmes in the world all rely on locally sourced food, which helps create jobs, make markets more predictable and helps establish lifelong dietary preferences for locally available fresh foods. There is a need to help low-income countries scale-up home-grown school feeding efforts as key elements of their national programmes.
- **School feeding programmes provide the world's most extensive safety net, and play a key role in the response to conflicts and emergencies.** Can we further sustain and enhance the resilience of food systems through a new generation of school feeding programmes that are more cost-efficient and more environmentally-sensitive? The current programme designs address hunger and peacebuilding as part of the immediate response to conflict and emergency. To maintain resilience in the longer term, and to transition to sustainability, food systems need to evolve in response to local needs and context.



Map 1  
**Children receiving school feeding around the world**



**Number of children receiving school meals**



- International Boundary
- - - - - Other Line of Separation
- ..... Armistice or International Administrative Line
- ..... Special boundary line

**TOTAL**  
**388 MILLION**  
**CHILDREN**



In this map, Jammu and Kashmir is included in the category "over 5 million children" because this territory is covered by a programme that provides school meals to more than five million children. This presentation of data does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of this territory or the delimitation of its frontiers.

# Executive Summary

This publication by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) provides an analysis of the State of School Feeding Worldwide in 2020. A report on the State of School Feeding Worldwide was first published by WFP in 2013 (WFP, 2013a). This 2020 version follows a similar format and uses the best available data sources to describe key aspects of coverage, implementation practices and costs of school-based health and nutrition programmes worldwide. In addition, the 2020 version seeks to analyse the direction and scale of change between 2013 and 2020, and to provide an update on advances in evidence and understanding of school feeding programmes.

Long planned for, the report is being published with an even greater sense of urgency as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in February 2020 dealt a blow that brought an end to a near-decade of global growth in school feeding programmes. At the height of the crisis in April 2020, 199 countries had closed their schools and around 370 million children were suddenly deprived of their daily school meal. This loss highlighted the importance of school feeding

as a social safety net, protecting the well-being of children and supporting their future. The sudden social shock of the crisis, and the experience of trying to cope without national education systems, has sharpened global resolve to restore access to education and to build back better systems.

We need to learn from the COVID-19 crisis. The time is ripe to redefine “education”, and to recognize that investing in schoolchildren is investing in the future. When schools closed, we realized that education is much more than textbooks and classrooms. The crisis has taught us that the education system is perhaps one of the most important pillars of our communities, and fundamental to how societies are structured: that schools support both learning and the learner. As the world responds to and recovers from the pandemic, it is time to expand the concept of education to address the health and well-being of children, and to build back equitable, quality school-based health and nutrition services in every school for every schoolchild.





## Main findings

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### **School feeding is the largest and most widespread social safety net in the world, benefitting 388 million children globally.**

Data from 163 countries show that 99 percent of these countries deliver school feeding programmes. Globally, one in every two schoolchildren, or 388 million children, now receives a school meal, although there are wide disparities between countries. The expansion and institutionalization of these programmes was greatest in low-income countries, improving the sustainability of efforts.

### **Low-income countries have considerably strengthened their financial and policy efforts in relation to school feeding, leading to increased coverage.**

The 2013 report highlighted that the coverage of school feeding was least where it was needed most. This was still true in 2020, but the gap was closing.

Between 2013 and 2020, low-income countries made great strides in policy and funding for school feeding. The proportion of countries that have a school feeding policy increased from 20 percent to 75 percent. Over the same period, low-income country governments have also increased their budgets: the share of domestic funding in overall spending for school feeding increased from 17 percent to 28 percent, reducing reliance on international donors. Consequently, the number of children receiving school meals increased by 36 percent in low-income countries, compared to a 9 percent increase globally. Despite huge population growth, the proportion of schoolchildren receiving meals in low-income countries increased from 13 percent to 20 percent over the same period. In middle and high-income countries, school feeding programmes are almost universally supported through domestic funds, with overall domestic investment exceeding 95 percent of total costs.

