

WFP CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE BRAZIL

COUNTRY CASES

KENYA 



**World Food
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HIGHLIGHTS

With a population of 47.5 million, Kenya experiences a rapid development, having achieved the status of lower-middle-income country in 2014. Despite its growth, many social and economic vulnerabilities persist in the country. This is partially driven by social protection fragility and underperforming food systems. School-based programmes delivered by WFP and the Government of Kenya act as tools to strengthen the country's capacity and ensure access to safe and nutritious food for school-aged children. These programmes are also important means to build resilience to vulnerabilities, shock and stress, particularly for smallholder farmers.

Home-grown school meals represent the leading school-based programme in Kenya and have become an important safety net for children and rural people since 1980. Today, WFP supports the Ministry of Education in providing nutritious meals to more than 1.5 million children in Kenya's most food-insecure counties. Since 2018, school meals interventions transitioned from WFP to a government-led home-grown school feeding modality, which aims to procure food from local farmers, promoting local economic development.

Kenya's Home-Grown School Meals Programme (HGSMP) contributes to the improvement of children's health and nutrition by linking schools to local agricultural production. Where cash-transfer to schools is operationalized, the Government transfers cash directly to schools, enabling them to purchase food from local suppliers and farmers. This allows the school-based programme to increase

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local food production and support smallholder farmers' access to markets, while improving school enrolment, attendance, and completion rates. **Kenya's home-grown school feeding experience has become an African flagship programme and is already an inspiration to other developing countries, like Namibia and Zambia.**

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Between 2011 and 2017, Kenya received direct support from the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger Brazil (WFP CoE Brazil) to strengthen its school feeding programme and develop the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy. Before that, exchanges occurred directly between the WFP Country Office in Kenya and agents of the Government of Brazil. In that sense, South-South and Triangular cooperation was a key tool to promote school feeding development and institutionalization in the country.



SCHOOL FEEDING IN KENYA

The origins of school feeding in Kenya date back to 1980, when the Government partnered with WFP to provide school meals and increase school enrolment, retention, and completion rates. Initially, 240,000 children in primary and pre-primary schools were targeted by the programme, in arid and semi-arid areas. The introduction of Free Primary Education in January 2003 boosted school enrolment and, by 2007, School Meals reached more than 1.2 million school children.

In 2009, after almost 30 years of school meals being delivered with WFP's assistance, the organization needed to reduce its caseload to 770,500 beneficiaries, due to increased commodity and transportation costs. As a national response to severe drought periods and an ownership movement of school-based programmes, the Government of Kenya introduced **Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM)** in that same year. The programme is run by the



School Health, Nutrition and Meals Unit under the Ministry of Education and provides hot meals from local suppliers to school-going children in Kenya's arid and semi-arid areas.

The number of children supported by the Home-Grown School Meals Programme has grown tremendously over the years, going from 540,000 in 2009 to more than 1.5 million children in 2020. Between 2009 and 2018 - when the programme was fully transitioned to the Kenyan government - WFP and the Ministry of Education agreed to a gradual handover of WFP's caseload, in tandem with the government's capacity to support the programme. With this transfer completed by mid-2018, Kenya's national government became fully responsible for implementing HGSM, while WFP continues to provide technical assistance to enforce and implement the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy.

In recent years, Kenya has put significant emphasis on increasing national ownership and improving management structures of its national school meals programme, while at the same time strengthening the involvement of local farmers in the school



meals supply chain. Hence, **Kenya stands out for developing an integrated programme led by the Ministry of Education and supported by several line-ministries including Agriculture and Health.**

On the agricultural development side, the government provides support to smallholder farmers to produce food. On the school feeding side, the government provides cash to schools to purchase the food produced by the small-scale farmers. Finally, the Ministry of Health is primarily responsible for health and nutrition functions at the school level, with Public Health Officers ensuring that the food consumed in schools meets the required food safety standards.

Kenya's National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy was a document built over a period of three years. However, as this section and the next one will show, the document represents the culmination of a longer and more complex process in the country. As WFP phased out its presence as a school meals implementer and the government-led home-grown approach gained space in Kenya, structures were built, and State capacities enhanced to implement a better school feeding model. In that process, Kenya continuously engaged with partners such as the WFP CoE Brazil to search for strategies to make meals more nutritious, purchase food from smallholder farmers and reach as many school-going children as possible with a sustainable budget. Workshops, study visits, technical visits and several rounds of document reviews were carried out and one of the key elements brought by the final National Strategy was a vision on how to implement home-grown school feeding in an integrated manner with different government sectors acting together for multiple benefits.



