



Mozambique School Lunch INITIATIVE

COVID-19 – What we're doing and how you can help

Dear MSLI supporter,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well during these unprecedented times. Here at the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative, we are doing all we can to keep our staff, the students we serve, and our communities healthy. We are writing with an update on the situation in Mozambique as well as steps we have taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. As always, we are grateful for our supporters who make this work possible.



COVID-19 in Mozambique

As of April 30th, Mozambique has 76 confirmed cases of COVID-19. However, Mozambique borders South Africa, which has the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in sub-Saharan Africa so far (5,647), and there is significant cross-border travel among traders and temporary migrants. The healthcare system in Mozambique is very weak and has little capacity to deal with a significant outbreak. Therefore, the government has taken strict preventative measures to try to stop the spread of the virus.

- All schools in Mozambique have been temporarily closed since March 23rd.
- On April 1st the President of Mozambique declared a State of Emergency, lasting until at least May 31st. The country's borders have been closed (except for vital cargo) and there are strict limitations on people's movements and activities within the country.

The economic crisis is making hunger in Mozambique worse

The World Food Program warns that the pandemic's economic impacts could [almost double](#) the number of people suffering from acute hunger. Food security in Mozambique is already near crisis levels, and the economic repercussions of COVID-19 are likely to make the situation even worse. Food shortages and price increases are expected. Many people who live hand to mouth have seen their daily jobs – such as market vendors, traders and drivers – disappear. For many children in Mozambique, school lunch is the only hot meal they eat every day. Now that schools are closed, they are at higher risk of malnutrition.

Our COVID-19 Response Policy

Since schools have been closed since March 23rd, MSLI has had to temporarily suspend our school lunch program. However, we are just as committed as ever to ensuring the children in our program have quality nutrition. These are the ways we are responding to this unprecedented challenge:

1. **We are caring for our staff, who are the frontline workers in the school lunch program.** MSLI has guaranteed full wages for all of our Mozambican staff during this period and has already delivered two months' worth of food baskets to each of the cooks.
2. **We are providing monthly food baskets to the orphans and vulnerable children at each of our schools.** These children are cared for by families at high risk of experiencing hunger. We have reallocated the budget we would have used to provide school lunches to send fortified maize flour and beans home with over 400 children, more than one-third of the total number of students in our schools. Each food basket contains enough to share with the child's siblings as well. About 10% of these children are living with HIV, making this food support even more important so they can continue to take their antiretroviral medications.
3. **We are supporting local farmers to increase community food security and income during the crisis.** MSLI is continuing to support farmer groups this season to protect local farming families and their communities. The farmers we work with have already begun planting almost 25 acres of nutritious beans, sweet potatoes, and vegetables. As the economic crisis worsens, these farmers will provide a lifeline of income and quality food for the local community.
4. **We are committed to immediately re-starting our school lunch program once schools re-open.** Although we do not yet know when schools will re-open in Mozambique, we know the economic impact of COVID-19 will be felt for months to

come. For vulnerable children, ensuring that they are back in school and have the nutrition they need will be all the more important to help these communities recover. Our school lunch program will be more important than ever.

Thank you for your continued support

We are immensely grateful for the outpouring of generosity we have experienced during this challenging time. If you are considering donating your stimulus check—or any amount—this is the impact it will have:

- \$1,200 provides monthly food baskets for 80 children. Our first food distribution was in the first week of April and our second distribution will be the first week of May. Help us reach more kids!
- As soon as farmers begin harvesting their crops, starting in June for some vegetables, MSLI will be purchasing fresh local produce to include in our school meals or in the food baskets for vulnerable children. Your donation helps ensure that the meals we provide are high quality and nutritious and that local farmers have a dependable market.
- Your donation also helps us continue providing stable wages and support for our Mozambican staff and 13 cooks, including one on maternity leave.

Ways to donate:

- 1) Online via PayPal or credit card [here](#)
- 2) Send a check to:

Mozambique School Lunch Initiative
5105 S. Park Lane
Spokane, WA 99223





Thank you and take care,

Cara and the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative team

"COVID-19 is potentially catastrophic for millions who are already hanging by a thread. We all need to come together to deal with this because if we don't the cost will be too high - the global cost will be too high: many lost lives and many, many more lost livelihoods."
- Arif Husain, Chief Economist at the World Food Program

Learn more about the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative

Check out our website:

<https://www.mozambiqueschoollunchinitiative.org/>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mozambiqueschoollunchinitiative/>

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