### **Before, during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic**

At the beginning of 2020, school feeding programmes were delivered to more children in more countries than at any time in human history. Nearly half the world's schoolchildren, about 388 million, received a meal at school every day, and 90 percent of those meals were complemented by a package of interventions to improve health.

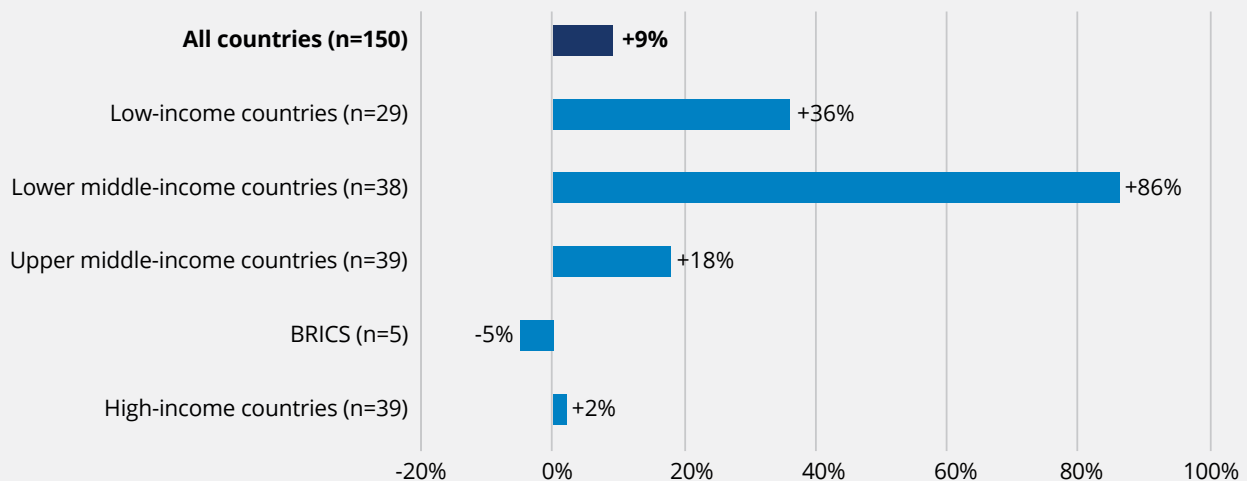
Comparison with 2013 data shows that this substantial growth reflected a rising trend in coverage throughout the previous decade, especially in low and lower middle-income countries. School feeding programmes have increasingly become part of the fabric of national institutional structures, with more than 80 percent of programmes being incorporated into national policies, becoming the world's most extensive social safety net. US\$41-43 billion is spent annually on these programmes, of which more than 90 percent comes from domestic funds. These investments not only create human capital to secure future national economic growth, but are also an important investment in local economies, opening markets for local farmers and creating 1,668 new jobs for every 100,000 children fed.

This publication provides an analysis of the state of school feeding programmes before the COVID-19 pandemic; it describes the damage caused by the pandemic; and presents what can be done to restore this remarkable global safety net – not only to get back to where the world was in January 2020, but to build back better.

**The COVID-19 pandemic brought an end to a decade of global growth in school feeding programmes and has sharpened global resolve to restore access to these vital safety nets as a priority.**

Figure 1  
**Change in the number of children receiving school feeding between 2013 and 2020**

**Legend:** Between 2013 and 2020, the number of children receiving school feeding increased worldwide, but especially in low-income and lower middle-income countries.



**The world needs to prioritize safely reopening schools, including restoring access to school meals.**

The negative effects of school closures could be lifelong. This is especially true for the most vulnerable children, who rely the most on school meals and for whom home schooling is least available. This not only has tragic consequences for the hopes and achievements of the individual, but also undermines a nation’s human capital and helps perpetuate a vicious cycle of poverty and inequality. The protracted closure of schools creates greater risks for children relating to abuse and inappropriate employment. This is especially concerning for girls because long-term school dropout is linked with increased child labour and child marriage.

