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School health and nutrition programming in Asia-Pacific: A snapshot



The health, nutrition and well-being of learners are key determinants of **education outcomes** and an integral part of quality education

Globally

School meals **increase attendance** rates

by up to

8%



Promoting handwashing in schools in low-income countries can **reduce absenteeism**

by up to

61%



Source: UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, 2023. Ready to learn and thrive: School health and nutrition around the world. Paris: UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP.

Almost every country in Asia-Pacific implements school health and nutrition programmes

In Asia-Pacific



9 out of **10** countries

implement some aspect of **school health programming**, especially in primary schools

Among 23 responding countries,

83%

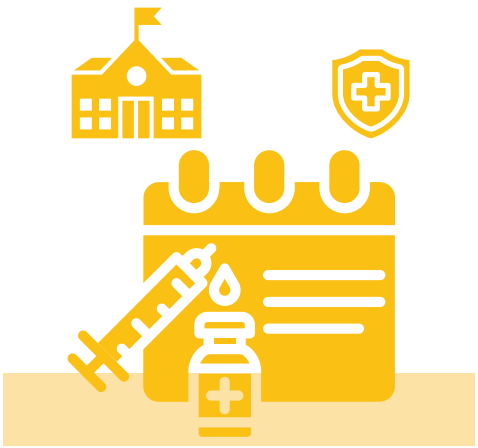
demonstrate having **national standards for health-promoting schools**



Out of 43 countries with available data,

63%

report having **school-based immunization services**



Source: Secondary analysis of data from the 2022 global report, 'Ready to Learn and Thrive. School health and nutrition around the world', that was featured in webinar launch of the global report on 20 June 2023 by the Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on School Health, Nutrition and Well-being.

School health and nutrition programmes are key determinants of education outcomes and are **a cost-effective investment,** feasible in all settings, and deliver significant development gains

Globally



School feeding programmes provide a

US$ **9** return on every US$ **1** invested

School programmes that address mental health can potentially provide a **return on investment** of

US$ **21.50** for every US$ **1** invested



Source: UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, 2023. Ready to learn and thrive: School health and nutrition around the world. Paris: UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP.

School health and nutrition programmes **promote inclusion and equity** in both education and health, and more needs to be done to reach those who are missing out

In Asia-Pacific

In **5** out of **6** South-East Asian countries where data is available, less than 50% of primary and secondary schools have adapted infrastructure for **students with disabilities**



More than **60%** of the more than 185 million children who receive school feeding live in **lower-middle income countries**





Among **28** countries where data is available, more than 30% report that **content on 'HIV', 'gender', 'sexual abuse' and 'puberty'** is only briefly included or not included in secondary school curricula

Source: Secondary analysis of data from the 2022 global report, 'Ready to Learn and Thrive. School health and nutrition around the world', that was featured in webinar launch of the global report on 20 June 2023 by the Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on School Health, Nutrition and Well-being.

More attention must be paid to the **school environment,** which is critical to health and learning

In Asia-Pacific

Among **37** countries where data is available, only 10% provide school-based, **anti-bullying interventions**



Basic hygiene services are available in more than 95% of schools in 13 of 28 surveyed countries

8 countries report more than **50%** coverage



Basic sanitation services are available in less than 50% of schools in 10 of 29 surveyed countries

12 countries report more than **90%** coverage



Source: Secondary analysis of data from the 2022 global report, 'Ready to Learn and Thrive. School health and nutrition around the world', that was featured in webinar launch of the global report on 20 June 2023 by the Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on School Health, Nutrition and Well-being.

Strengthening **coverage and impact** requires school health and nutrition programmes that are comprehensive, responsive to the context, and sustained by policy and financial commitments

In Asia-Pacific

Between **2013 and 2020,** the number of children in countries receiving **school meals** grew by

4%



19 of **23** countries currently have a school feeding **policy**



Source: Secondary analysis of data from the 2022 global report, 'Ready to Learn and Thrive. School health and nutrition around the world', that was featured in webinar launch of the global report on 20 June 2023 by the Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on School Health, Nutrition and Well-being.

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School health and nutrition programming in Asia-Pacific

School health and nutrition programmes are among the most widely implemented public policies in the world. Governments recognize that these initiatives significantly improve health, nutrition, and learning outcomes for school-age children and adolescents and deliver big development gains to their communities and countries. Yet too many children are still missing out on these essential inputs to their learning and well-being.

This Snapshot brings together global and regional data from Asia-Pacific on the situation of school health and nutrition programming. It draws from the 2022 global report, 'Ready to learn and thrive: school health and nutrition around the world', together with secondary analysis of data from that report specific to Asia-Pacific. The Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on School Health, Nutrition and Well-being featured this global and regional data in the regional webinar launch of the global report on 20 June 2023. The Snapshot highlights the six key messages of the global report, encouraging efforts by the education sector and its partners to improve, scale up, sustain, and monitor the progress of school health and nutrition programmes that holistically address students' needs, so that all children and adolescents can learn and thrive.



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