

25 September 2025

## **Management response: Summary of actions taken as part of the developmental evaluation of the Catalysing good food through school feeding programmes in Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, India, and Rwanda (2022-2025) projects**

The developmental evaluation of the “Catalysing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes” provided insights and opportunities for adaptation throughout projects that WFP implemented in Benin, Burundi, Ghana, India, Honduras, and Rwanda, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Due to the nature of the developmental approach, the final evaluation report did not include recommendations. Instead, evaluators facilitated discussions during sensemaking workshops and proposed potential adaptations and pathways forward following each country mission. Proposed adaptations were documented in “Pathways to Innovation” deliverables for each country. Implementers used these discussions and country-level learning documents to adjust project activities throughout the evaluation. The final evaluation report synthesized findings from individual countries and identified cross-cutting issues for consideration.

WFP’s School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS), which commissioned the evaluation, welcomes the issues for consideration identified in the final evaluation report. PPGS is incorporating lessons and suggestions into a new knowledge sharing network. Additionally, the School Meals Coalition, for whom WFP serves as secretariate, will also consider lessons from the issues for consideration under a new initiative that will be launched in 2026.

The issues for consideration and suggested actions identified in the report are relevant for many actors beyond PPGS. They were not formulated as recommendations in the report and therefore do not align with WFP’s standard management response framework for evaluations. Accordingly, the PPGS unit will not produce a management response to the evaluation in the typical WFP format. Instead, this narrative response outlines actions that have already been taken at the country level in response to the evaluation and highlights planned global actions that WFP and the SMC initiative will take pending partner agreement. Adaptations and lessons learned through the evaluation process are described in greater detail in the final report.

### **Issues for Consideration**

Several issues for further consideration were identified through the evaluation report. These issues fall under two overarching categories that are particularly relevant for WFP’s support to school meals and for the work of the School Meals Coalition, for whom WFP serves as the Secretariat.



### **Issue 1: Working with partners to influence systems (Issues 1 and 2 in the evaluation report)**

In response to the evaluation, WFP will share lessons learned with the co-founding partners of a new initiative of the School Meals Coalition (SMC) set to launch in 2026. This initiative, which will support governments to meet their school meals commitments, emphasizes leveraging partners' comparative advantages and reducing duplication of efforts at national, subnational, and community levels. Collaborative mechanisms will be established jointly by governments and partners to mobilize diverse resources, including human expertise, institutional capacity, knowledge systems, communication networks, and technological solutions to strengthen country-level programme implementation.

WFP recognizes the need to strengthen its partnership approach and work with a wide spectrum of partners to collectively transform food systems – one of the issues identified through the evaluation. The initiative described above is a new model through which WFP will strengthen its capacity to partner more strategically with a wide range of stakeholders, including funders – moving away from donor and grantee dynamic – to building an ecosystem of support for systemic change.

### **Issue 2: Creating mechanisms for iterative learning and adaptation and prioritizing evidence generation (Issues 3, 4 and 5 in the evaluation report)**

WFP acknowledges the importance of evidence in underpinning project design and advocacy efforts and the power of the developmental evaluation to help projects learn and adapt. Country-to-country knowledge sharing has already been expanded within WFP at the global level through the School Meals Knowledge Network, a channel for information sharing amongst WFP school meals implementers. This channel will continue to connect implementers via the chat function and host country-to-country virtual learning sessions.

As part of the evaluation process, WFP adjusted its quality assessment mechanisms to better reflect the characteristics of the developmental evaluation approach. WFP is also examining ways to more effectively integrate the specific features of developmental evaluations into its evaluation guidance. For example, it has initiated a review of the technical note on developmental evaluation to incorporate lessons learned from this process.

Through its contributions to the new SMC initiative, WFP will work with partners to incorporate iterative learning, information sharing, and evidence generation as core components. Learning activities for the initiative will be similar to those of the developmental evaluation, prioritizing experimentation and adaptation, building on the positive feedback received from project stakeholders regarding the evaluation process.



## **Country-Level Adaptations**

### **Benin**

In Benin, the WFP country office adopted an Agile project management approach to pilot a new modality for school meals using cash transfers. This approach included the formation of a task force team dedicated to the project, establishing clear objectives, and conducting weekly meetings to ensure effective collaboration and progress monitoring.

### **Burundi**

The WFP office in Burundi has shifted its approach to school meals by transitioning from an in-kind procurement modality to a commodity voucher procurement model for more schools than initially planned. Additionally, they have adjusted the school meals food basket by increasing the proportion of rice over maize, due to challenges in the maize value chain identified through the evaluation. The evaluation also provided supporting evidence for a strategic transition from project-based to area-based approaches in future work, promoting synergies among various projects and partners.

### **Ghana**

In Ghana, the WFP Country Office has taken proactive steps to enhance communication and collaboration following the evaluation. Meetings with the Minister of Education have been established to address information gaps. Furthermore, a monthly partners' meeting has been initiated to share updates on ongoing activities. In response to the evaluation findings, Ghana has incorporated market development activities into new projects to support millers who produce fortified and unpolished parboiled rice. Additionally, a cost-benefit analysis of fortification and nutrient profiling of local rice varieties will be conducted, addressing a critical evidence gap identified by the National Food Fortification Alliance (NFFA) following conversations initiated by the developmental evaluation.

### **India**

India's WFP office has actively participated in sharing its school meals approach with members of the Strategic Learning Community through the evaluation process. The India Country Office will continue to facilitate structured knowledge exchanges via South-South Triangular Cooperation activities and will continue to operate its pilot-to-scale approach for school meals, ensuring that best practices are effectively disseminated.

### **Honduras**

In Honduras, the WFP Country Office is undertaking an intersectional gender study to better understand the interplay between gender and other social dimensions, which will inform future school meals work. The Country Office is also focused on enhancing the capacity of farmer cooperatives to market and commercialize their products that were supported through the project. Plans are underway to identify and collaborate with a business incubator to support these farmers in the future.



## **Rwanda**

In Rwanda, WFP is addressing challenges related to scaling fortified whole grain maize meal by collaborating with smallholder farmers to diversify the school meals food basket with nutrient-rich commodities. This initiative aims to promote nutritious meals while integrating environmentally friendly food crops. Additionally, the Rwanda Country Office has enhanced collaborative planning among team members from different functions for an upcoming project proposal.

Through these global and country-level changes, WFP intends to strengthen food systems-oriented approaches to school meals, ensuring that they are flexible, partnership-based, and effectively address the complexities of food system transformation.

*This management response was submitted by the WFP Programme Policy and Guidance Division - School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS)*