

World Vision 

ENOUGH

END CHILD HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

WORLD VISION SOUTH SUDAN SCHOOL MEALS STRATEGIC PLAN

October 2025 – September 2030

“In Science class, we learn how food nourished our body and mind. That’s true. When we are not hungry, we can focus on our studies and enjoy learning,” shares Josephine, a primary 8 student in Juba. With her is Yanga, primary 7 student, who also enjoys the daily meal he receives in school.



1.0 Background

School meal programs have long been recognised as essential interventions in times of crisis, providing immediate relief to children facing hunger and malnutrition. Sometimes, it's the only meal the children eat daily. However, the importance of school meals extends far beyond emergency response. These programs serve as crucial safety nets and powerful developmental tools contributing to children's and communities' well-being and future success.

South Sudan is one of the few countries where more children are out of school than in school. Years of conflict and displacement have left an estimated 2.8 million children out of school, representing over 70% of the school-age population, with 52% of these children being girls. Many schools have been destroyed or repurposed, teachers are often undertrained or absent, and significant barriers to learning exist, particularly for girls. These barriers include poverty, child marriage, and cultural and religious beliefs that hinder their education. Without immediate intervention, an entire generation risks being left behind, perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability.

The recent conflict in Sudan has exacerbated the situation, leading to over 1 million individuals fleeing into the country, including more than 30% of school-aged children. Many of these children have lost over a year of schooling. The risk of conflict remains high, resulting in extensive displacements and increased exposure to gender-based violence, including rape, early pregnancies, and forced marriages. Environmental challenges, such as flooding, continue to severely impact education, with floods in 2024 leading to the closure of an estimated 522 schools and disrupting education for around 184,178 children.

Child hunger and malnutrition are widespread in South Sudan, severely affecting the well-being of children and the overall population in both the short and long term. The acute food insecurity and malnutrition situation in South Sudan is deteriorating as a result of the economic crisis, repeated climatic shocks – primarily widespread flooding – and conflict and insecurity. Between September and November 2024, an estimated 6.3 million people (47 per cent of the population analysed) were classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse). Of this total, 1.71 million people are facing critical levels of acute food insecurityⁱ. School-aged children are particularly impacted by the food crisis, often attending school on empty stomachs. Providing daily meals at school can significantly improve enrollment, attendance, and retention rates among students.

In emergency situations, such as nature-induced hazards, conflicts, or economic downturns, school meal programs are often deployed to address acute food insecurity. By ensuring that children receive at least one nutritious meal a day, these programs help mitigate the immediate effects of hunger, allowing children to focus on their education rather than their empty stomachs. Sometimes parents send children to look for food during the crisis, but where there are school meal programs, parents prefer to have them in school for they are assured they will at least get a meal. This immediate response is vital for maintaining school attendance and preventing dropouts during crises.

1.1 Enhancing Educational Outcomes

There is a strong link between nutrition and educational performance. Well-nourished children are more attentive, have better memory retention, and exhibit higher levels of cognitive function. School meal programs contribute to improved academic outcomes by ensuring that children are well-fed and ready to learn. Increased attendance and reduced dropout rates are also associated with the availability of school meals, as parents are more likely to send their children to school when meals are provided.

South Sudan has one of the worst literacy rates in the world. Approximately 70% of adults cannot read or write, roughly 84% of girls over the age of 15 are illiterate, and an estimated 2.8 million children are out of school – according to recent United Nations data as of Sept 2024. According to UNESCO, South Sudan

ⁱ [South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - November 2024 and Projections for December 2024 - March 2025 and for April - July 2025 | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#)

has a very low adult literacy rate of 34.52%. While the male literacy rate is 40.26%, for females is 28.86%, showing a big gap between the sexes. According to the South Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024, South Sudan remains in a humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 9 million people needing humanitarian assistance. This crisis significantly impacts South Sudan's education programs, disrupting the education calendar and making it difficult for children to access consistent, quality education.

