



School Feeding:

Feed Minds & Change Lives



Time-tested and Effective

School feeding programmes serve as a magnet to bring children to school, and to improve their ability to learn and concentrate. They are also among the most effective tools at increasing access to education and improving nutritional status of children¹. For a minimal investment, lives can be transformed in fundamental ways. Many developed nations, including Japan, United States, United Kingdom, Italy and France, have long histories of supporting national school feeding programmes—a testament to the vitality and effectiveness of these programmes.

WFP School Feeding Highlights

WFP now provides meals to an average 20 million children in school; almost half of whom are girls. WFP school feeding programmes are implemented in some 70 countries; over half of them in Africa where 11 million schoolchildren receive meals. WFP programmes have proven success in getting girls to school, and keeping them there. Within the past four decades, 28 countries have graduated from WFP school feeding programmes, and most are now providing school feeding on their own.

School Feeding Programmes....

- **Promote Education**
- **Attract Children to School**
- **Improve Health & Nutrition**
- **Help Educate Girls**
- **Spur Economic Growth**
- **Contribute to Achieving MDGs**
- **Support Local Farmers**
- **Combat Child Labour**
- **Assist with Peace-building**
- **Create a Platform for Other Interventions**

Global Commitment Needed

About 59 million primary school age² children attend school hungry throughout developing countries³, 23 million of whom are in 45 African countries. Many children who lack food are unable to learn, meaning they lose an opportunity for personal development that ends up costing their family, community and economy. A minimal investment in food for these children today goes a long way.

25 US cents a day

Feeds a child through school

23 million children

Currently attend school hungry in 45 African countries

US\$1.2 billion

Annual investment to feed the most vulnerable children in schools in Africa

Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Increased investment in school feeding programmes helps achieve three MDGs:

- Goal 1—Reduce hunger by half (Target 2)
- Goal 2—Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3—Eliminate gender disparity in primary education (Target 2)



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Return on Investment

Promotes Education—It's hard to learn on an empty stomach. Hungry children have a hard time concentrating on lessons. A meal during the school day gives them the energy and concentration to focus on learning.

Attracts Children to School—Food attracts children to school. In WFP assisted schools, absolute enrolment increased by 28 percent for girls and by 22 percent for boys in the first year of assistance.⁴

Improves Health and Nutrition of Students—Feeding programmes can provide needed micronutrients—vitamins and minerals—to allow students to learn, function and develop to their potential.

Addresses Gender Inequalities—Feeding programmes encourage girls to attend school, especially if girls receive a take home ration of food as an incentive for themselves and their families.

Spurs Economic Growth—Educated individuals earn higher wages and have better earnings when self-employed⁵. Investments in education yield high returns both to the individual and the society; these returns are highest in low-income countries and for investments in primary education and education of girls.⁶

Combats Child Labour—Food provided at school is an incentive for families to send children to school instead of keeping them home to work for additional income.

Supports Local Farmers—When possible, food is purchased from local, small-scale farmers for use in feeding programmes and in support of families and local economies.

Assists In Peace-building—Following times of conflict and struggle, school feeding programmes often serve as a safe haven for children to begin returning to normalcy. Education, generally, is an important tool to fight against discrimination, poverty, hunger, and the struggle over resources which often lead to conflict.

Creates a Platform for Tackling Global Issues—Feeding programmes transform schools into potential centres for addressing a range of children's needs. Complementary activities include: deworming, micronutrient supplementation, fuel-efficient cooking stoves, water and sanitation at school, health education, HIV/AIDS education, psycho-social support, malaria prevention, and school gardens.⁷

¹ WFP Report: *Food for Education Works*; 2007.

² Primary school age varies from country to country and usually includes ages 6-12.

³ Figures based on existing data for 93 countries (82 LIFDC, plus 11 countries with WFP presence but that are not considered LIFDC); UNESCO: number of primary school age children (in & out of school); FAO: figures for proportion of undernourished among the general population; UNESCO: proportion of primary school age children who are among the poorest 20 percent of the population, and who are in school; and an average school year of 200 days.

⁴ WFP Report: *Food for Education Works*; 2007.

⁵ Schultz, T.P. 2001: *Why governments should invest more to educate girls*. Discussion paper 836. Yale University, Economic Growth Center, New Haven, Conn; Schultz T.W. 1963: *The Economic Value of Education*. New York: Columbia University Press; reported in: UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education 2005.

⁶ Psacharopoulos, G. and Patrinos, HA 2004: *Returns to Investment in Education: A Further Update*. *Education Economics*, 2004, vol. 12, issue 2, pages 111-134.

⁷ Essential Package of Health and Nutrition School-based Interventions; WFP School Feeding.