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NEWS RELEASE

Rockefeller Foundation Commits US\$100 Million to Serve 100 Million Children Nutritious School Meals

2025-03-27

- 5-year effort announced at Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Paris summit to expand support to more than a dozen countries worldwide and in the United States
- The Rockefeller Foundation and partners to strengthen countries' food systems, while boosting nutrition and investment in locally and regeneratively sourced foods

PARIS, March 27, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- As part of the 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G), hosted by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, The Rockefeller Foundation **announced** a new US\$100 million commitment to address rising global nutrition insecurity by supporting more than a dozen countries' efforts to

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This five-year effort, which builds on initial work in Brazil and in the United States with more nutritious, locally, and **School Meals Coalition**, The Rockefeller Foundation will join the UN World Food Programme (WFP), to help improve the nutritional quality of school meals, mobilize

finance, and help design procurement standards that incentivize investment in locally and regeneratively sourced foods. Test2



During a special session titled, "**Together to Feed the World: Mobilizing the Private Sector and Philanthropists for Global Food**," President of the Republic of France Emmanuel Macron, who announced that France would commit €750 million for projects promoting nutrition, said that, "Our health depends on what we eat and therefore the health of our soil, our plants, and our animals. We see how much this fight for nutrition is twinned with our fight for health, biodiversity, and the environment." He also thanked The Rockefeller Foundation for its US\$100 million commitment, noting it "will allow us greatly to accelerate our work...adding even more strength to it."

Dr. Rajiv J. Shah, President of The Rockefeller Foundation, said: "The world can't stand by and let kids go hungry. We need to come together behind bold, innovative solutions like locally grown, sustainable school meals that address today's urgent needs while safeguarding against tomorrow's urgent threats. This announcement reflects The Rockefeller Foundation's commitment to delivering results for people in the United States and around the world by investing in solutions and working with a range of partners that can advance the food security of children, economic opportunities for farmers, businesses, and communities, and the health of our planet."

Today, over **2.8 billion** people cannot afford a healthy diet, and according to the WFP, **153 million** children and

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to the estimated **550,000 people** who could die worldwide. In the context of Sustainable Global Development, nutrition insecurity leads to a range of health issues that includes high rates of anemia, lower academic achievement, and other long-term consequences.

In response, The Rockefeller Foundation, in collaboration with others, plans to advance a range of public, private, and non-profit efforts over the next five years across three core areas:

Supporting countries as they expand their school meal programs and improve the nutritional quality of meals. For example, The Rockefeller Foundation will help improve the nutritional quality of school meals by increasing consumption of micronutrient-rich, locally grown, indigenous, and more resilient crops like millet, teff, and sorghum on school menus. It will also continue to support nutrition research, including on fortified whole grains and adapted crops, to more deeply understand the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of incentivizing better sourcing for school meals.

Cultivating local economic development and facilitating a stable market. This includes generating a supply chain for school meals from local farmers and production by working with investors and other philanthropies to provide upfront capital for regenerative agriculture transitions along supply chains connected to school meal programs. The Rockefeller Foundation will start with "proof point" countries that will model the initial investment before scaling the effort with partners to other countries. For example, countries like Brazil have demonstrated the power of effective procurement with 30% of school meals sourced from family farms. With additional incentives to shift to agroecological practices, according to research by **IPEA** in Brazil, the program led to income gains ranging from 23-106% for farmers.

Working with partners to mobilize financing and galvanize support for countries' school meal efforts. The Rockefeller Foundation will also collaborate with cross-sectoral coalitions, including, but not limited to, the Agroecology Coalition, which has 300 public and private sector members across 55 countries committed to agroecological food system transformation; Global Alliance Against Poverty and Hunger, which is part of Brazil's G20 presidency; World Business Council for Sustainable Development, a CEO-led organization of over 225 international companies; and Regenerative and Agroecological Finance for Transition (RAFT), a collaborative initiative between 32 philanthropic partners aiming to accelerate and scale regenerative and agroecological approaches to transform global food systems.

School meals, which feed an estimated **418 million** children worldwide, have consistently been shown to improve nutrition, increase attendance, improve education outcomes (especially for girls), and drive economic growth and development. Providing a significant return on investment, ranging from US\$7 to US\$35 **for every dollar** spent, the WFP also calculates that for every 100,000 school meals served, **1,377 jobs** are created.

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on's total investment in global nutrition to more than \$220

ident of Programs at The Rockefeller

French Foreign Ministry. "Our \$100 million in new

us meals, by connecting the demand for school feeding

programs, with the supply of locally grown food – creating new opportunities for farmers, children and the planet alike. Bottom line: school meals are more than just food; they're the fuel for opportunity and a brighter future."

This new US\$100 million commitment to advance universal locally grown and regenerative school meals both in the United States and around the world is part of a more than US\$220 million that The Rockefeller Foundation has committed to nutrition initiatives benefiting people, the planet, markets, jobs, and beyond. This includes The Rockefeller Foundation's 'Big Bet' of **US\$100 million** to advance Food is Medicine solutions in the United States and over US\$20 million for the **Periodic Table of Food Initiative**, which is providing standardized tools, data, and training to map food quality of the world's edible biodiversity.

Statements of Support:

- "As the world's largest humanitarian organization, WFP fights hunger on the ground in 120 countries supporting millions of people every year. We have the global reach, the scale, and the ability to help our partners deliver assistance where it matters most. Our work with governments and partners like The Rockefeller Foundation supports school meals programs that transform the lives of children, boost local economies, and help vulnerable communities tackle the root causes of food insecurity all across the world. Together, we can ensure that no child goes to bed hungry." — Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the World Food Programme
- "With this substantial investment, The Rockefeller Foundation will be playing a key role in advancing school meals at the global and national levels. We look forward to growing our strong collaboration around the world and in Brazil." — Daniel Balaban, Director of the WFP's Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil
- "Good nutrition is the building block for lifelong learning, earning, and good health. In a world of increasing pressure and complexity, it is more important than ever for us to scale solutions that break silos – delivering all the things that future generations need to thrive. Universal school meals are exactly this kind of solution, and we applaud The Rockefeller Foundation for their exciting commitment to this work." — Matt Freeman, Executive Director of Stronger Foundations for Nutrition
- "I am excited about this bold intervention from The Rockefeller Foundation focused on propelling catalytic

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gic partnerships to transform and scale school meal
onary program will ensure that 100 million children around
and live full and meaningful lives, empower farmers and
" — Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, President and CEO of the
undation Board of Trustees

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About The Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation is a pioneering philanthropy built on collaborative partnerships at the frontiers of science, technology, and innovation that enable individuals, families, and communities to flourish. We make big bets to promote the well-being of humanity. Today, we are focused on advancing human opportunity and reversing the climate crisis by transforming systems in food, health, energy, and finance. For more information, sign up for our newsletter at www.rockefellerfoundation.org/subscribe and follow us on X [@RockefellerFdn](https://twitter.com/RockefellerFdn) and LinkedIn [@the-rockefeller-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-rockefeller-foundation).

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