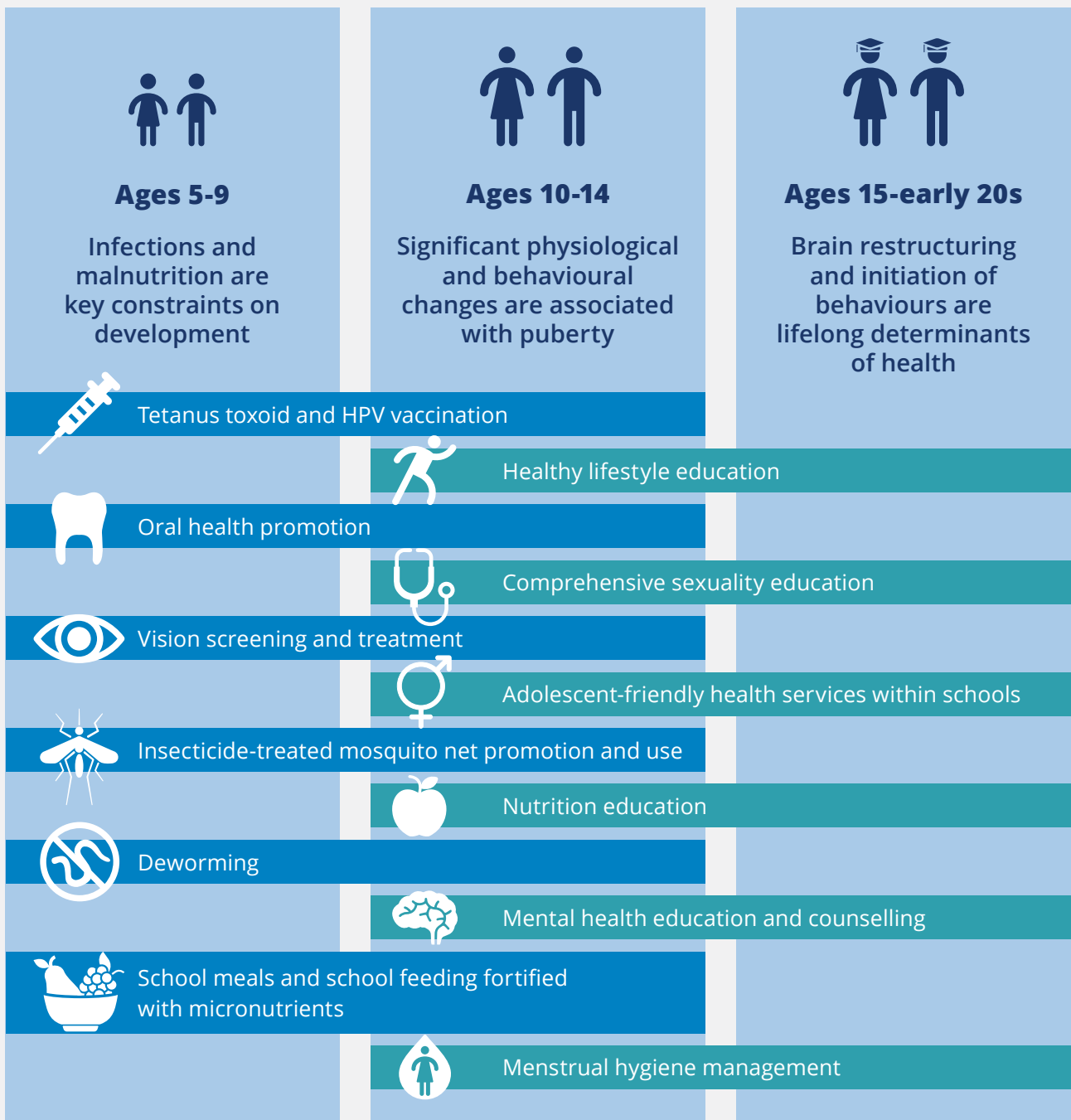
More than 70 countries have implemented coping and mitigation measures to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with mixed results. Countries and partners have sought to mitigate the most damaging effects: supporting education by e-learning, TV and radio; and by replacing school-based safety nets with community services, such as take-home rations and cash transfers.

