



SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMMES

School feeding offers four main benefits, which span multiple sectors, generating a multiplier-effect:

Education:

School meals programmes can help get children into school and help them stay there; studies have shown programmes can increase enrolment by an average of **9%**. These initiatives are particularly effective in increasing girls' attendance. Once children are in the classroom, these programmes can contribute to their learning by enhancing cognitive abilities through hunger prevention.

Nutrition and Health:

In the most vulnerable communities, nutrition-sensitive school meals can offer children a regular source of nutrients that are essential for their mental and physical development. On-site meals, especially when fortified or supplemented, can reduce the prevalence of anaemia by up to **20%** in girls and for the growing number of countries with a "double burden" of undernutrition and emerging obesity problems, well-designed school meals can help set children on the path towards healthier diets.



Social Protection and Safety Nets:

School meal programmes can reduce poverty by boosting income for households and communities. For families, the value of meals in school is equivalent to about **10%** of a household's income. For families with several children, that can mean substantial savings.

Local Economies and Agriculture:

Buying local food creates stable markets, boosts local agriculture, impacts rural transformation and strengthens local food systems. In Brazil, for example, **30%** of all purchases for school meals come from smallholder agriculture. These farmers are often parents with schoolchildren, helping them break intergenerational cycles of hunger and poverty.

