**Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices**

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Food for Education

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Kenya

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- [x] Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- [ ] Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- [ ] Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- [ ] Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- [x] Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Food for Education

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

Food for Education leverages economies of scale, technology, and smart logistics to ensure no child has to learn on an empty stomach.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Food for Education is creating a model of excellence for school feeding that can be replicated across Africa. We aim to bridge the nutrition and education gap for millions of children using an inter-sectoral approach that brings together communities and local and national governments to develop and implement high impact and innovative school feeding solutions at scale. We leverage the demonstrated effectiveness of school feeding to end classroom hunger and improve children's educational outcomes.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)
   This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:
   i) Which population was affected?
   ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
   iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

Of the world's 388 million children who receive school meals each day, only 13.7% are in Africa. Africa boasts the world's largest population of children yet has been largely left behind in the implementation of the world's most effective social safety net: school feeding programs.

Kenya, where approximately 43% of the population is primary school age, faces an acute issue of ensuring children are nourished and well-fed. In Kenya, 51% of the population is food insecure, 46% live in extreme poverty, and 1 in every 4 children is stunted. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation, decreasing food spending by over 30%. Stunting has serious effects on health and school performance, consequently hindering a child's current ability to learn and future potential: stunted children grow up to earn 22% less than non-stunted children, while non-stunted children have a 33% better chance of getting out of poverty compared to stunted children.

Food for Education is creating a model of excellence for school feeding that can be replicated across Africa. We aim to bridge the nutrition and education gap for millions of children using an inter-sectoral approach that brings together communities and local and national governments to develop and implement high impact and innovative school feeding solutions at scale. We leverage the demonstrated effectiveness of school feeding to end classroom hunger and improve children's educational outcomes.

We use technology, smart operations, and supply chain to source fresh, nutritious, local ingredients from smallholder farmers, centralize production, and simplify distribution logistics. We enable community participation through local stakeholders and parent contributions to bring high-quality daily school meals to children, improving learning and health outcomes for the most vulnerable.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)
   Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:
   i) What are the main activities carried out?
   ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
   iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
   iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?
   *

   Food for Education provides about 65% of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of a varied menu consisting of rice, beans, legumes, maize, vegetables and fruits. Our portions are up to 2.5 times more than the average school feeding programs with a high ratio of protein to carbohydrate of 1:1.5 addressing malnutrition, especially protein deficiency which is predominant in children across the African continent.

   Through a centralized kitchen model we leverage bulk sourcing, production and distribution of meals taking advantage of economies of scale and reaching the most vulnerable. Our ingredients are sourced locally giving small holder farmers stable markets and produced centrally to control quality and lower costs. The meals are prepared in the central kitchens then distributed through insulated trucks to ensure the food safety until it's served to the children. In the school, the children access the meals through Tap2Eat, our technology platform that allows parents to contribute to the meals through mobile money payment. The parent contribution of $0.15 allows them to participate in the school feeding program Our technology Tap2Eat that facilitates pre-payment through mobile money enables parents to conveniently save towards their children's nutrition.

   Since inception in 2012 we have served over 7 million meals. We currently feed 40,000 children daily and we are on track to serve 100,000 children in urban and peri-urban areas by the end of 2022. We have leveraged partnerships with local governments to support the school feeding in some regions through contribution of construction costs for the central kitchens and we endeavor to explore this model as we expand operations.

   As active members of the National School meals and Nutrition Committee at the Ministry of Education, we are also strategically positioned to support the Kenyan government in delivering integrated action in school feeding and nutrition at policy and implementation level, through advocacy, capacity development and technical support. We are currently active members in the implementation of Kenya's first School Meals Policy. We are also working closely with the legislative in formulating a National School Lunch Bill that will necessitate provision of meals in all schools in Kenya, a step towards universal school feeding.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)
To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:
i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

School feeding programs are evidenced as one of the most critical interventions to improve education and nutrition. School feeding programs can help to get children into school and help to keep them there, increasing enrolment and reducing absenteeism. Once the children are in the classroom, these programs can contribute to their learning, through avoiding hunger and enhancing cognitive abilities.

The positive impact of school feeding programs in addressing nutritional and educational needs is well-established. Recent research by WFP and Harvard validated our work, finding that for every $1 invested in school lunches in Kenya, there is a 9x return in improved social outcomes. A longitudinal impact assessment by AC Nielsen from 2006-2010 found that student enrolment increased by 23.3% during the first year of a feeding program, with overall, school attendance increasing by 11.67%. With improved health, nutrition, and education during childhood, children are more productive as adults and live longer and healthier lives.

Additionally, our internal analysis of schools enrolled in the school feeding program, showed a 20% improvement in performance of the schools in the 2020 National Examination. Additionally, schools with the feeding program performed up to 30% higher than schools without feeding programs and school attendance across 28 schools improved by 45%.
The economic benefits from school feeding programs are also evident, reducing poverty by boosting income for households and communities. For families, the value of each meal in school is equivalent to about 10 percent of a household's income. For families with several children, that can mean substantial savings. As a result, school feeding programs are often part of the social safety net in vulnerable communities. There are also direct economic benefits for smallholder farmers in the community. Buying local food creates stable markets, boosting local agriculture, impacting rural transformation, and strengthening local food systems.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)
    To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:
    i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
    ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
    iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

    In 2012, we started out by preparing and providing 25 meals a day for kids from vulnerable households. Since inception, we have provided over 7 million meals for children in Kenya The cost per meal, a key metric in our model, aims to leverage economies of scale to achieve lower cost of operations. We have been able to reduce our cost per meal by 26% from approximately $0.35 in 2019 to $0.26 in 2021. Core to Food for Education's model is establishing a sustainable model that has solidified the financing structure. Integral to this, we have engaged the community in participating in the school feeding program through the contribution of $0.15 by the parents that is supplemented by donor subsidy.

    The current parental contribution covers about 58% of the food expense of meals provided. By 2025, with the contribution at a constant of $0.15, we anticipate that this will cover 71% of all direct costs. We still anticipate that the additional costs will be covered by government subsidies. By the end of 2022, we expect to scale 2.5x and feed 100,000 kids daily from 6 kitchens, including 'tier two' counties in Kenya where public primary school enrollment and demand for our program is high.

11. Conclusions (250 words)
    Please describe why may this intervention be considered a "best practice".
    What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented "best practice" or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

    With proven willingness for parents and communities to contribute to daily school meals we continue to solidify government and partner commitments and build an ecosystem that fosters sustainable delivery of quality school lunches. Our ultimate long-term goal and recommendation is to leverage this approach to expand national school feeding programs for Africa's estimated 200 million children, mainstreamed into national policy and local systems.

12. Further reading
    Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the "best practice" for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

    https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/24/africa/kenyan-keeping-children-fed-lockdown-spc-intl/index.html
    https://food4education.org