Another significant challenge facing the South Sudan education system and causing gender disparity in the education sector is the issue of child marriage and early pregnancy, particularly for girls. According to a UNICEF 2020 report, one in three girls in South Sudan becomes pregnant before turning 15. This not only disrupts girls' education but also has a significant impact on their prospects. This highlights the need for initiatives including school feeding take home support with components/activities focusing on promoting girls' education in South Sudan to address these challenges and ensure that girls have equal access to education.

In the face of these challenges, various UN agencies such as UNICEF and WFP, among others, and INGOs, including World Vision International and other international organizations are working to improve access to quality education with a special focus on primary and nursery schools in South Sudan. These organizations play a crucial role in addressing some key challenges facing the South Sudan education system, such as capacity building for teachers, training for PTAs, and provision of school meals to boost enrollment and retention in schools. Furthermore, by addressing the hunger effects on school-going children caused by severe food insecurity and helping to ensure that all children in South Sudan can learn and thrive in this era.

Against this background, World Vision South Sudan (WVSS), in collaboration with the Government, other donors, and partners, has drafted this five-year school meal strategic plan to target over 200,000 vulnerable school children in the country by 2030.



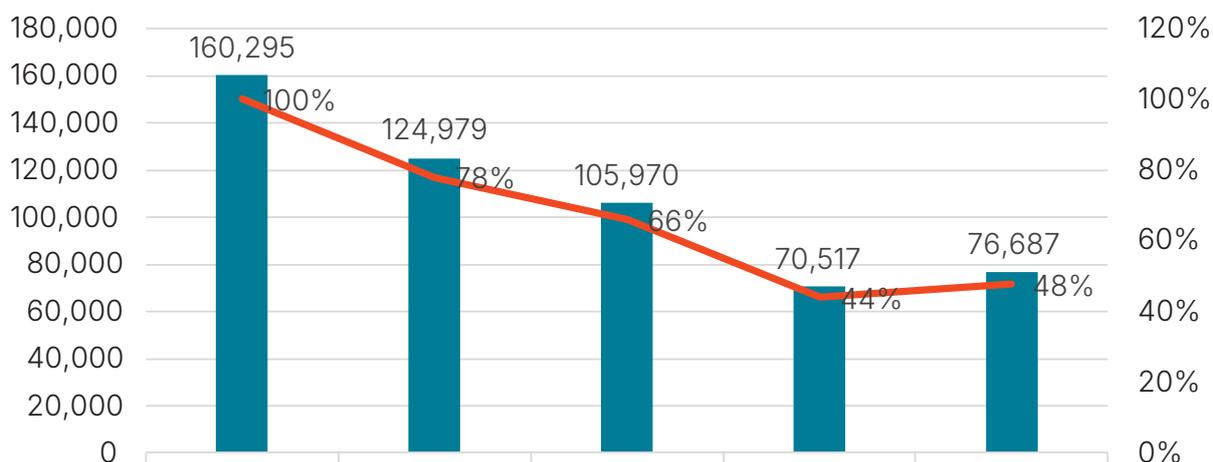
Twenty one Schools in Juba Central Equatoria State supported by World Vision through the World Food Programme's School Feeding Program. The provision of school meals has contributed to increased the enrollment and improved student retention rates. ©World Vision/ Andre Guardiola

1.2 Background/overview of the School Meals Programme in WVSS

WVSS started the implementation of the School Meals Programme way back in 2003. Since then, it has remained one of the key cooperating partners of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Ministry of Education in delivering the programme across four states in South Sudan: Central Equatoria, Upper Nile, Warrap, and Western Equatoria.

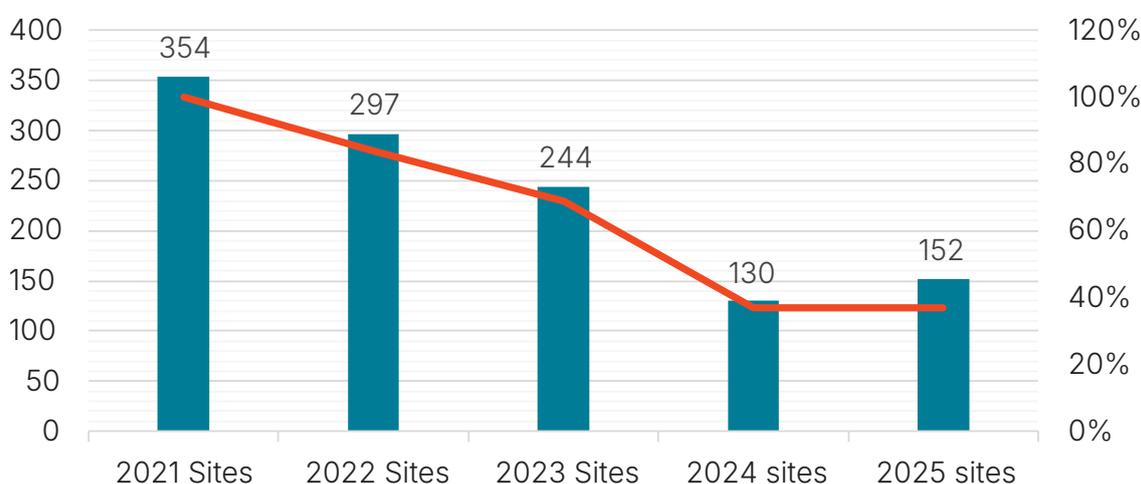
The WVSS School Meals Strategy is designed to address several critical challenges, including low enrolment and attendance rates, high dropout rates, and limited participation of girls—often due to cultural norms, economic hardship, and widespread food insecurity. Although there has been a significant decline in the number of students and schools currently supported through WVSS-managed school meals, WVSS is committed to reversing this trend. WVSS aims to scale up its efforts in alignment with its strategic priorities, with a renewed focus on improving children’s nutrition, health, protection, and access to education.

Figure 1: Graph showing Pupils supported through WV school meals programme (2021 -2025)



Source: WVSS Reports 2025

Figure 2 Graph showing schools covered supported with school meals (2021 - 2025)



Source: WVSS Reports 2025

2.0 Focus

Due to the country’s significant fragility, WVSS operates in an emergency context. The organization focuses not only on meeting the immediate survival needs of the population but also on building their resilience to adapt and thrive.

Key areas of focus include:

- **Healthier Children:** Addressing child hunger and malnutrition through an integrated approach.
- **Empowered Communities:** Enabling communities to become resilient, self-sufficient, and actively engaged in their own development.
- **Functional Institutions:** Strengthening governance frameworks for institutional and food systems, along with resilience programs that incorporate climate-smart technologies, safety nets, and social protection, especially during lean months.

In line with these goals, WVSS aims to enhance its existing School Meals programme. This initiative seeks to achieve the following objectives (for more details refer to Annex 1: Logical Framework):



1. Improved educational outcomes



2. Enhanced health, protection, and nutrition for students



3. Increased climate resilience



4. Strengthened community food security and economic stability

2.1 Alignment Strategy, ENOUGH Campaign, SDGs

In 2020, World Vision made a bold commitment to improve the lives of at least 3 million children in South Sudan. This promise is rooted in hope and shared responsibility. Today, with rising hunger and instability threatening the futures of these children—especially girls—this commitment is more urgent than ever.

Good nutrition is the foundation of child development. Without it, children cannot grow, learn, or thrive. That’s why the ENOUGH Campaign and school meal programs share a common goal:

School meals are a proven solution. They help children stay in school, improve learning outcomes, and reduce dropout rates. For girls, these programs offer protection from early marriage and child labor. For families, they serve as a critical safety net. Most importantly, they combat chronic malnutrition, which can have lifelong impacts on health and opportunities.

