

WFP EVALUATION

HOW IMPACT EVALUATION EVIDENCE SHAPED GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING IN JORDAN

Introduction

The **Government of Jordan** has embarked on an ambitious effort to strengthen its **National School Feeding Programme**.

Evidence from an **impact evaluation** conducted by the World Food Programme's Impact Evaluation Unit and the World Bank, in partnership with the WFP Jordan Country Office and the Royal Health Awareness Society, played a key role in Jordan's long-term decision-making and strategic direction for the programme.

This case study illustrates how rigorous evidence, generated through a randomized controlled trial, translated into **concrete policy change, increased domestic financing, and programme scale-up**.

Programme overview

Jordan's National School Feeding Programme is part of the Government's National School Feeding Strategy (2021-2025), under which over 430,000 students in 2,300 schools receive centrally procured date bars or high-protein biscuits as a school meal every day.

The Government of Jordan asked WFP to pilot and test an alternative school feeding model, which aims to:

- Increase children's nutritional diversity by providing healthier meals, and
- Foster socioeconomic development in poverty pockets by providing employment opportunities for women

Under this new "Healthy Meal" model, nutritious meals are prepared by community-based kitchens which employ local women to assemble and package meals for children – a programme component that was of particular interest to the Government of Jordan, because of low participation of women in the labour force (estimated to be only 14%).

Evaluation findings



Children's nutritional diversity, behaviour, education and learning outcomes

The impact evaluation demonstrated that, after one scholastic year, the "Healthy Meal" model significantly improved children's diets. They ate a wider variety of foods and were less likely to bring extra food or money for food to school. Physical activity levels increased, and absences decreased by approximately one day per school year. Although the evaluation found no significant changes in attention, learning or cooperation, boys showed greater improvements in nutritional behaviour and physical activity.



Kitchen workers' employment opportunities income, and other socioeconomic outcomes

Women who received job offers under the new “Healthy Meal” model were more likely to be employed and express a desire to stay in the labour force long-term. Their individual income more than tripled, while overall household income rose by a third. Savings increased by 50%, and non-food expenditures grew by 8%. The women also reported higher life satisfaction, while male household members reported more positive attitudes toward women’s earnings, including being more open to women working and earning more than men.

These results made a compelling case for Jordan’s government to expand the “Healthy Meal” model.

Enabling Government to act on evidence

The impact evaluation, along other evidence products such as a cost benefit analysis and a study on how the programme contributed to the local agricultural sector, formed a robust, evidence-based business case for the programme’s expansion and increased the government’s national investment in school feeding.

Specifically, the Government of Jordan adopted several policy and financing decisions:



Immediate expansion: The “Healthy Meal” model was expanded to an additional 30,000 children in 2025.

Commitment to scale-up: The draft National School Feeding Strategy includes a commitment to expand the new model to 250,000 students by 2030.

Increased domestic financing: Demonstrating ownership and sustainability, the Government allocated an additional US\$2 million in domestic resources to support the “Healthy Meal” model in 2025. The Ministry of Education also tripled the requested allocation for school feeding to the Ministry of Finance, citing the need for continuity and expansion.

These actions contributed to the **gradual handover of the National School Feeding Programme to the Ministry of Education**, given that for the handover to be completed, the Ministry of Education needs to increase its domestic finance from covering 35% of the programme (currently) to 80% by 2030 – an essential factor to ensure the programme’s continuity and sustainability.

Conclusion

The Jordan school feeding impact evaluation is a strong example of how rigorous evidence can contribute to national policy. Answering key policy questions, it demonstrated that the decentralized “Healthy Meal” model outperformed traditional centralized approaches in child nutrition and that community-based kitchens can generate meaningful socioeconomic benefits for women.

Jordan is now investing in and scaling a more nutritious, locally-led school feeding model that will reach thousands of children, while strengthening local economies and national systems – signalling a shift from externally supported programmes to government-led national adoption.

The case study demonstrates the relevance and influence of impact evaluation for **evidence-based policymaking** and represents an important milestone in Jordan’s journey toward sustainable, government-owned school meals.

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Find the impact evaluation [here](#)

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