



# Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds

## Partnering for the child's well-being and equity in education

UNESCO, UNICEF and WFP today renew our commitment, and seek additional partners, to improve educational outcomes for the world's most underserved children through "Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds", a three-year integrated approach.

24 January 2013



## **Why a renewed partnership?**

In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, the international community committed to provide quality education for all. Since then headway has been made in increasing

access and bridging the gender gap, but over 60 million children are still out of school and low education quality remains a persistent problem. Of the estimated 650 million primary school age children worldwide, more than one third do not reach grade four while still more fail to attain basic literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to the well documented challenges of adequate schools, qualified teachers and appropriate materials to ensure a quality education, malnutrition and ill health, fuelled by food insecurity and inadequate water and sanitation facilities, further undermine learning and are linked to lower school performance.

In 2012, the UN Secretary General launched the Global Education First Initiative to galvanize renewed international action to meet global education goals. WFP, UNICEF, UNESCO and private sector partners come together in support of this Initiative, as they share the recognition that quality education requires a holistic approach. Motivated by the potential to create synergies between nutrition and education, the partners will support governments in ensuring quality education is available and that children are ready to take advantage of learning opportunities.

## **What does the partnership aim to do?**

The partners will strengthen collaboration at policy and field levels in target countries in order to identify and remove barriers that prevent children from accessing comprehensive health care, nutrition and education programmes. The aim is to generate replicable models that incorporate partnership among agencies and other actions, including the private sector, in support of national priorities and local institutions, for further scale up. The collection of evidence on best practice is a top priority. The specific outcomes include:

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- improved child health and nutrition through school health and nutrition programmes;
- expanded access to early childhood care and education programmes;
- improved enrolment rates of girls where participation is low, with a particular focus on adolescent girls.
- successful collaboration with communities and governments to build school environments conducive to learning; and
- stronger evidence base demonstrating the synergies between education, health and nutrition to inform policy and advocacy efforts.

### **Who are the partners?**

- UNESCO promotes education as a human right, sets standards, coordinates the Education for All movement and facilitates policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building of educational institutions.
  - UNICEF supports governments to ensure safe, quality education for all, also during crisis and recovery. It works on school readiness and developing Child Friendly Schools that address the totality of needs of the learners.
  - WFP provides school meals in marginalized areas, currently reaching 26 million children in 60 countries. These nutritious meals attract children, especially girls, to enrol and stay in school and provide micronutrients essential for learning and development.
  - Private sector companies bring financial and technical capacity that can be leveraged to help measure progress and demonstrate the return on investment in education, as well as foster innovation in support of initiatives that will lead to better learning outcomes.
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Front cover: WFP/Rein Skullerud/Haiti

### **Where are the focus areas?**

The renewed partnership will initially focus on four countries, with experiences set to inform further scale up. Indicatively, Haiti, Mozambique, Niger and Pakistan have been identified as they are among countries facing education disparities and nutrition challenges, while also presenting opportunities for improved collaboration among the agencies, with Government and with the involvement of the private sector.

### **When does it take place?**

The initial phase takes place over a three year period. This allows time for investing in concrete activities, gradually defining models of collaboration, and measuring progress against an initial baseline. After the pilot phase, a roll-out to a larger number of countries is envisioned.