



The XXI Global Child Nutrition Forum

What We're Learning:

Enhancing Value and Exploring Challenges and Good Practices in School Meal Program Implementation

COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble

The 21st Global Child Nutrition Forum was organized by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) in partnership with the World Food Programme Brazil Centre of Excellence against Hunger and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia, with support from the World Food Programme.

The Global Child Nutrition Forum brought together 357 participants from 70 countries, including high-level officials from government and multilateral institutions, and representatives of donor organisations, the business sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and media outlets.

The present Communiqué recalls the recognition and recommendation of previous Fora of 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 identified by the participants during the discussion to produce this year's Communiqué.

The 21st Global Child Nutrition Forum recognizes that:

1. It is vital to raise global awareness about the importance of school meal programs
2. The best outcomes of school meal programs result when school meals make a significant contribution to the children's nutrition requirement. Increasing investment in school meal programs is essential to ensure good health and nutrition of school-age children
3. School meal programs are essential for all countries, regardless of their economic or social conditions. They should be designed specifically according to the country's context with the aim to leave no child behind
4. We should strengthen the evidence base and improve program quality in order to increase stakeholder support and funding for national school meal programs
5. The impacts of climate change on food systems should be considered by all stakeholders
6. Partnerships formed with shared objectives can improve the value, quality, expansion, and sustainability of school meal programs
7. There is a need to adequately plan and develop capacities at all levels for ownership and sustainability of the programs
8. There is an urgent need to further improve monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) of school meal programs and to make data accessible for learning and sharing of best practices

Gender and equity are key considerations for planning, implementation and evaluation.

THE FORUM RECOMMENDS THAT:

Governments should:

- Commit political will and funding.
- Take leadership and ownership in the coordination and strengthening of programs, by ensuring appropriate involvement of school meal program partners and resources, including sister Ministries, state and local governments, development organizations, businesses, and civil society partners.
- Develop and strengthen policies, strategies and action plans with measurable outcomes and commit resources for improving school meal programs.
- Adopt effective systems, including data management systems, to ensure transparency and accountability, as well as to demonstrate program impacts
- Plan and design school meal programs to be sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change, political and social unrest, and other threats to school meal program sustainability
- Enhance and diversify partnerships with all sectors that add value and identify solutions to programs
- Share lessons learned and best practices and report during the next Forum
- The ownership transition process from partners to National Governments is a central process that needs to be planned and involve parallel processes of increasing ownership of operational implementation along with increasing financial commitments

Development Partners, Academia and Civil Societies should:

- Support governments in resource mobilization for school meal programs
- Collaborate with governments in the implementation of school meal programs
- Improve the identification, documentation, dissemination and reporting of good practices
- Create a global digital platform to ensure open access to documents and reports on school meal programs
- Engage with governments to explore cross-sectoral opportunities
- Enhancing the nutrition education and other complementary activities, and involve the whole community

The Private Sector should:

- Partner with governments and other stakeholders to help countries implement and sustain high-quality school meal programs accessible by all children
- Work to expand and diversify private sector engagement and commitment to national school meal programs
- Leverage market knowledge, capital, and human resources to drive innovation and strengthen government capacities in operating efficient, high-quality school meal programs
- Support the development of a toolkit for governments seeking to partner with the private sector in its school meal program activities

All:

- Explore technical innovative models to resolve possible challenges and maximize benefits
- Encourage interactions with farmers and local communities to develop a better understanding on how to participate and increase knowledge of nutrition and food safety
- Promote the development and use of globally accepted metrics to evaluate and report the impacts of school meal programs.
- Explore ways to engage more youth and women as program advocates and encourage entrepreneurship in homegrown school meals businesses.
- Make the Communiqué a useful action planning tool in the next Global Child Nutrition Forum