This approach supports WVSS’s 2026–2030 Strategy, which emphasizes education, nutrition, and child well-being. It also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 2: ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

The WVSS’ School Meals Strategic Plan aims to leverage World Vision’s membership in the School Meals Coalition. This will position World Vision South Sudan to take a lead role in shaping the country’s school feeding efforts, focusing on strategic engagement and partnerships, especially with policymakers, as well as community mobilization and participation.

3.0 Approach

The scaling up of investment and intensified focus on school meals will enable WVSS to act with a stronger, more united voice and achieve impact for children faster. Our goal is to ensure that every child has access to a healthy and nutritious meal at school by 2030, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in collaboration with local and global partners to enhance and expand efforts and initiatives aimed at improving school meal programs.

WVSS will enhance the School Meals initiative by investing additional efforts and resources in the following areas:

3.1 Building and Strengthening Partnerships

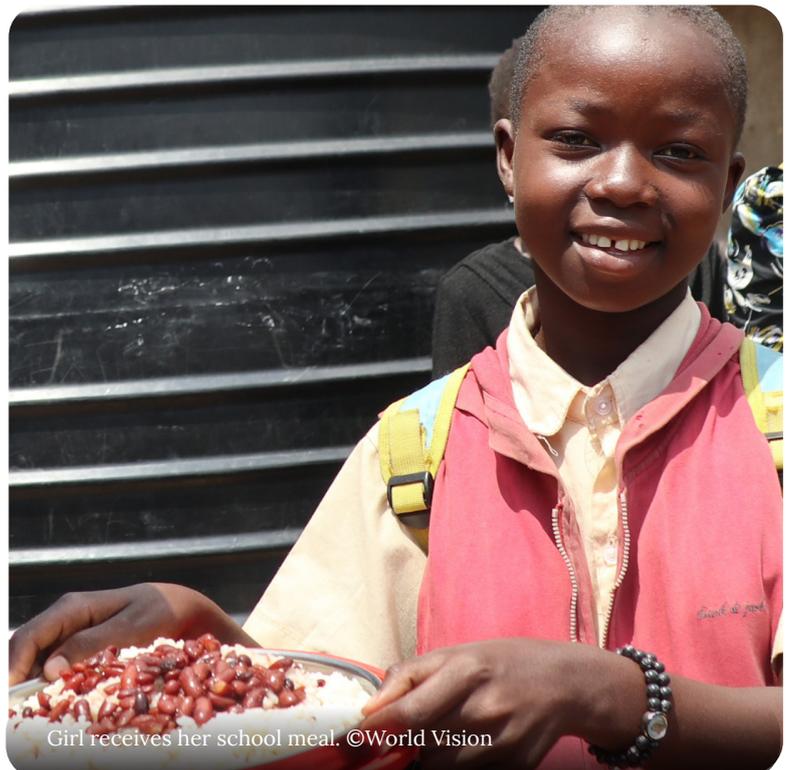
- a. UN Agencies: Collaborating with the WFP, UNFAO and UNICEF.
- b. Donors: Engaging with various funding sources.
- c. Private Sector Partners: Fostering Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- d. Collaboration with like-minded agencies with shared goals and objectives to support school meals programme in enhancing education outcomes
- e. Partnerships with local organizations and community structures such as PTAs, Communities and local leaders

3.2 Reinforcing Community Resilience Capabilities

School meal programs can have positive ripple effects on local economies. By sourcing food locally, these programs create demand for agricultural products, supporting farmers and stimulating rural economies. Additionally, the preparation and distribution of school meals can create jobs and provide income for community members, further contributing to economic development.

Home-Grown School Feeding:

- i. Promoting school and community gardening for improved households' nutrition.
- ii. Implementing climate-smart agricultural practices to boost food production and expand markets opportunities for smallholder farmers.
- iii. Creating market linkages between farmers (producers) and buyers (traders).
- iv. Fostering meaningful linkage between farmers and research institutions, Universities and Government.