However, coping mechanisms can exacerbate inequities: less than 10 percent of households in Africa have access to e-learning; and cash or in-kind transfers to households may not equate with support to children, especially girls. WFP alternatives to school meals, such as take-home rations and cash-based transfers, have reached some 6.9 million children, or about 40 percent of the 17 million children who used to receive meals through WFP-supported programmes before COVID-19.

Countries are supporting “back to school” efforts to reverse the harm caused by school closures. School health and nutrition programmes, especially school feeding, are now recognized as playing a key role, acting as a strong incentive for parents to send their children back to school, and for children to stay in school.

Three recent developments may significantly affect school closure policy by the time this report is published: the mass roll-out of licensed vaccines; the emergence of variant virus strains some of which may be more transmissible among children; and the increasing evidence that the long term cost of lost education outweighs the health benefits of school closures.

Figure 2  
**Essential health and nutrition interventions during school years**



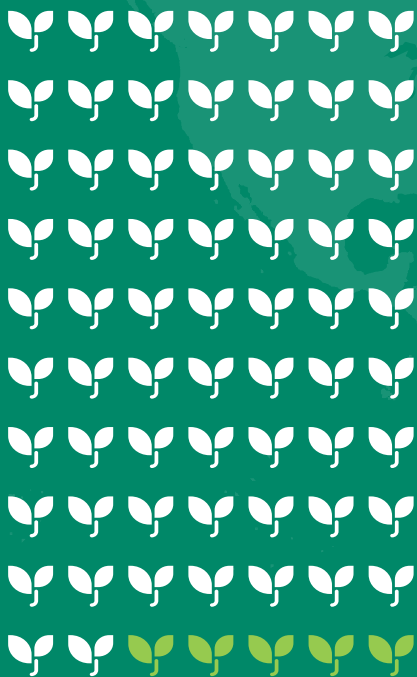
Source: Global Partnership for Education, based on Bundy et al., 2018a.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, national school feeding programmes delivered school meals to more children than at any time in human history, making school feeding the most extensive social safety net in the world.

# Key findings at the global level

## 1 IN EVERY 2

primary schoolchildren in the world receives school meals



## 93%

of governments implement school feeding in conjunction with complementary health and nutrition interventions

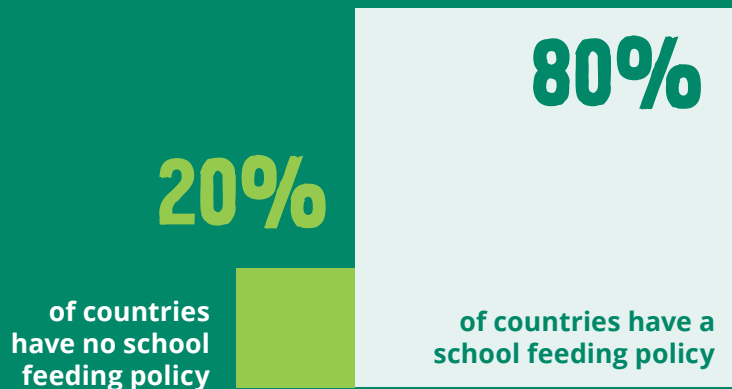


### Institutionalization of school feeding programmes

4 in 5 countries now have a school feeding policy



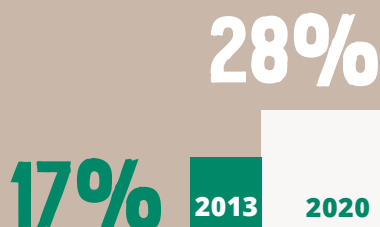
Over 90 percent of the cost of school feeding programmes comes from **domestic funds**



