



World Vision

**ENOUGH**

**Indonesia:**

**Our meals,  
our voice**





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## What's this about?

World Vision is leading the *School Meals Child-led Research* initiative, a unique effort that ensures children's voices are at the centre of shaping school meals programmes. Across 13 countries, children took the lead in asking questions, gathering stories, and sharing what matters most to them about school meals. They explored critical root causes, gaps and potential solutions, always through the lens of their lived experiences in schools.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. The data collected by child researchers was analysed thematically, reflecting the priorities and perspectives of their peers.

In Indonesia, this child-led research is part of World Vision's ENOUGH campaign, which amplifies children's voices in national, regional and global advocacy efforts. By listening to children and learning directly from their experiences, this initiative highlights not only the challenges faced by children in Indonesia, but also their aspirations for a future where every child can thrive and enjoy nutritious meals at school.





## Who we are

We are students from Indonesia who wanted to share our experiences of the school meals we receive through the new national Free Nutritious Meals programme, Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG). **We know that what we eat affects our health, our energy levels, and how well we can learn.** This research gave us the chance to speak up about what is working well and what could be improved.

A total of 31 children took part, along with 3 adults. There were 21 girls and 10 boys, all aged between 12 and 17 years. We come from different areas of the country, including Central Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, West Kalimantan, and Papua.

## What we see at school

All of us know about the MBG programme. We understand that it is a government initiative to ensure school children get the nutritious food they need, especially in places where malnutrition is a risk. The meals are served every day, following a varied menu to help us eat more healthily. Some of us mentioned that the programme is linked to other health efforts for mothers and young children. **One of the best things about the MBG programme is that it means we don't feel hungry at school.**

Most of us feel grateful and happy to be part of the MBG programme. It helps us eat regularly, prevents us from buying too many snacks, and allows us to save more of our pocket money. For some of us, **the meals have made it easier to concentrate in class and have reduced the pressure on our parents to prepare food.** Families with less money especially benefit, as the cost of meals is no longer a burden.

In some schools, the meals taste good, but in others, the taste and quality could be improved. Some of us have noticed **problems like food spilling in containers or ingredients that aren't fresh.** While these things don't happen all the time, they greatly affect how much we enjoy our meals.

## Before and after the MBG Programme

The MBG programme is new and was introduced in different areas between January and July 2025. We have all noticed changes. **We feel more confident that our food is healthy, we save money by not buying snacks, and we are more focused and motivated to be in school.**

One student in Palu shared that before the MBG programme, they spent money carelessly, but now they manage it better and feel healthier. Others said the programme helps them eat on time and has improved their nutrition.

## Hygiene matters

When food is prepared well and kept clean, it makes a big difference to how we feel about eating it. **Many of us think that hygiene, freshness, and preparation could be better in some schools.** We want meals that are safe, served in clean containers, and cooked in kitchens that meet good hygiene standards.

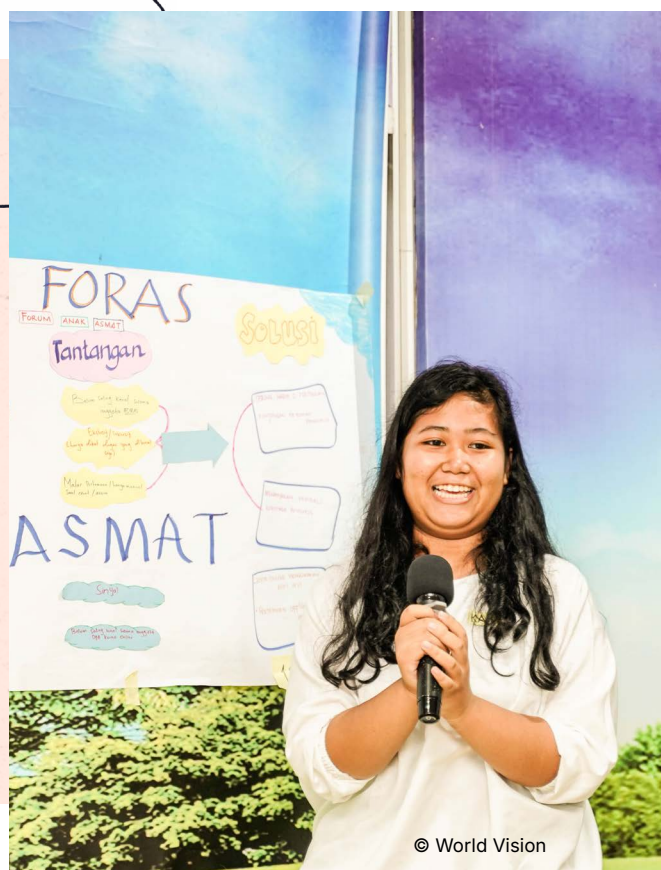
But we have also seen worrying things. In one school, students were served food that smelled unpleasant or was too tough to eat. In another, a child who documented poor food quality was threatened by a kitchen supervisor. **This shows why it is important for children to be able to speak up about their meals and feel safe doing so.**

## Impact on our lives

We believe the MBG programme has had a big impact. It has helped us stay healthy, focus more on learning, and eat more nutritious food. **It has made access to food fairer because now all children have the same chance to have a good meal at school.**

We no longer have to worry about going hungry during the day. The MBG programme has even improved our relationships with our parents because they are less stressed about preparing food every day. Families can save time and money, and parents feel less pressure at home.

Some schools have also taught students about nutrition and healthy eating, such as the "My Plate" programme in Palu. We believe this should be introduced in all schools, so we understand why school meals matter.



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## What we want for the future

We want the MBG programme to continue and reach every child in Indonesia. **We want the food to be cooked well and made with fresh, safe ingredients.** The menu should offer more variety, hygiene standards should be followed, portions should be sufficient, and food should be served on time, so it stays fresh. We would like proper cutlery, and we think less plastic should be used.

**We also want nutrition education in all schools so every child understands why school meals are important and how they can help improve them.** This means providing safe and friendly ways for children to share ideas or speak up when something is wrong. We want the government to work with parents, our communities, and local businesses to ensure the MBG programme maintains good standards and continues for many years.

**Our hope is for every school to serve food that is fresh, nutritious, and filling,** with enough variety to make us look forward to our school meals each day. **Our message is simple: listen to us and work with us to make the MBG programme the best it can be.**

**Our voices matter. Our school meals matter. Our future matters.**

- Indonesian child researchers



## Acknowledgements

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Report curated by **Eoin O'Keeffe**

Copyediting: **Helen Shipman**

Design: **Carol Homs**

Cover photo: © **World Vision / Ben Adams, Elissa Webster, Gracia Thomas**

For further information about this publication please contact: [mario\\_stephano@wvi.org](mailto:mario_stephano@wvi.org)

For more information about World Vision's School Meals, visit the [ENOUGH School Meals](#) page.

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### CHILD AND ADULT SAFEGUARDING

World Vision ensured the safe and ethical participation of girls, boys adhering to World Vision's Safeguarding policy and protocols on data collection and World Vision's Code of Conduct.

Data collectors were trained on how to conduct interviews in an ethical and safe manner. Children were oriented on the possibility of withdrawing from the interview process at any moment. Informed consent was obtained for all photographs included in this report.



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