

**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 healthier and more sustainable diets, combating food poverty, strengthening rural-urban linkages, and raising awareness among children on food waste.

National governments are typically responsible for the regulatory aspects by enacting framework laws or guidelines, which are then passed on to local governments for implementation.

In many countries, school meals programmes are established and managed directly by local governments, which are the primary providers of the service. On one hand, cities serve as the entry point for the effective and efficient implementation of national legislation; on the other hand, only through the deep understanding cities have of their citizens' needs can they provide meaningful and robust support, not just in implementing, but also in designing these policies.

As a result, **the relationship between national governments and cities is crucial.**

## Cities Feeding the Future Initiative

The Cities Feeding the Future Initiative was launched in October 2023 at the School Meals Coalition First Global Summit in Paris.

Led by the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), **it aims to support municipalities in their responsibility of implementing school meals programmes**, while fostering links between local and national governments. It was established as part of the School Meals Coalition strategy to effectively align the efforts and commitments of the Coalition Member States, facilitating the successful implementation at city level.

## 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 meals programmes**. This is achieved by **sharing best practices** from selected cities within the MUFPP.

Leveraging a network of over 310 cities, the MUFPP aims to amplify its global impact on transforming local food systems, with a specific focus on improving school meals and enhancing the overall service.

The initiative works towards three main objectives:

- **Empowering cities** in implementing effective school meals programmes;
- **Facilitating the sharing of knowledge** among peer cities and global actors;
- **Supporting local decision-making processes.**

## Key actions

To achieve its objectives, the *Cities Feeding the Future* initiative focuses on **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, the initiative organizes events and technical field visits. Simultaneously, the Initiative commits to playing an active role in key meetings of the Coalition.

### 2. BEST PRACTICES

To facilitate the **exchange of best practices** among relevant cities, the Initiative aims to complement the SMC database with an urban perspective. In addition, it aims at organising **technical workshops** focused on sharing best practices and highlighting different approaches from various cities.

### 3. RESEARCH

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**.

## Structure and partners

The initiative is led by the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Secretariat, with a dedicated team overseeing its activities, guided by a shared action plan.

To ensure coherence within the Coalition, it collaborates closely with other SMC initiatives.

## School Meals Coalition

Launched in 2021 at the UN Food System Summit in New York, the School Meals Coalition aims to improve and scale up school meal programs to ensure that every child has access to healthy, nutritious meals in school by 2030.

Today the Coalition network features over 105 governments, 140+ partners and 6 regional bodies, working together to transform food and education systems through school meals.

[schoolmealscoalition.org](https://schoolmealscoalition.org)



# Deliverables

So far the initiative has carried out several activities:

## Champion Mayors

- **Identification of two cohort of Champion Mayors**, who are city leaders among the MUFPP cities of country that are part of the School Meals Coalition, who act as school meals pioneers and political ambassadors of the Cities Feeding the Future Initiative.
- Development of **Guidelines on preparing a School Meals City Commitment** to further reinforce the Champion Mayors' involvement by submitting concrete time-bound pledges for strengthening and improving their school meal programmes, to turn commitments into action.



**Who are the Champion Mayors? How to become a Champion?**

Champion Mayors are MUFPP city leaders from around the world... **Lead by example**... **Advocate**... **Build coalitions**...



## Research

- Publication of the first **flagship City Case Study** in collaboration with the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition to showcase the knowledge on city efforts on school meals.
- Contribution to the **State of School Feeding Worldwide 2024** publication with city-led solutions and innovation, the enrichment of the Data and Monitoring Initiative's **Global Database on school meals with data from MUFPP cities**. The data gathered from 156 cities of the MUFPP network have enriched the Global Database on School Meals of the Data and Monitoring Initiative, with a specific new section dedicated to city-level data.
- Publication of the report **School Meals: the transformative potential of urban food policies**, presenting virtuous examples coming from the MUFPP community.



Read the report on **School Meals** here!



# MUFPP cities in SMC countries

269 cities

72 SMC countries

## Spreading Experiences and Knowledge on School Meals Programmes in ASEAN Cities Project

- Developed in partnership with ASEAN and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
- Organisation of the MUFPP-ASEAN School Meals Summer School in ASEAN Cities (July 2024, Bandung, Indonesia) to increase the capacity of city officers and member states from ASEAN countries to develop school meals programmes.
- Development of Feasibility Studies on school meals programmes for selected cities with the technical support of Milano Ristorazione.

## Boosting School Meals in ASEAN Cities Project

- The Initiative will be involved throughout 2026 in creating an **enabling environment for cities** to work on their project proposal to scale up and improve their school meals programmes, focusing on funds scouting with mentoring and fundraising activities for city officers and advocacy at national and international level, with a final match-making event to present the City's project proposal to possible donors and funders.

## Trainings

- Organisation of the **MUFPP Regional Forum in Africa** (Addis Ababa - October 10-11, 2024), on **"School Meals Programmes for Healthier and Sustainable African Cities"**, which brought together 50 participants from 14 African cities, to highlight successful school meal initiatives across Africa and advocate for the key role cities and local governments play in providing this essential service.
- Organisation of the high-level conference **The Power of Public Food Procurement** (17-18 June 2024, Copenhagen), which brought together over 50 food policy and food procurement officers, and local politicians, to highlight the crucial of cities in reshaping public procurement practices for school meals programmes, ultimately contributing to healthier and more sustainable food environments for their communities.

# Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

Launched by the Municipality of Milan in 2015, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) is the leading international agreement among cities, committed to developing sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe, and diverse food systems. It aims to create a permanent platform for knowledge exchange, best practices, and capacity-building activities.

Today, it brings together over 340 cities!