# Key findings for low-income countries

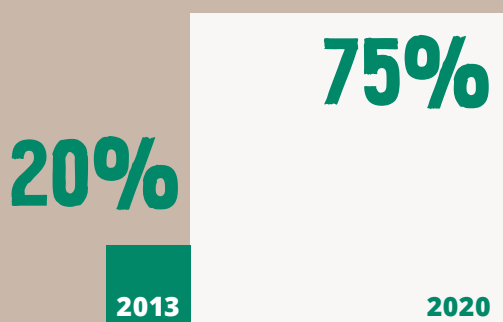
## Countries increased domestic spending on school feeding

Between 2013 and 2020, in low-income countries, the share of domestic funding has increased relative to international donor funding. Low-income countries have made great strides to prioritize school feeding in their budgets



## Governments adopted school feeding policies

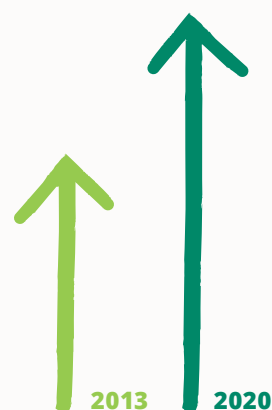
Over the same period, the funding trend has been matched by a policy trend, as a large majority of low-income countries adopted school feeding policies



These financial and policy efforts have paid off: low-income countries scaled-up their school feeding programmes, outpacing the growth of their school populations

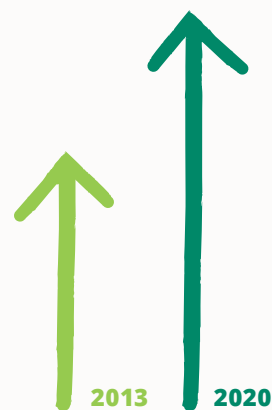
### +36%

increase in children benefitting from school feeding from 2013 to 2020

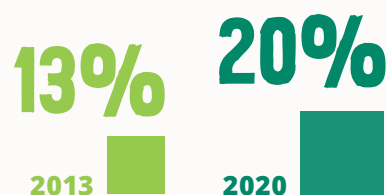


### +7%

increase in coverage of school feeding



Between 2013 and 2020 low-income countries increased school feeding coverage by 7 percentage points; almost a doubling of children receiving school meals



**There is growing consensus on the need to support children throughout their development to adulthood. Investment in human capital is essential for individuals to achieve their full potential and contributes to national growth and economic development.**

There has been a paradigm shift towards investing in children throughout the first 8,000 days of life (roughly until age 21). The window from conception to 2 years of age, known as the first 1,000 days, is critical to child health and development. A focus on this period is a well-established policy in many countries, but it is also important to support health and nutrition for the next 7,000 days to sustain the early gains; provide opportunities for catch-up; and to address phases of vulnerability, especially puberty, the growth spurt and brain development in adolescence. School health and nutrition programmes provide important means for governments to intervene cost-effectively in the next 7,000-day period.

School feeding during middle childhood and adolescence contributes to human capital, i.e. the sum of a population's health, skills, knowledge and experience. A well-nourished, healthy and educated population is the foundation for growth and economic development: in high-income countries some 70 percent of national wealth is due to the output of their population, but in many low-income countries this proportion is less than 40 percent. This inequity has lifelong consequences for society and the individual: poor societies develop and perform well below their capacity, and individuals fail to achieve their potential in life. Programmes that invest in the learner are key to creating human capital.