COOPERATION WITH WFP COE BRAZIL

Between 2011 and 2017, Kenya received direct support from the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil to strengthen its school meals programme and develop the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy.

In 2013, the Kenyan government began to prepare for the sustainable expansion of the HSGMP, to take place between 2014 and 2018. This transition aimed to build a programme which was fully run by the National government, with integrated actions in education and nutrition, and a programme that purchased from smallholder local farmers – thereby stimulating local economic development.

In 2015, Brazilian officials from the WFP CoE went on a technical mission to Kenya, together with the WFP Country Office, to support the Government of Kenya in building the *National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy*. A two-day workshop was organized to bring together the main actors in the process. This initiative was supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

In February 2016, experts from the WFP CoE acted as facilitators at a seminar sponsored by the Kenyan Ministry of Education. Representatives from the ministries of education, health, agriculture, and finance, as well as from non-governmental organizations also attended the event. On the occasion, participants discussed and revised once again the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy.

Still in 2016, a study visit to Brazil took place, composed of 18 representatives of the Kenyan government and the WFP Country Office. The mission visited Brazil to learn





about Brazilian social protection programmes and to understand how Brazil managed to integrate its social policies and programmes in the areas of food security, nutrition, income generation, school meals and smallholder farming. The study visit included the participation in an international seminar on social development organized by the Brazilian government and a field visit to the state of Paraíba.

In August of that same year, two experts from the WFP CoE attended a conference organized by the Kenyan government and WFP Kenya Country Office to finalize the country's National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy. The objective was to review the document page by page in small working groups to conclude and submit the final version to the Ministry of Education. As a result of the work, the Strategy was finalized and sent for approval. As the narrative in this section shows, the development of the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy was characterized by extensive consultations with relevant actors, the analytical work of a multisectoral team and with continuous technical support from the WFP CoE.

In October 2016, as part of the partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the WFP CoE conducted a technical mission focused on nutrition for delegations from Liberia and Kenya. The group - made up of nine representatives from the ministries of Health and Agriculture, civil society and WFP offices in both countries - undertook field visits to understand how Brazil implemented its nutrition-sensitive multisectoral policies and how they could adapt these policies to their own national realities. Delegations visited schools to see the school feeding programme up close and talk to nutritionists, school staff and students. They also visited a smallholders' settlement, a community restaurant, a human milk bank and a health centre to understand how nutrition-related programmes are integrated in Brazil.

Between 2017 and 2018 the Kenyan government formally approved and launched the **National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy**. The document presents five strategic objectives, including promoting the sustainability of the school meals programme to foster local and inclusive development. The approval of the Strategy in May of 2018 is a result of the Government's and WFP's commitment to improve school meals in the country and to guarantee the right to food and nutrition to the Kenyan youth.



WHY IS SCHOOL FEEDING A IMPORTANT STRATEGY?

There are a few crucial reasons why a strategy document may help to build a sustainable school feeding programme in a country.

School Feeding Strategy documents tend to point the way forward for a country's effort in promoting improved food and nutrition security for school-aged children. They are important tools for planning, designing and implementing school feeding according to a country's broader development goals, by showing school feeding's coherence with other national plans, legal instruments and policies in the area of development. In fact, while writing a strategy document, governments and other development actors are driven to think of the best ways to link school feeding to existing institutional and legal frameworks. That brings **coherence at the policy level**.

In terms of content, a school feeding strategy can be very broad in determining a

country's vision and goals with that programme, or it can be very specific - establishing institutional arrangements, funding sources and menu requirements for a national school feeding programme. In the latter case, strategies play a very similar role to school feeding policies. They help to **define the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in school feeding implementation, as well as the rules that this implementation should follow**.

Regardless of their level of specificity in guiding school feeding implementation, strategy documents can be instrumental to integrate school feeding with other sectoral programmes, such as school health, nutrition education, support to smallholders' access to markets, among others. Connecting school feeding delivery on the ground with programmes in other areas may boost development results of all these programmes and brings **coherence at the implementation level**.

Finally, a school feeding strategy will lay out for government agents, national and international development partners what to expect from government actions during the period that the document is valid for. It will define what are the national priorities and plans to provide support to school-aged children.



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