



# Mozambique School Lunch INITIATIVE

January 2019 – Newsletter



## 2018 Highlights

- ❖ School lunch program impact: working where it matters most
- ❖ Farmer investment program growth: building a home-grown model from the roots up
- ❖ Stories from the field: hearing from the real champions
- ❖ Join us for 2019!

**We aim to build on these highlights for another successful year in 2019!**



## About Us:

Co-founders Roberto Mutisse (second-left) and Cara Myers (second-right) with the cooks at Candiza Primary School.

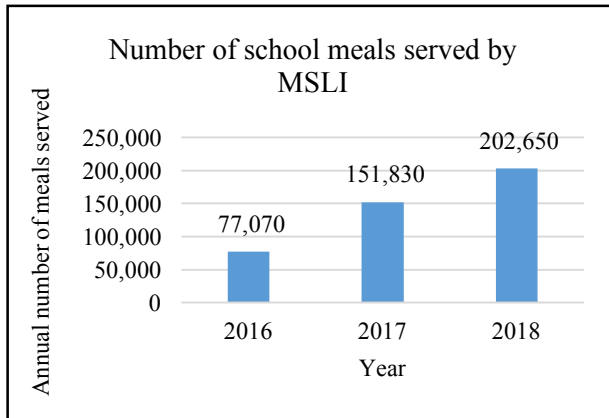
In 2016, Roberto and Cara founded the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative, a non-profit organization that builds home-grown school lunch programs in Mozambique. Since then, we have grown and expanded our approach to tackling hunger in rural communities. We are passionate about creating opportunities for all children to live healthy, productive lives.



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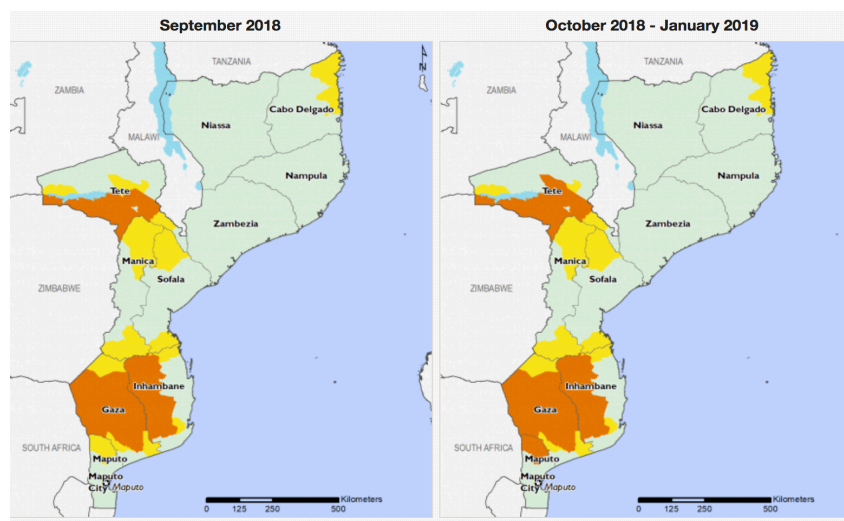
## School Lunches – Increasing Our Impact

In 2018, the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative served daily school lunches to 1,050 students across five different primary schools (grades 1-7) in rural communities in Chokwe District, Gaza Province, Mozambique. These school lunches helped get students enrolled, with our newest school, Bombôfo Primary School, registering an increase in enrollment by 52% over the 2017 school year. The school lunches also incentivize higher attendance rates and learning. According to teachers, regular student attendance is critical so that they can progress through the curriculum and not have to go back and repeat for students who are chronically absent.



## Safety Nets Where They Matter Most

In 2018, weather conditions made worse by climate change resulted in failed or significantly below average harvest for farmers in Mozambique. This has created crisis-level food security conditions, especially for families living in Gaza Province where MSLI is based. According to FEWS Network’s Food Security Outlook Update for Mozambique in September 2018, “*Poor households in remote semiarid areas have exhausted their food stocks earlier than normal...The most vulnerable households are reducing the quantity and frequency of meals and withdrawing children from school.*” MSLI is directly countering this problem by providing a vital safety net for children who would otherwise be at risk of hunger, malnutrition, and dropping out of school.



