



Cities Feeding the Future

School Meals Coalition Initiative



Overview

The **Cities Feeding the Future** initiative was launched in October 2023 on the occasion of the School Meals Coalition First Global Summit in Paris. Led by the **Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Secretariat** (MUFPP), the initiative seeks to support municipalities in their responsibility of implementing school meals programmes, while fostering links between local and national governments.

Indeed, school meals programmes are a **powerful driver of urban food policies**, enabling cities to achieve multiple cascading objectives, such as promoting sustainable food consumption for children, facilitating the shift to a healthy and sustainable diet, combating food poverty, strengthening rural-urban linkages, and raising awareness among children on food waste.

National governments are typically responsible for the regulatory aspects through enacting framework laws or guidelines, which are passed on and transferred to local governments for implementation. Since in many countries school meals programmes are set up and managed directly by local governments - which are the main provider of the service - the **relationship between national governments and cities is crucial**. On one hand, cities represent the entry point for the concrete and efficient implementation of national legislation; on the other hand, only through the knowledge that cities possess of their citizens' needs, they can offer effective and robust support, not only in implementing but also in designing these policies.

With the aim of more effectively aligning the efforts and commitments of the Coalition Member States and facilitating the successful implementation at the city level, the Cities Feeding the Future initiative was established.

Vision and objectives

The Cities Feeding the Future initiative primarily works with mayors, city officers and local governments around the world to **establish and enhance school meal programmes**. This is achieved by sharing best practices from selected champion cities within the MUFPP network. Leveraging a network of over 280 cities, the MUFPP aims to amplify its global impact on transforming local food systems, with a specific emphasis on improving school meals and enhancing the overall service.

The initiative works towards **three main objectives**:

1. Empower the role of cities in implementing school meals;
2. Facilitating the sharing of knowledge among peer cities and global actors;
3. Supporting decision-making processes at local level.

Structure and partners

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Secretariat leads this initiative of the School Meals Coalition, with a dedicated team managing its activities. The Initiative also works closely with the other initiatives of the Coalition, specifically the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition, the Data and Monitoring Initiative, and the Sustainable Financing Initiative, in order to ensure coherence under the Coalition's umbrella.

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is the main legacy of EXPO 2015, the first and foremost global commitment of mayors from around the world that considers food as an entry point for the sustainable development of growing cities. To date the Milan Pact gathers more than 280 cities, representing a total of 490 million inhabitants. Over the years, it has consolidated an increasing number of partners, ranging from international organizations to universities and research centres to NGOs.



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Cities Feeding the Future

Key actions

Following its primary objectives, the initiative pursues its goal following **three main areas of action**:

1. ADVOCACY

Through the identification of **champion mayors** and the organisation of **national dialogues**, the initiative aims to promote advocacy actions towards national governments and international organisations, emphasizing the importance of school meals and highlighting best practices worldwide. Within this pillar, the initiative organizes events and technical field visits in selected cities. Simultaneously, the initiative commits to playing an active role in key regional meetings of the Coalition.

2. BEST PRACTICES

To facilitate the exchange of best practices among relevant cities, the initiative aims to establish a comprehensive **urban database** on school meal programmes and to organise **technical workshops** focused on sharing best practices and highlighting different approaches from various cities.

3. RESEARCH

The initiative seeks to support cities with specific learning needs to co-design new school meals programmes or to improve existing ones. This is achieved by offering technical assistance in selected cities through the development of **feasibility studies**.

Deliverables

So far the initiative has carried out the following activities:

- **Launch of the initiative** during the School Meals Coalition First Global Summit in Paris and presenting it to MUFPP signatory cities.
- Identification of the first cohort of **champion mayors**, who play a leading role by presenting their state-of-the-art school meal models.
- Publication of the report **School Meals: the transformative potential of urban food policies**, presenting virtuous examples coming from the MUFPP community.



Read the report here

MUFPP cities in SMC countries

School Meals Coalition geography in MUFPP

52 SMC Countries with MUFPP cities

185 MUFPP cities in SMC Countries

87 MUFPP cities with School Meals Programme

Management system

28% outsourced school canteens

36% direct managed school canteens

37% direct managed and outsourced

