

Country	Tanzania						
Population	541,603						
Title of practice	Growing a Healthier Future						
Subtitle	Mbeya Inclusive School Feeding for Nutrition and Community Empowerment						
Photos/videos	Please check the link to the Sharepoint folder provided. If you need access, please contact the MUFPP Secretariat.						
MUFPP Recommended Action	12. Encourage joint action by health and food sectors to implement integrated people-centred strategies for healthy lifestyles and social inclusion. – SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION						
Starting year	2022	Ending year (if any)			2025	already submitted in the past	
Actors and stakeholders' involvement	Municipal departments	Other public institutions	NGOs CSOs	Research centres	Private sectors	International organizations	Other
	4.	2	3	1	3	2	
Budget	The total budget of the practice is € 86,684.50 co-funded by Helvetas Swiss Intercorporation and the City of Zurich under the city-to-city cooperation initiative. Mbeya City Council contributes in-kind for staff time, training venues and coordination of community engagement.						
Brief description	<p>In Mbeya City, despite abundant food resources, malnutrition persists due to monotonous diets, limited nutrition knowledge, and cultural food practices.</p> <p>Recognizing this, the municipality in collaboration with NGO Helvetas and Rikolto is implementing an inclusive school feeding program under the “Inclusive Cities for Nutrition” initiative. The program is active in 122 public schools, reaching 121,712 children.</p> <p>Its activities include providing diverse, locally sourced meals, sensitizing parents to contribute, forming nutrition clubs, and establishing school gardens to ensure cultural relevance.</p> <p>The objectives are to improve children’s nutritional status, raise awareness of healthy and diverse diets, and foster demand for nutritious foods at home. The primary beneficiaries are students and their families, who benefit from better nutrition and increased knowledge. The city’s role centres on policymaking, funding, coordination, and community engagement.</p> <p>Key lessons learned include the importance of integrating education with food provision, practical hands-on activities through school vegetable gardens, and strong community participation. Outcomes show increased dietary diversity in school meals, enhanced nutrition awareness, and positive behavioural changes children now demand vegetables and establish gardens at home. This demonstrates that local leadership and multi-stakeholder collaboration are vital to sustainably building a healthier future for Mbeya.</p>						
Innovation	<p>The inclusive school feeding program in Mbeya proves an innovative approach through integrating nutrition education, local sourcing, community participation, and hands-on activities such as establishing school gardens.</p> <p>By linking school meal diversity with practical nutrition clubs and gardening initiatives, it moves beyond traditional food aid programs, creating a sustainable model that actively involves children, families, and local farmers.</p> <p>This comprehensive approach fosters cultural relevance and promotes behavioural change within the community, which are critical for transforming food consumption patterns.</p> <p>In addition, the practice emphasizes empowering children as agents of change to demand healthier diets at home thus introducing a novel behavioural dimension to nutrition interventions.</p>						

<p>Impact</p>	<p><i>Implementing an inclusive school feeding program contributes to improvement of the Mbeya city food system across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Social Impact</i> The initiative improves nutrition, health, and school attendance, boosting learning and development. It encourages community engagement and social cohesion as parents contribute food and participate in meal preparation. The shift towards increased vegetable consumption and home gardening raises awareness of healthy diets and sustainability, promoting lasting behavioural change. 2. <i>Environmental Impact</i> Establishment of school gardens and local sourcing of food has encouraged sustainable agricultural practices and supports biodiversity through diversified cropping and promoting composting within school gardens, contributing to healthier ecosystems. 3. <i>Economic Impact</i> The practice stimulates the local economy by creating demand for locally produced foods and vegetables, supporting farmers and small-scale producers. Healthier children could reduce future healthcare costs associated with diet-related diseases, representing long-term savings for families and the healthcare system.
<p>Inclusion</p>	<p><i>The inclusive school feeding program in Mbeya City involves multiple stakeholders for success. It aligns with national school feeding guideline which is flexible for local adaptation. Key actors include health, education, community development, and agriculture departments within the municipality, alongside NGOs, CSOs, private sector food suppliers, and farmers. Research institutions such as Uyole research centre has provide bio-fortified beans and fruit tree nurseries to schools while farmers sell vegetables directly to schools. Community and parents' engagement ensure cultural relevance and sustainability. The program also emphasizes nutrition education through school clubs and school gardens as learning tools. This collaborative approach creates a resilient system that improves children's health, foster inclusive learning environment, supports local farmers, and promotes sustainable development.</i></p>