



World Vision

ENOUGH

Lebanon:

**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 Lebanon, 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 Lebanon, but also their aspirations for a future where every child can thrive and enjoy nutritious meals at school.

Who we are

We are a group of young students, aged 12-17, in the Al-Tebbaneh and Zehrieh areas of Tripoli, Lebanon, who wanted to share what school feels like when there are no school meals. In Lebanon, there is no national school-feeding programme, so schools do not provide free meals to their students.

We did this research because many people do not know this is a problem. **We want to raise awareness among children, parents, schools, and the government, so that school meals become a reality.**

This is part of a wider research project that brings together children from many countries to discuss ways to improve school meals. The research was conducted between May and June 2025, using interviews and observations from the experiences of 19 students, which included us as child researchers.

We all shared our views on why school meals matter, what is missing, and what we want to see change. We spoke with students from different backgrounds, especially those living in the most vulnerable communities where poverty and school dropout rates are high.



What we see at school

Every child we spoke with agreed that **school meals are essential for health, learning, and well-being**. Many of us arrive at school without breakfast because our families cannot afford it. This makes it hard for us to focus and our energy fades before the day is over.

Some of us only eat cheap snacks from the school kiosk, but these are often unhealthy and overpriced, sometimes costing double what they do outside school. That's why **many students simply go hungry**.

We spend around eight hours at school. That's a large part of our day. **Imagine going eight hours without eating?** This shouldn't be normal. **Ensuring students aren't hungry should be part of a school's responsibility.**

Hunger doesn't just make it harder to study; it affects how we treat each other. **Students who have food sometimes bully those who don't**. When our classmates suffer from malnutrition, instead of helping them with food, parents just pull them out of school to avoid embarrassment. That's the culture we're in. **But if schools provide daily meals, they're not just helping children to eat, they're helping end a whole culture of shame.**



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What we'd change

We believe every child in Lebanon should be able to eat a healthy meal at school. The school feeding programme is not merely about providing food; it addresses essential needs that support students' education and mental and physical health, and it helps to reduce social disparities.

A proper school feeding programme can:

- Help more children come to school
- Help children do better in their studies
- Prevent children from dropping out of school
- Make children healthier and stronger

Here's what we want:

- Meals for all students
- Nutritious meals with fresh fruits and nuts
- Food that respects our traditions and meets our health needs
- Meals to be served during the school day, when we need the energy
- Participation of students in meal planning so to minimise waste
- Schools and parents to share responsibility for ensuring children have enough food, so it's not a burden solely on parents
- Schools to provide kiosks that offer healthy food at special, reduced prices for students, if free meals aren't possible.





Do adults listen to us?

Most of us have never been asked what we think about the food served at our schools or if we need school meals. But almost all of us say that school meals are needed. We also want to be heard.

Right now, it feels like everyone says they can't help. Parents say they're incapable of doing so. Schools say they're incapable of doing so. The government says it's incapable of doing so. So, who can take responsibility? Are we supposed to sacrifice our education, health, and future? Should we drop out of school just to take control of our lives and earn enough to eat?

We believe children should be involved in decisions that affect us. We're ready to share our ideas, and work with schools and leaders to make them a reality.

In [our open letter](#) to the Ministers of Education, Health, and Social Affairs, we said clearly that school meals are not just about food; they are about giving children the chance to stay in school, learn better, and be healthy.

What we hope for

We hope for a Lebanon where no student has to choose between learning and eating. We hope for schools that care about our health, our happiness, and our future. We hope for leaders who listen to children's voices and act on them.

We imagine a school where girls and boys feel welcome, safe, and are treated with dignity, where the smell of freshly cooked food fills the school. A school with a clean kitchen where cooks prepare hot, healthy Lebanese meals every day: rice and vegetables, lentils, fresh salad, some protein like chicken or meat, and maybe even soup on cold winter mornings. We picture a bright dining space where we can sit together with our friends, laugh, and eat without shame or worry.

In this school, no one is left out. Every student gets a plate of food. The food is healthy, tasty, and enough to keep us full until the end of the day. We leave the dining hall ready to focus on lessons, play at recess, and dream about our futures.

We hope for a Lebanon where this isn't just our imagination; it's a reality in every school.

Our message is simple:

Our voice matters. Our school meals matter. Our future matters.

- Child researchers from Lebanon

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Special thanks to: **Dr. Patricio Cuevas-Parra, Mario Stephano**

Report curated by **Eoin O'Keeffe**

Copyediting: **Helen Shipman**

Design: **Carol Homs**

Cover photo: © **World Vision / Hicham Najem**

For further information about this publication please contact: 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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