

World Vision

SUFICIENTE

Peru:

**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 Peru, this child-led research is part of World Vision's ENOUGH campaign (SUFICIENTE in Spanish), 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 Peru, 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 students from different regions of Peru who came together to ask: what do school meals really look like in our country? What do students think about them? And how can they be improved?

We listened to the voices of 82 students, aged 8 to 16. Some attend schools with kitchens, others go to schools where the food is prepared at home and brought in. Some love the meals; others think they need big changes. But we all agreed: **if the meals are for students, then students should be part of the conversation.**

What we found

The students we talked with had very different opinions about the meals they receive. Many felt that school meals are nutritious and help them stay alert in class. Some said the food is tasty and made with care, and that it helps them feel healthy throughout the day.

But not everyone shared that view. **Some students said the food is always the same and doesn't have enough vitamins or variety.** Others said the food doesn't look or smell appetising, so they don't feel like eating it, and some felt the meals don't help much with their energy or learning.

We learned that in some schools, mothers do the cooking and try their best with what they have. But the quality of meals depends a lot on where you live. **Some schools have proper kitchens. Others don't. This makes a big difference in how meals are prepared and served.**

When we talked about hygiene, many students said the food is handled well. They told us that kitchens are cleaned, vegetables are washed, and gloves are used. But there were also worrying stories, like food being cooked in unclean places or students finding insects on their plates.

Not all cooks use gloves or hats, and not everyone washes their hands. **Without proper space or enough staff, good food hygiene is difficult.**

What we would like to see

We have many ideas to improve school meals, and we want people to listen. First, we want more variety. The meals should be balanced and include vegetables, fruits, and proteins. They should taste good too. Many of us would like different types of food each day, made with ingredients from our own communities.

We want all food to be prepared safely, in clean kitchens with the right equipment. The people who cook need support and training, and everyone handling food should wear gloves and hats and follow good hygiene. Fruits and vegetables should be washed carefully, and the food should look and taste good.

We also want to be more involved in decisions about school meals. Right now, students are rarely asked what we want or need. We think there's a big gap between those who prepare the food and those who eat it. If school meals are meant for students, then students should have a say.

We'd like to be part of the committees that plan and monitor the meals. We want to be asked for feedback and for adults to take it seriously.



What we hope for

We believe school meals should support our health and help us do well in school. They should be clean, nutritious, and prepared with care. We know many mothers put in a lot of effort to cook for us, and we're grateful. But students deserve meals that are safe, fresh, and made with our needs in mind.

We also want to feel respected. That means food that looks appealing, is served in clean dishes, and comes from kitchens we can trust. When meals are good, we feel stronger and more focused. When they're not, school is harder.

We believe students have important things to say on the topic of school meals. If schools and leaders hear our ideas, we can help shape these meals, so they really work for us.

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

- Peruvian child researchers

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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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