As nations increasingly experience budget shortfalls as a result of the damage caused by COVID-19, budgets for social programmes and education are likely to be reduced, affecting the futures of children all over the world. Countries need to recognize that these programmes are crucial investments in the human capital of the next generation, the generation that will bear the greatest burden of paying for the current response to the crisis.

**As most national school feeding programmes are supported by domestic funds, better understanding of the underlying cost drivers could help more countries transition to self-reliance.**

Globally, more than 90 percent of support to national school feeding programmes comes from domestic funds. As previously highlighted, in low-income countries, the proportion of domestic support has risen from 17 percent to 28 percent between 2013 and 2020, even as coverage has increased from 13 percent to 20 percent over the same period. Low-income countries with the least fiscal space and the greatest need for school feeding depend disproportionately on donor funding. Nevertheless, several low-income countries have transitioned to majority domestic funding. Understanding where external support is crucial and where transition is possible, will be central to future growth in sustainable school feeding.

The annual cost of a school feeding programme per child per year has changed little since 2013. The median cost of school feeding remains unchanged in 2020 at US\$57 per child per year. Data indicate a cost of US\$55 (up from US\$50 in 2013) in low-income countries and US\$41 (down from US\$46) in lower middle-income countries. Trend data between 2013 and 2020 support the interpretation that there is a basic minimum price to be paid to provide a meal for a child.

The relative cost of school feeding is greatest for those countries which invest least in education and which have the lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Poor countries that need school feeding the most will struggle most to meet the costs; as countries increase their GDP, they are increasingly able to become self-reliant and meet the costs from domestic funds. These observations support WFP's new strategic direction, which focuses external resources for programmes on the poorest countries and enhances technical support to countries transitioning to domestic funding.



WFP/Neil Brander/Angola

**School feeding is a cost-effective intervention, which yields high returns on investment in education, health, social protection and local economies.**

Increasingly rigorous trials show both economic and non-economic benefits of school feeding programmes. Pre-2015 studies show improvements in children's education, as well as their physical and psychosocial health, with most benefits accruing to more disadvantaged children. Recent studies find effects on learning, maths and literacy scores, with larger effects for girls, and for children below the national poverty line. A recent meta-analysis in Sub-Saharan Africa, by the French Development Agency and the World Bank, ranked school feeding third at boosting learning outcomes, only exceeded by pedagogy-focused interventions, and outperforming the construction of new schools and education support interventions such as scholarships and cash transfers. There is increasing evidence that effective school feeding programmes improve both access to schools and learning, while cash transfers primarily affect access.

Benefit-cost analysis studies also show that school feeding programmes yield returns on education, health and nutrition, social protection and local agriculture. The return on investment can be as high as US\$9 for every US\$1 invested in implementing school feeding programmes.

In light of recent data on the costs and benefits of school feeding, more technical assistance is needed to support governments further improve cost-efficiency and maximize the impacts of their school feeding programmes.

**Global coalitions of partners have formed over the past two decades to support better coordination and capacity strengthening. These platforms have supported governments to accelerate policy, funding and operational change.**

Governments have increasingly engaged with other stakeholders, such as donors, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), international agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at the regional and international levels to coordinate on technical and policy matters. Most regions now have a school feeding thematic network, bringing together policymakers and practitioners. Agencies such as WFP are fostering international cooperation among governments (e.g. South-South Cooperation) and promoting the adoption of sustainable and high-quality programmes.

The Focusing Resources for Effective School Health (FRESH) Framework emerged in 2000 as an effort by multiple agencies to develop a consensus on how to promote the health and nutrition of the learner as part of overall investment in learning. The school health and nutrition agenda was revitalized in 2019 when

UNESCO re-convened an inter-agency group on School Health and Nutrition with the objective of strengthening global collaboration and promoting a more effective multi-agency school health and nutrition approach. This has led to new initiatives, such as the partnership launched in 2020 between WFP and UNICEF to help ensure that children receive a school-based package of essential health and nutrition services.