3.3 Advocating for Policy Reforms and Increased Budget Allocations

- Strengthening national policies and strategies related to children’s health and nutrition.
- Advocating for the integration of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), education, protection, food assistance, food security and livelihoods, environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as gender equality and social inclusion.

The government of South Sudan is actively involved in developing and implementing school meals policies. The WFP, in partnership with World Vision International, is the lead agency responsible for the School Feeding Program, while the Ministry of General Education and Instruction establishes school governance and policies that oversee compliance. The government has established a National School Feeding department tasked with coordinating activities and policies related to school programs. Effective implementation of school meals programmes requires coordinated efforts from all stakeholders including government, NGOs, PTAs and communities as seen in annex 2.

3.4 World Vision School Meal Strategic Plan 2026-2030

The goal of World Vision South Sudan School Meal strategy 2026-2030 is to ensure that 200,000 school children in South Sudan have access to nutritious meals supporting their health, learning, and overall well-being by December 2030.

This initiative seeks to achieve the following objectives:



1. Improved educational outcomes for 200,000 learners in South Sudan by 2030.



2. Enhanced health, protection, and nutrition for 200,000 students.



3. Increased climate resilience among 70,000 farming communities.



4. Strengthened community food security and economic stability among 70,000 vulnerable households.

It is envisaged that this strategy will focus on all five states (Upper Nile, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, Warrap and Northern Bahar El Gazal) with tier approach showing gradual/year-on-year targets as outlined here below;

3.4.1 Building and strengthening partnerships

Stakeholder partnerships are crucial for the success of school meal programs in South Sudan, enhancing program performance, sustainability, and local ownership. By involving various actors, including government entities, WFP, beneficiaries, local leaders, and international partners (including World Vision), programs can effectively address local needs, improve food security, and promote education. Effective stakeholder involvement during project planning contributes to better execution and alignment with national policies. Comprehensive consultations with beneficiaries and local leaders ensure that programs are relevant, addressing their needs and fostering a sense of ownership. Government support, local involvement, and international partner funding and expertise are vital for long-term program viability. Involving communities in decision-making, such as through advisory boards and planning committees, builds local ownership and strengthens the program’s impact.

3.4.2 Reinforcing community resilience capabilities

By investing in local food systems, Homegrown School Feeding programmes positively impact the nutrition, food security, livelihoods, economies, and environmental sustainability of surrounding areas, contributing to community resilience. Each context brings unique challenges and opportunities for school feeding. Homegrown school feeding is critical to trigger the transformation of food systems among farmers. In addition to its potential to contribute to the adaptation of communities to climate change, homegrown school feeding relies on dietary diverse local food products and supports the emergence of local agricultural markets. By investing in homegrown school feeding, we are feeding children and helping small-holder farmers enhance their production and, eventually, contribute to household's food resilience.

Table 1 showing projected food requirements (USD) for the five-year period

Cost category	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	Total
Targeted # of children	90,000	120,000	150,000	180,000	200,000	200,000
Projected food requirements (\$)	6,480,000	8,640,000	10,800,000	12,960,000	14,400,000	53,280,000

3.4.3 Advocating for policy reforms and increased budget allocations

WVSS will collaborate with diverse partners to advocate for the scaling up of school meal programs through a multi-faceted approach. Key areas of focus will include coverage expansion to ensure universal access, quality improvement, sustainability, funding and resources where we will push for increased government funding and budget allocation for school meal programs and encourage partnerships between governments, NGOs, and the private sector to pool resources and expertise. We will also advocate for parental engagement and involve parents and local communities in the planning and implementation of school meal programs to ensure they meet local needs and preferences. We will further conduct awareness campaigns to educate communities about the benefits of school meals for children's health and education. By focusing on these areas, we can work towards ensuring that school meal programs are comprehensive, inclusive, effective, and sustainable, benefiting children and communities alike. This approach will span all through the five years 2026 to 2030.

