



CFS 50: Side Event No. 24: Virtual Exchanges: Digital South-South Triangular Cooperation for Home-Grown School Feeding

Wednesday, 12 October 2022 18:30 – 19:45 UTC+2

General Context:

Governments and development actors are progressively recognizing the importance and value that school meals constitute globally. The benefits of Home-grown School Feeding (HGSF) go beyond education and nutrition to tackle livelihoods of smallholder farmers and local communities. They also leverage the nexus between nutrition, agriculture, and social protection. At the community level, Home Grown School Feeding initiatives promote nutrition education and better eating habits and encourage the diversification of production with a special emphasis on local crops. Community involvement, in turn, enhances the sustainability of programmes.

South-South Triangular Cooperation can showcase positive experiences in the development of food and nutrition security policies and in programmes such as the Home-Grown School Feeding. To increase adaptability, the WFP CoE Brazil and FAO have been focusing on providing support through virtual exchanges. This remote assistance methodology was crucial for the continuity of services during the pandemic, enabling a flexible and cost-effective provision of technical assistance to more than 17 countries in the last two years. In this session, two remote assistance initiatives were showcased: the Virtual Study Visit: Brazil, developed by the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger Brazil in partnership with the Government of Brazil, and a joint project between the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger Brazil and FAO to connect smallholder farmers to school feeding programmes.

Another example of how this methodology is already enabling quick and cost-efficient initiatives is a new joint project between WFP and FAO to generate evidence and provide technical support to countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with the goal of highlighting good practices in sustainable value chains for nutrition and strengthening the link between school feeding and smallholder farming. In this session, WFP and FAO shared their experience identifying and supporting global good practices in connecting local procurement in school feeding programme, in order to showcase opportunities for South-South exchanges and in support of the School Meals Coalition.

Summary:

This side event presented these successful initiatives and fostered a discussion about the opportunities and challenges of using digital tools to promote South-South cooperation around food security and nutrition. Sharing learning and challenges through South-South Cooperation is essential for countries to devise robust, evidence-based food and nutrition security policies. Even after the end of travel restrictions, this remote support is expected to respond to demands that require fast, inexpensive and effective technical assistance to governments and UN country offices, especially by allowing larger delegations to participate in the activities and reaching implementation partners involved in the process at all levels.



The session first presented the Virtual Study Visit: Brazil, the innovative solution developed by WFP and Brazil to disseminate and improve the implementation of this policy in the global sphere. We could also hear directly from partners countries about how digital South-South cooperation can be a powerful tool, helping countries from the Global South develop their school feeding programmes by learning from each other.

Afterwards, the side event shared with participants how the collaboration between WFP and FAO is joining efforts to digitally collect evidence, share best practices, produce training materials, and provide technical support to countries in linking smallholder farmers to school meals in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, particularly encouraging inclusive public procurement and short value chains for better nutrition.

Objectives:

The objectives of the event were to:

- To share knowledge on the Brazilian experience in remote support for home-grown school feeding programmes;
- To introduce the joint project of FAO and WFP CoE in Brazil entitled “Improving Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes through a Sustainable Food Value Chain for Nutrition Approach”, particularly through synergies between local food, agriculture, and smallholder farmers, encouraging inclusive procurement and short value chains for better nutrition;
- To promote a discussion on opportunities and challenges in the use of digital tools for South-South Cooperation.

Main Takeaways:

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation have embraced digital technologies, and thus made it more inclusive. The statements seen in this side event have corroborated the assets the virtual visits have brought to the countries who conducted it.

Speed is of essence in the current context of a global food crisis, with quick timing being necessary to keep the momentum of advocacy work and national mobilization around food security programmes. Finally, remote assistance can offer significant savings to countries and UN country offices, a core advantage in the shadow of a global recession and increasing demand for humanitarian and development investment.

In this session, we could hear directly from our partners about how digital South-South cooperation can be a powerful tool, helping countries from the Global South develop their school feeding programmes by learning from each other. These exchanges can accelerate our work together to solve our common challenges, making sure that every child has access to healthy, nutritious meals.

Panelists:

Daniel Balaban – Director of the WFP Centre of Excellence Brazil

Nancy Aburto – Deputy Director of the Food and Nutrition Division – FAO

Sharon de Freitas – Head of programme of the WFP Centre of Excellence Brazil



Marcelo Pontes – FNDE’s President

Masahiro Matsumoto - Deputy Country Director, WFP Lesotho

Soraya Kalongela – National Director of Primary and Pre-School Education of Angola

Andrea Polo Galante – Senior Nutrition Consultant of the Food and Nutrition Division – FAO

Camila Alencar – Programme Policy Officer - WFP Centre of Excellence Brazil

Plinio Pereira - Project Analyst, Brazilian Cooperation Agency

Dageng Liu – Head of South-South Triangular Cooperation Unit – World Food Programme

Anping Ye – FAO Director of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Division

Cecília Malaguti do Prado - Responsible for Trilateral South-South Cooperation with International Organizations of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency.