



Mozambique School Lunch INITIATIVE

The case for investing in school lunches

1,965. This is the number of school lunches served by the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative (MSLI) *every day* this year. That's almost two thousand children who are counting on our program, knowing they'll get a hearty meal when they go to school.

- 130 preschool students
- 1,665 primary school students
- 141 secondary school students

Why is this important?

Because... ***“Nothing destroys potential as savagely as hunger.”*** Malnourished children are less able to concentrate and absorb information. They are also more likely to drop out of school, partly because they are not learning – and partly because poverty pushes them into work and child marriage.” This [article from the Guardian](#) describes exactly the situation we see in Mozambique, and is the driving motive behind our school lunch program.

A huge bang for your buck

Funding school lunch programs actually have an incredibly **high return on investment**. According to [analysis by the World Food Program](#), for every **\$1 invested in school meals**, communities **receive \$9 in economic returns**. How is this so?

4 ways school lunch programs benefit children and transform communities

1. School meals **keep children, especially girls, in school**, which increases their earnings later in life.
2. School meals provide **essential nutrition**, reducing the economic costs of chronic malnutrition and stunting.
3. School meal programs **generate income for local farmers**, providing stable market opportunities to sell their crops.



Students having lunch at Chate B Primary School.



A student with a big plate of xima and beans.

4. School meals create **positive ripple effects**, enabling teachers to teach more material, preventing children from getting sick, helping avoid child marriages and teenage pregnancies... the list goes on.

That's why we **LOVE** school lunches!

(Especially MSLI's school lunches, because they are DELICIOUS too!)



MSLI's cooks serving lunch at Cumba Primary School.

Breaking the cycle of poverty: supporting girls and boys through adolescence

If you tell a girl she should stay in school, but that requires her to walk 15 miles one way to school, with no breakfast and no lunch, you never really put yourself in her shoes. Before MSLI's school bus program, this was the reality for most students who finished the 7th grade at their local primary school. Secondary schools in Mozambique require more resources and higher qualified teachers, and are usually located in more urban or peri-urban areas. This is one of the main reasons why rural students drop out of school after the seventh grade. Our mission is to ensure that all children in Mozambique have the opportunity to pursue a full education, and this year we have extended that to overcoming the secondary school hurdle. That's why **we have two school buses transporting 141 secondary school students every day**, getting these adolescents to school safely and enabling them to continue with their education.



Secondary school students with their lunches, getting ready to board the school bus.

Girls and boys clubs for adolescents

Recognizing that most of these students are the first in their families to go to secondary school, we decided to create an additional support system, especially since adolescence can be a tricky time. In May, MSLI welcomed our two newest team members, Tucha Rangel and Dino Morais, who are leading girls and boys clubs for the secondary school students. Twice a week, the students have club meetings with Tucha and Dino where they play games, practice skits and dances, eat some snacks, and discuss important topics like goal-setting, communication, puberty, and preventing pregnancy. In August we collaborated with the organization [BeGirl](#), who came and delivered workshops for the students on puberty, menstrual hygiene, and reproductive health.



A representative from BeGirl giving a workshop on menstrual hygiene to a group of our students.



A girls club meeting with MSLI mentor, Tucha, outside the Manjanguê secondary school.

Setting kids up for success: early learning in our preschools

We know that early childhood learning and development makes a big difference in how well a student performs in school later on. That's why we're really excited to see our preschools in Duvane and Bombôfo villages full of students.

We are also **measuring the effectiveness of the program** by carrying out evaluations at the end of each trimester to gauge how much the students in the preschools are learning. We ask students to recognize and sing letters of the alphabet, write numbers, and assess socio-emotional skills. We've found that the students are learning a lot, especially at Duvane preschool thanks to the excellent teaching of head preschool teacher, Anacleta. The evaluations have also helped us see where there are gaps so we can reinforce certain topics.



A preschool student eating lunch at Bombôfo preschool.



A preschool student showing off her numbers skills at the Duvane preschool.

Empowering the local community to be part of the solution: growing with our farmers

The farmers MSLL works with are growing more each year, **supplying tons of fresh, nutritious food for the school lunch program**. While these farmers are earning more income from these sales, they are still vulnerable to the challenging circumstances of being a farmer in Mozambique, such as volatile weather, poor roads, expensive inputs, and hippos. That's right, hippopotamuses. In order to use their irrigation equipment, the fields need to be near canals, and inevitably, sometimes a hippo will wander into the field, destroying crops just by walking around. Luckily, the latest hippo visitor did not stay too long, and so most of the bean crop is still in good condition.



Hippos trampled and munched on some of the bean crop this year, but luckily didn't cause too much damage.



A farmer sorts through the beans she has harvested.



A farmer packages her beans to sell to MSLI.

Support MSLI to do even more this year and beyond!

As we grow, there are more and more ways that you can make a difference. Here are some examples of specific needs we have right now:

1. Help us provide more school lunches: **\$50** to support a student's lunches for a whole year
2. Fundraise to purchase a school bus, as we expect to have twice as many secondary school students in our program next year: **\$26,700**
3. Fund the preschool program (breakfast, lunch, teachers) for a class of 30 students: **\$378** per month
4. Help us buy an irrigation pump for another farmer group to get started in our program: **\$2,800**

Donate directly on our website –

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

If you'd like to **donate with a credit or debit card**, [you can do so here and just select the "Donate with a Debit or Credit Card" option.](#)

Donate to MSLI's projects on GlobalGiving

[Click here to donate to our school bus program](#)

[Click here to donate to our school lunch program](#)

If you're **in the U.S.**, you can make a check out to "Mozambique School Lunch Initiative" and send to:

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

If you're **in Mozambique**, reach out to Ahuti Kumar for the best ways to donate locally! ahuti@mozambiqueschoollunchinitiative.org

A huge thanks to all of our supporters!



Students with their lunches at Cumba Primary School.

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