



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With Schools Closed Worldwide, Food Banks Turn Their Attention to Feeding Millions of Vulnerable Children

The Global FoodBanking Network and the Global Child Nutrition Foundation Announce Partnership to Support Children's Food Needs Amid COVID-19 School Closures

Chicago, IL (April 24, 2020) – [The United Nations estimates that 368.5 million children that normally rely on school meals for nutrition must now turn to other sources due to COVID-19](#). This week [The Global FoodBanking Network](#) (GFN) and the [Global Child Nutrition Foundation](#) (GCNF) announced a partnership to help provide meals to these children.

The partnership will provide technical support to food banking organizations in more than 40 countries that are on the frontlines of fighting the food insecurity and hunger now accompanying the COVID-19 health emergency, including access to food for vulnerable children.

GFN's mission is to nourish the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks in 40+ countries. Pre-COVID, GFN aided food banks in the establishment, development, and expansion of feeding programs for low-income school-aged children; and 30 food banks affiliated with GFN served an estimated 3.49 million school-age children.

GCNF is a global network of governments, businesses and civil society organizations working together to support school meal programs that help children and communities thrive.

To further mobilize food banks to tackle child hunger amid COVID-19, **GFN and GCNF** will aggregate information on what they are learning from partners who are responding to the food and nutrition needs of children worldwide while they are out of school.

Lisa Moon, President and CEO of The Global FoodBanking Network, said, "We know that children are disproportionately affected by this global health and economic crisis. We are thrilled to partner with the Global Child Nutrition Foundation to determine how to best reach children out of school during these unprecedented times. Nearly half of the people served by food banks are children, and many of our members are involved in school meal programs. This is a natural partnership that will propel our collective work forward."

Arlene Mitchell, Executive Director of the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, shared, "This partnership with The Global FoodBanking Network is coming at a critical time. Around the globe, COVID-19 has closed schools, threatens children's food security, and can hasten malnutrition. Our team is excited to work with GFN to combine resources and know-how of school meal programs and food banks to ensure that children are nourished."

With the rapid spread of the pandemic and mandated school closures, nearly all food banks have had to adapt to reach children in their communities. Globally, 8 in 10 food banks that operate, or support child feeding programs report that COVID-19 has had an impact on these programs.

- 66% of food banks with a child feeding program are reporting a decrease in number of students fed.
- 57% report a decrease in frequency of feeding.
- 40% report a decrease in size of rations.
- 40% report a decrease in the variety of food.

These statistics suggest the school closures will not only impact children's educational development but may also contribute to rising child hunger and malnutrition if not addressed. To address this issue, GFN is supporting food banks as they deploy a myriad of ways to address feeding children.

[Food For All Africa](#) (FFAA), a GFN affiliated food bank based in Accra, Ghana, has facilitated a school feeding program since 2016. Low-income households with children in Ghana had high rates of child hunger before the spread of coronavirus; with schools now closed, students who relied on school meals are suffering. To respond to the increased need for food assistance, FFAA is deploying emergency rations, including food boxes for families of the children who previously received school meals. In order to reach the families, FFAA worked with the school principals to map out the homes of the students. On Thursday of every week, FFAA staff are accompanied by one or two staff members from the local school to go directly to the communities and deliver food boxes to each household.

Since the onset of the crisis, [Banco de Alimentos Perú](#) (BAP) has seen a 41-50 percent increase in requests for emergency food assistance. However, due to schools being closed, the number of children who were previously fed through school feeding programs has decreased. BAP has had to change the modality in which it reaches the children; BAP is now providing food to some schools who are able to package the products into kits and delivering these directly to the students and their families.

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About The Global FoodBanking Network:

The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN) is an international non-profit organization that nourishes the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks in 43 countries. GFN focuses on combating hunger and preventing food waste by providing expertise, directing resources, sharing knowledge and developing connections that increase efficiency, ensure food safety and reach more people facing hunger. Last year, 943 GFN member food banks rescued over 500 million kilograms of food and grocery product and redirected it to feed 9.6 million people through a network of more than 55,000 social service and community-based organizations. For more information, please visit www.foodbanking.org.

About Global Child Nutrition Foundation

The Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) expands opportunities for the world's children to receive adequate nutrition for learning and achieving their potential. GCNF provides training, technical assistance, and sharing opportunities to help governments build national school meal programs that are nutritious, locally sourced, and ultimately independent from international aid. Learn more at www.gcnf.org.

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