- Expanding coverage in target schools and pupil's support through school meals
 - (a) Year 1 target: 90,000 learners/pupils supported covering all the five states
 - (b) Year 2 target: 30,000 new learners/pupils added covering all the five states
 - (c) Year 3 target: 30,000 new learners/pupils added covering all the five states
 - (d) Year 4 target: 30,000 new learners/pupils added covering all the five states
 - (e) Year 5 target: 20,000 new learners/pupils added covering all the five states

4.0 Approach and methodology of school meals

School Meals is the provision of meals or snacks at school to reduce children's hunger during the school day. Through this strategy, WVSS will employ these following approaches towards provision of school Meals: (a) On-site meals including any one or more of the following at-school meals: breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, or dinner. On-site meals are foods that are distributed to children while at school (b) take-home" food rations which will be provided as economic incentives to families (or foster families, or other childcare institutions) in return for a child's regular attendance at school. Take-home rations may include collection of basic food items, such as rice, sorghum, pulses, cooking oil, vegetables, salt etc. which may be sent home and transferred to the families of the child that regularly attend school.

Home-grown School Meals utilizing locally grown food to feed children at school is a more inclusive definition that is used in this paper, although the primary emphasis is on in-school meals and take-home rations.

Monitoring and Evaluation Reporting: The school meals program will leverage on existing information available through ENOUGH campaign and the Monitoring and Evaluation reporting systems. M&E unit will define key performance indicators (KPIs) within the school Meals programming manual such as the target number of children served, educational and nutritional outcomes. The WVSS M&E team will also conduct project monitoring and evaluation to assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. WVSS will establish an iterative framework for M&E involving regular data collection, analysis, reviews and joint learning and continuous improvement to ensure the Project remains on track in endeavor to realize its objectives. WVSS will use data and feedback to make informed decisions and continuously enhance the program.

Humanitarian Accountability: We will embrace effective and quality programming that will recognize the community's dignity, capacity, and ability to be independent. We will implement the four standards of humanitarian accountability namely information sharing, participation, consultation as ingrained in the WVI program Accountability Framework (PAF) which aligns well to the Core humanitarian standards (CHS) and ensure there is confidential and contextualized feedback mechanism.

Risk Management: Key risks to school meals programming in South Sudan include supply chain disruptions, funding shortfalls, climate-related shocks, and insecurity, all of which can hinder consistent food delivery and nutritional quality. Additionally, poor infrastructure and lack of community engagement





The provision of school meals has contributed to increased the enrollment and improved student retention rates, as well as enhanced academic performance. ©World Vision

can limit program effectiveness. To mitigate these risks, World Vision will strengthen local procurement systems, diversify funding sources, and invest in climate-resilient agriculture. Building strong partnerships with governments, communities, and local organizations will also enhance program sustainability and responsiveness to crises. Regular monitoring and adaptive planning will be essential to ensure continuity and impact. Every year the field team will update the risk register based on context.

Sustainability: WVSS will implement strategies to promote sustainability in school meals programs as below:

- Support mainstreaming of School Feeding into national policies.
- Enhance national governments technical capacity for implementation.
- Support homegrown Food production systems; Prioritize purchasing from local farmers to support the local economy and reduce carbon footprint.
- Implement environmental management measures including environmental education, use of energy efficient kitchen equipment, use biodegradable packaging, promote farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR), minimize food waste and run clean-up drives.
- Promote school gardens to teach students about growing their own food to supplement their meals and for them to learn the importance of local produce, and the benefits of organic farming.
- Recycling Programs: Implementing comprehensive recycling programs, including composting food waste, will significantly reduce the school's environmental footprint
- Energy Efficiency: Schools can install solar panels, use energy-efficient lighting, and encourage energy-saving practices among students and staff

Conclusion

School meal programs are much more than emergency response interventions. They are vital safety nets that provide consistent nutrition to vulnerable children, promote health and educational outcomes, support local economies, foster social equity, and build lifelong healthy habits. By recognizing and investing in the multifaceted benefits of school meal programs, we can ensure a brighter, healthier future for children and communities worldwide.