Historically, civil society networks have played a strong role, especially the Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) and the Partnership for Child Development. New initiatives are also being established by the Russian Federation, working with the other BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and by Germany; while knowledge networks are emerging at the regional level, especially in Latin America and South Asia. The African Union (AU) is a key partner in supporting the scale up of nationally owned school feeding programmes throughout the continent of Africa.

### **WFP is strengthening its strategic role in school health and nutrition globally.**

WFP has continued to work with countries and other development partners at a global level on school health. There is evidence, especially since the *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013* report, that WFP's strategic role has contributed to key changes in policy in low-income countries, which have helped strengthen and accelerate government-led efforts.

Through a new strategy, *A Chance for Every Schoolchild*, launched in early 2020, WFP is taking deliberate steps to strengthen its role as a partner and to act as a catalyst for policy change. A global needs analysis determined that 73 million vulnerable children need school feeding in 60 priority countries, with a focus in Africa.

WFP will enhance its support to governments to help address national goals and challenges, and in countries' transition to self-reliance. WFP will help find solutions by working with others and by convening partners, leveraging its six decades of

experience in supporting school feeding. Based on current in-country capacity, WFP technical and policy support to national programmes could potentially influence the quality of life of some 155 million schoolchildren in 74 countries.

The new strategy also calls for more research and knowledge sharing to improve the quality of programmes. WFP aims to stimulate more research on the health and well-being of schoolchildren, including creating evidence-based intervention designs which are more gender-sensitive and responsive to climate change challenges. The *State of School Feeding Worldwide* series is part of this plan to enhance access to knowledge, and to track roll-out of the strategy.

### **School feeding programmes play a key role in resilience to conflicts and emergencies. In the long term, they may contribute to minimizing the impacts of climate change through environmentally sensitive food systems.**

School health and nutrition programmes are recommended by the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. Home-grown school feeding programmes, whereby food is purchased from local farmers, are also particularly responsive to climate change as they shorten food chains and minimize food waste, the largest single preventable cause of carbon emissions. Gender-sensitive programmes enhance girls' enrolment in education; help keep girls in schools at vulnerable ages; and improve the diets of adolescent girls. There is growing evidence that even in conflict settings, school feeding programmes can enhance enrolment and reduce inappropriate labour, especially for girls.

WFP was awarded the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize in part because of the role of its school feeding programmes in supporting national resilience to conflict and emergencies. WFP envisions a future where environmentally sensitive school feeding programmes, which engage effectively with agriculture and the environment, make a major contribution to creating more resilient, new-generation approaches to public food and education systems.



## Main conclusions

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We identify five future priority actions for school feeding, starting with a key role in helping to safely reopen schools following the COVID-19 pandemic, and then focusing on new ways to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of national school feeding programmes.

- 1 The most immediate priority is to help countries re-establish effective school feeding programmes.** How can we accelerate global efforts to safely reopen the schools closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2 Before the pandemic, school feeding programmes were least present where they were needed most.** Can innovative approaches to financing bring new hope to the 73 million children who are most in need?
- 3 The available data on school feeding focus on public-sector programmes in low and lower middle-income countries.** What more might we learn from programmes managed by the BRICS and high-income countries, and the private sector?
- 4 Home-grown school feeding programmes have proven their worth in middle-income countries.** How can low-income countries, which have the most to gain from this approach, scale up home-grown school feeding efforts as part of their national programmes?
- 5 School feeding programmes provide the world's most extensive safety net and play a key role in the response to conflicts and emergencies.** Can we further sustain and enhance the resilience of food systems through a new generation of school feeding programmes that are more cost-efficient and more environmentally-sensitive?



