



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.) *

Healthy Public Procurement

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Global

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

- 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
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

WHO : ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC FOOD
PROCUREMENT AND SERVICE POLICIES FOR A HEALTHY DIET
FAO/ WFP/ FAO/ IFAD/ Global Child Nutrition Foundation/ AUDA-NEPAD/ Imperial College
London: Home- Grown School Feeding

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

Healthy public procurement policies to deliver healthy diets from sustainable food systems

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Global examples of the health, education, gender equality benefits of healthy public
procurement policies- particularly those delivered on a national scale such as that in Brazil

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? *

Unhealthy diets are responsible for millions of deaths and lost years of good health annually. Urgent action is needed to stop the growing consumption of foods and beverages that lead to unhealthy diets. Of greatest concern are excess consumption of sodium and salt, sugars and fats, particularly trans-fatty acids (trans fats); and low consumption of whole grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits. Governments worldwide have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead by example through the implementation of healthy public food procurement and service policies, requiring that all foods and beverages served or sold in schools contribute to the promotion of healthy diets. While in many contexts the burden of childhood undernutrition and hunger prevail, school-aged children also seldom meet recommended fruit and vegetable intake, frequently consume sugar-sweetened beverages, and often eat at fast-food outlets contributing to the growing burden of obesity and non-communicable diseases. Delivering nutritious school meals to children acts as a great equaliser, ensuring all children receive the same access to nutrition, promotes school attendance- particularly amongst girls and ensures they receive the needed nutrition to foster learning and cognitive development. UN agencies are united behind the promotion of healthy school meals.

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?

*

Example from Brazil: Brazil's National School Feeding Program (PNAE) sets nutrition criteria for school meals, and aims to make meals more representative of the culture and food of the region. The programme has set a goal of 30% of the PNAE budget to be used to purchase food from family farms, with the aim of promoting economic and social inclusion, and creating incentives for sustainable production and income generation. PNAE began in 1954, with a target of addressing hunger and improving school attendance. In 2003, the Zero Hunger Program was instituted, which focuses on reducing the number of malnourished children, addressing levels of overweight and obesity, and improving rates of school enrolment. In 2009, a new law was passed that updated the PNAE to include a link between local food systems and school feeding, as well as to promote student growth, development, learning and academic achievement, and healthy nutritional habits. This law was developed with significant input from a multisectoral group of civil society and government representatives, particularly through the Brazilian National Council of Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA). Studies since 2012 have documented further improvements, including decreased consumption of ultraprocessed food, as well as decreased purchase of food with high sugar content and increased purchase of food recommended in the school meals nutrition criteria. Purchases from smallholder farmers have also seen significant growth.

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? *

In addition to benefits of school feeding programmes on educational outcomes such as enrolment, attendance, reduction of drop-out, completion and learning achievements, there is evidence of a positive association between a healthier diet (i.e. containing whole grains, fruits and vegetables) and improved cognitive function and academic performance among children. Additionally, improving the nutritional quality of school meals by shifting from low-budget processed meals towards healthier options has demonstrated benefits for educational outcomes. Similarly, results from studies conducted at worksites (public and private) suggest that nutrition interventions may reduce absenteeism and increase productivity .

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? *

Nutritious school meal programmes have been an effective nutrition and education approach since the 20th century, proving essential in many countries to build back from the ravages of World War II. Their wide spread implementation has provided valuable lessons in effectiveness- such as the need to set strong nutrition criteria for the provision of school meals, and to support their implementation through strong laws and policies (such as that implemented in Brazil) to ensure whole-of-government, consistent support to their implementation and to avoid the negative consequences of unhealthy school meals and undernutrition which negatively impact on educational attainment.

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)? *

Following the UN Food System Summit countries are aligned behind nutritious school meals as one of the most powerful game-changing solutions to transform food systems and delivery healthy diets from sustainable food systems. This is supported by the broad country support for the evolving School Meals Coalition. It is essential to harness this momentum to advance the nutrition and strong education benefits school meal programmes can deliver, as well as to protect children from the food and education crisis caused by conflict, climate and COVID-19.

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. *

WHO, 2021. Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240018341>

FAO/ WFP/ IFAD: Home-Grown School feeding Resource Framework: <https://www.fao.org/3/ca0957en/CA0957EN.pdf>