IPC 2.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase  
 1: Minimal 2: Stressed 3: Crisis 4: Emergency 5: Famine

Source: Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS Network) <http://fews.net/southern-africa/mozambique/food-security-outlook-update/september-2018>



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## Farmer Investment – Providing Seeds to Tackle Root Causes

Recognizing that low agricultural productivity is a driving cause of food insecurity and hunger for rural families in Mozambique, in 2018 MSLI doubled down on its investment in local farmer groups. By gaining access to key inputs, like tractor services, seeds, and small scale irrigation equipment, farmers were able to greatly increase their production, supplying nutritious crops to the school lunch program, selling to their neighbors, and consuming at home. This is integral to reducing the prevalence of children going to school hungry in the first place and our closed-loop model means that the local economy also benefits from the school lunch program.



## Two Seasons of Growth

In the first season from March to August 2018, farmers grew beans, kale, tomatoes, cabbages, onions, bell peppers on three hectares of land. This supplied the school lunch program all of its vegetables for four months and beans for almost two months. For the second season from September 2018 to January 2019, farmers grew beans, maize, and green beans on five hectares of land. We are currently harvesting this crop and expect it to contribute significantly to the procurement needs of the school lunch program.



In particular, access to irrigation equipment has allowed farmers to grow even with irregular rains, having a huge impact on their community's level of food security.



## Stories from the Field

While the facts and figures are important, sometimes it's the stories that give us an even deeper layer of understanding of what's going on in the field.

### *MSLI's Champions – The Cooks*

Sara (pictured left) and Tereza (pictured right), the two cooks at the Candiza Primary School, are extremely dedicated to their work. Both are single mothers with children at the school. Every morning, they rise as early as 5am to prepare the beans, vegetables, or chicken that will be served with rice or xima. Sometimes students bring along their younger siblings, as young as 3 years old, hoping that they will also get a meal if they are at school. These two women always find a way to make sure that every child eats, often skipping lunch themselves to ensure that the last child gets a meal.



### *Culminoca's Students*

Professor Culminoca (pictured left) is the director of the Bombôfo Primary School. She is very dedicated to her students and is the chief monitor of the school lunch program at her school. She believes strongly in the importance of the school lunch program, citing cases of children whose parents have both migrated to South Africa in search of informal jobs, leaving the kids at home. She says that these students depend on having a reliable lunch at school. After MSLI installed tip-tap handwashing stations (pictured right) at each school and trained students to use them before eating and after going to the bathroom, Culminoca reports that the rate of diarrhea among students has dramatically decreased.



## MSLI's New Logo



As of November 2018, MSLI has a logo! As a Mozambican initiative, we are using the colors of the Mozambican flag (red, green, yellow, black). The round shape partitioned into three sections represents the typical bowl used to serve the school lunches. The green section with rice grains symbolizes the food we serve every day and is also similar to the pattern often seen on the skirts of the women farmers who grow the crops for the school lunch program. The yellow section with the plant represents growth. We are literally growing food through our work with local farmers. We are also growing children's bodies and minds through better nutrition. And yellow is for a brighter future. The red section with the child's face symbolizes our north star—the Mozambican child, the reason we do what we do. Because at the end of the day, our mission is for every Mozambican child to grow and thrive.

### Join Our Cause for 2019!

At the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative, we are excited for another year of growth in 2019, serving students and tackling the root causes of hunger and poverty in rural Mozambique. You can help by:

- 1) Learning more: check out our new website: <https://www.mozambiqueschoollunchinitiative.org/>
- 2) Sharing our story: spread our message to others so we can garner more support!
- 3) Donating: At **\$0.25 per meal**, you can **feed a child for a month with just \$5** (click on this [link](#)). Please consider supporting MSLI so we can reach more Mozambican children and give them the tools for a better future. Every donation counts!



#### *Sample meal*

Peanut Vegetable Stew  
with Rice

#### Nutrition Facts

Calories: 620  
Protein: 18 grams  
Vitamins: A, B, C, E, K



### Student's Voices

"I really like coming to school and eating lunch. My parents leave early in the morning to go out to the bush to produce charcoal.... I go to school without eating anything in the morning. My favorite is chicken day because we rarely eat chicken at home." - Maimossi Enoque Cubai, grade 4, Duvane Primary School



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