## The structure of the publication

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The publication is comprised of five chapters covering the following topics:

- **Chapter 1: School feeding programmes in 2020: scale, coverage and trends** – provides an update on global school feeding beneficiaries, coverage and funding, with new analytics on sources of funding, employment, policies and programmes.
- **Chapter 2: Policy outlook and priorities** – provides an overview of key policy evolutions and trends since 2013, highlighting how school feeding is increasingly being provided as part of integrated school health and nutrition packages.
- **Chapter 3: The costs and benefits of school feeding** – is a summary of the latest evidence on school feeding programmes and includes an updated global cost benchmark, a review of academic evidence and a benefit–cost analysis.
- **Chapter 4: Partnerships for school feeding** – presents information on the global, regional and national-level partnerships and coalitions working to deliver school feeding programmes around the globe.
- **Chapter 5: The global and strategic role of WFP in school health and nutrition** – takes stock of WFP’s renewed commitment in the area of school feeding and its new strategy for the coming decade.

The full publication is available online at [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

In addition, the publication contains a special report on COVID-19 inserted between chapters 1 and 2. This special report examines the unprecedented global crisis caused by the pandemic, its consequences for the education and health of schoolchildren, and the mitigation measures adopted by governments. It also describes the many current efforts being made to learn from the crisis, to safely reopen schools and to build back an education system that is better adapted to protect the health, nutrition and well-being of children and learners.

In the wake of the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to WFP, an additional section explores how school feeding contributes to bettering conditions for peace and resilience.

In addition to the data and analyses, the publication also contains 16 new case studies from around the world, as well as 22 boxes on sectoral and thematic issues. The vast majority of these were drafted outside of WFP by technical experts and policymakers with first-hand

knowledge of their topics. These contributions are a rich and diverse source of new perspectives beyond the global data presented in this publication, providing access to more immediate insights into the experiences, challenges and lessons learned by countries and partners. The boxes and case studies provide insights into:

- government programmes in high, middle and low-income countries, illustrating the diversity of experience and practice;
- external points of view and partner policies on specific areas of interest that intersect with school feeding and school health and nutrition; and
- lessons learned about specific innovative experiences, especially from the South-South approach of the Centre of Excellence in Brazil and from the experiences of non-state actors.

The case studies are located between chapters, while the boxes are featured in the chapters that are most relevant to the topic throughout the report.



WFP/Mike Bloem/Colombia

Published in 2020 by the World Food Programme  
Via C.G. Viola, 68-70, Rome 00148, Italy

Recommended citation (full publication):

**WFP. 2020. *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020*. Rome, World Food Programme.**

**ISBN 978-92-95050-00-6 (print)**

**ISBN 978-92-95050-04-4 (online)**

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- A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).
- Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
- Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

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# State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020

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Healthy and well-nourished children learn better. One of the most important human capital investments that a country can make is to support the health, nutrition and learning of its children. This publication by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) provides an analysis of how countries across the world are supporting their children through effective school feeding programmes.

In 2013, WFP published the first edition of *State of School Feeding Worldwide*, the first ever global snapshot of school feeding programmes. This 2020 version follows a similar format, using the best available data sources to describe key aspects of coverage, implementation practices and costs of programmes worldwide. This second edition seeks to analyse the direction and scale of change between 2013 and 2020. The award of the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize has further strengthened WFP's commitment to deliver on the 10-year strategy *A Chance for Every Schoolchild*.

The 2020 edition is being published with an even greater sense of urgency as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in February 2020 brought an end to a near-decade of sustained global growth in school feeding programmes. At the height of the crisis, 199 countries had closed their schools and 370 million children were suddenly deprived of their daily school meal. This shock has highlighted the importance of school feeding as a social safety net, and has sharpened global resolve to restore access to education and to create school-based programmes that can play a stronger role in protecting the health and nutrition of children.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, national school feeding programmes delivered school meals to one in every two schoolchildren every school day, more than at any time in human history. This publication examines how this most extensive social safety net in the world was created, and explores how countries can build-back-better and re-establish effective school feeding programmes.

The full publication is available online at [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)



Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,  
00148 Rome, Italy - T +39 06 65131

[wfp.org](http://wfp.org)

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