5.0 Projected budget for the 5 years (FY26- FY30)

Table 2 showing resources required to deliver on this strategy is projected to be as follows:

Cost category	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	Total
Targeted # of children	90,000	120,000	150,000	180,000	200,000	200,000
Projected food requirements (\$)	6,480,000	8,640,000	10,800,000	12,960,000	14,400,000	53,280,000
Projected operational cost (\$)	4,320,000	5,760,000	7,200,000	8,640,000	9,600,000	35,520,000
Grand Total (\$)	10,800,000	14,400,000	18,000,000	21,600,000	24,000,000	88,800,000

Note: It is estimated that each child consumes food worth \$6 per month, and the project spend \$4 on a child as operational cost

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Theory of change and Logical Framework

Theory of Change:

If students have access to quality education, school-based health and nutrition, climate-resilient infrastructure, and linkages to local food systems, then educational outcomes will improve, health and well-being will be enhanced, communities will build resilience to climate change, and local food security and economies will strengthen.

Goal of World Vision South Sudan School Meal strategy 2026-2030 is to ensure that 200,000 school children in South Sudan have access to nutritious meals supporting their health, learning, and overall well-being by December 2030.

Logical Framework

Objective	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
1. Enhance educational outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in school attendance, retention, and test scores Improved student-teacher ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School records National exam data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government support and peaceful environment
2. Improve health, protection, and nutrition of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of students receiving regular meals and health checks Reduction in WASH-related illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School health reports Nutrition surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable supply chains and community involvement
3. Enhance climate resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of climate-resilient school facilities # of students and staff trained in environmental sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure assessments Training records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to technical expertise
4. Improve community food security and economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in local food production # of households engaged in income-generating activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural output reports Household surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favorable weather and market access

Annex 2: Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Responsibilities
Government counterparts (Ministry and Lower - level education departments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community mobilization and support Giving guidance during implementation of the programme Monitoring Providing technical support during implementation
Country and Payam Education officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support for the implementation of the project Overall supervision of the project activities Ensure quality programming during the implementation of School meals programmed guided by the national Education framework protocols Regular project monitoring to ensure the objectives are achieved Take over projects at the end of the programme
SMC, PTAs, Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the implementation of the programme Monitoring the projects to ensure outputs are achieved
Community Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in identifying farmers Supporting the Complaints feedback mechanism process Labor or manpower Support school management committees Participate in project monitoring and other organized events
Community and beneficiaries (children, parents, farmers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in project management at schools Participate in vegetable growing/ production of home-grown school meal foods



Stakeholders	Responsibilities
World Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading the overall implementation of the School Meals programme Capacity building for staff
WVI - Global Centre (DMT) and Support Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support Resource acquisition & implementation Link between WVI - SS & SOs
Multi - lateral Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National and Subnational engagement with Governments on School Meal programme Planning and review meetings including cross partner meetings Outcome monitoring Capacity building of staff
Humanitarian actors/Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide complimentary support Provide additional resources



Michael Messenger, President and CEO WV Canada, speaks with school staff, who have received training in proper food handling. ©World Vision/Andre Guardiola

Contact information:

Dr. Mesfin Loha, National Director - WV South Sudan. Email address: mesfin_loha@wv.org
 Dorance Cooper- Operation Director, WV South Sudan. Email: dorance_cooper@wvi.org
 Diwa Aquino, Gacosta. Senior Manager, Advocacy and Communications. Email: Diwa_Aquino-Gacosta@wvi.org
 Geoffrey Ocen, HEA and Food Assistance Specialist. Email address: geoffrey_ocen@wvi.org