



State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013 Factsheet

The first State of School Feeding Worldwide report, produced by the UN World Food Programme (WFP), provides for the first time a global picture of developments in school feeding, with maps, analysis, and research. Around 368 million children, about 1 out of every 5, get a meal at school every day around the world, yet where the need is greatest, in low income countries, the coverage of school meals programmes is the lowest

School meals programmes protect vulnerable children especially during shocks such as the food, fuel and financial crises of 2008. Today, as even affluent countries grapple with painful austerity measures, local governments and organizations are stepping in to provide school meals to children whose families can no longer afford to feed them on a regular basis.

KEY DATA

- **Around 368 million children, about 1 out of every 5 children, get a meal at school every day around the world.** This includes pre-primary-, primary- and secondary-school children from 169 developing and developed countries.
- **Global investment in these programmes is huge - around US\$ 75 billion per annum.** Most of the investment comes from government budgets.
- **Return on investment is substantial - for every \$1 spent by governments and donors, WFP estimates at least \$3 is gained in economic returns.** School feeding provides an array of benefits in education and nutrition and to local agriculture.
- **The number of children receiving school meals is lowest in countries where the need is the greatest.** In low-income countries, the proportion of primary school children receiving school meals is just 18%, while in lower-middle-income countries that figure is 49%.
- **Donor support is crucial for low-income countries.** External development assistance accounts for 83% of investment in school feeding in low-income countries.
- In some low-income countries the cost of **feeding a child in school exceeds the overall cost of education.** In low- income countries there is great potential for cost efficiencies.

- **At least 38 countries have scaled-up their school feeding programme in the past five years in response to a crisis.** A crisis could be related to food prices, armed conflict, a natural disaster or financial instability (examples include armed conflict in Philippines, earthquake in Haiti, high food prices in Ghana, floods in El Salvador).
- **The average annual cost of school feeding per child varies greatly** – from about US\$ 56 in low and lower-middle income countries to around US\$ 370 in upper-middle and high income countries.
- **Governments recognise school feeding as a key response to hunger and poverty** : it protects children from hunger; it can be strategically targeted; it offers an existing platform on which to stage further interventions; and it has proven to be relatively easy to scale up in a crisis.
- **To achieve educational goals, it is not enough to feed children in school.** School meals can support improved quality of education, when there is also training for teachers, essential infrastructure, including textbooks and materials, and a safe physical environment that is conducive to learning.
- Since the year 2000, **21 countries have started their own school meals programmes** that are financed and managed by the government: 17 of these were or are supported by WFP, which works with governments to achieve national ownership of their programmes

Done in partnership with the **World Bank and the Partnership for Child Development**, the first edition of State of School Feeding Worldwide is the start of a concerted effort to improve the knowledge and evidence base on school feeding.

The report was presented to the Global Child Nutrition Forum in Brazil, the world's largest gathering of school feeding experts and practitioners.

[Click here to download the four-page overview](#)

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