



**SCHOOL NUTRITION
REFORM in UKRAINE**

#3 — 04 '25

The School Nutrition Reform Team Digest

(January–April 2025)



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Welcome! You are reading the third issue of the School nutrition reform digest, prepared by the School nutrition reform team. The key developments and achievements of the first four months of 2025 in the ongoing transformation of school meals system in schools are highlighted in this edition.

The reform, initiated in 2020 by the First Lady Olena Zelenska, continues to gain momentum: it is expanding at the national level, deepening in local communities, and gradually integrating into the international context. We remain committed to making school meals healthy, safe, and high-quality for every child – and every contribution you make to this mission matters.

In this edition, you'll find important updates, events, best practices, and useful materials to explore and share. Thank you for staying with us – and we wish you an enjoyable delving into the successes of the reform!



SECTION I – STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES. CASCADE METHOD OF THE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION



January 29 – visit of the First Lady Olena Zelenska to Dnipropetrovsk region

As part of the working trip to the Dnipropetrovsk region, First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska reviewed the progress of the school nutrition reform in the region. Together with the Reform team and representatives of the regional administration, she visited several lyceums where modernized food blocks already functionate.

The modernization of school food blocks became possible due to a state subvention of UAH 1.5 billion allocated in 2024. Schools were selected through an open competition held via the digital DREAM system, with the support of the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative. Among the 173 selected projects there were two lyceums in the city of Kamianske.

The comprehensive upgrades resulted in the following positive changes:

- over 1,100 pupils now receive balanced hot meals;
- a modern medium for food provision was created;
- new kitchen equipment was installed, and all facilities now meet safety and quality standards.

In total, 12 general secondary education institutions in the Dnipropetrovsk region has modernized food blocks through the governmental subvention.

Olena Zelenska, the initiator of the reform, remarked: “We shared how we are implementing the school nutrition reform while defending our country. This made a strong impression on our guests: renovating food blocks and dining halls, improving and making menus healthier under extreme conditions – something no one else in the world has done before.”



February – visit of the School nutrition reform team to Chernihiv, Volyn, Rivne, Poltava, and Sumy regions

The school nutrition reform is gradually transforming food organisation practices in schools all over Ukraine. The reform team continues to work closely with regions to support implementation in communities and ensure that every child has access to healthy meals.

As part of working visits, the Head of the reform team, Orest Stepanyak, visited Chernihiv, Volyn, Rivne, Poltava, and Sumy regions. The main goal was to engage with local authorities, inspect modernized food blocks, assess conditions in schools, and analyze how different models of food organisation are functioning.

Reform team is implementing the reform through a cascade approach – providing expert support to communities, helping them select effective solutions, and sharing successful case studies from other regions.

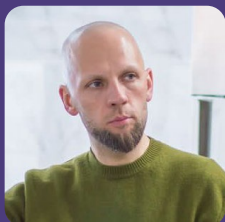
Chernihiv region once again demonstrated its strong commitment to implement the reform. In Losynivka, a general secondary school has been modernized, providing daily meals to 277 pupils. Renovations are under completion at Gymnasium No. 35, while Gymnasium No. 13 is setting up a modern food block as part of the Swiss-Ukrainian DECIDE project. A new culinary hub at the Chernihiv vocational education center is opening opportunities for training school chefs.



In Volyn region, different models of food organisation are actively implemented. A standout example is Dubove lyceum, operating as a “support kitchen” model, providing meals to nearly 500 children in four institutions. The Volyn regional lyceum with enhanced military and physical training now offers four balanced meals a day to over 500 pupils, following modern nutrition standards.

Poltava region demonstrates a technological approach: in Kremenchuk, over one third of local school chefs has already trained in a culinary hub. In Poltava, the modernization of food blocks is under completion at lyceums No. 26 and 38, while the food block in the Dykanka secondary school has been fully upgraded to provide meals for more than 350 pupils.

Despite a challenging security situation, Sumy region has achieved impressive results: five school food blocks were fully modernized over the past year, and eight more projects are under completion. A powerful culinary hub has also been established, capable of training professionals for school and preschool institutions across the region.



“

“Success depends on the determination of local leadership. We are always ready to support those who are striving for meaningful change today,” emphasized Orest Stepanyak, Head of the School nutrition reform team.

”



March – expansion of the free meals program

Since October 2024, the government has been providing a [subvention to support the organization of free hot meals for primary schoolpupils](#). Today, more than 1.6 million pupils have benefit from free meals, funded either through the state subvention or local budgets. Ukraine continues to invest in children's health, and the free school meals program will gradually expand to cover pupils in secondary and upper secondary schools.

The next stages of the reform envision a gradual program expansion:

- From September 2025, free meals will also be provided to pupils in grades 5–11(12) in frontline and border regions.
- From September 2026, the program will be extended to pupils in grades 5–6 across all regions of Ukraine.
- In subsequent years, the program will continue to expand to pupils in other grades nationwide.

Effective expansion of the program requires a systematic approach to addressing infrastructure and organizational challenges, including:

- modernization of food blocks and updating equipment;
- development of modern educational programs and culinary hubs for staff training and upskilling;
- implementation of an effective incentive system to attract and retain workers in the school nutrition sector;
- strengthening quality control over food products and ensuring compliance with modern safety standards.

During 2025, modernization of food blocks is planned in approximately 210 schools.



Communities received a subvention of 50 UAH per child to provide free meals for pupils in grades 1–4

The government [allocated](#) and [distributed](#) UAH 2.83 billion among local budgets to organize free hot meals for primary school pupils from January to May 2025.

Funds were distributed among the local budgets of 22 regions. Due to the security situation, the subvention did not extend to communities in Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kherson regions.

The program was improved and expanded to cover more areas:

- Special and specialized schools were included.
- Pupils studying under an individual plan (pedagogical patronage) who are physically study in educational institutions are also provided with meals.

The subvention may be used both for the purchase of food products and for the payment for catering and/or outsourcing services to provide hot meals for primary school pupils in educational institutions where in-person learning is organized or where in-person learning is combined with distance learning. In the case of providing meals by catering or outsourcing service providers, no more than 70 percent of the cost of such services must be paid from the subvention funds, and the remaining 30 percent of the cost must be financed from the local budget.

The updated subvention mechanism allows more children to have benefit from hot meals, even under challenging conditions. The School nutrition reform team continues to support program implementation at the local level.

Communities received support from the UN World Food Programme to improve the quality of hot meals for primary school pupils in general secondary education institutions

Providing balanced nutrition in schools is crucial for creating a safe and nurturing medium for pupils. An example of effective international cooperation in this area is the joint initiative between the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and WFP are implementing a program to fund hot meals for more than 150,000 primary school pupils across 1,428 educational institutions in 310 communities in 16 regions of Ukraine.

The government allocated two tranches of UAH 74.6 million each. The first tranche was approved by the [Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1451](#); The second — by [Resolution No. 248](#).

As of March 2025, 35.4% of the first tranche (UAH 26.39 million) had been used.

The dynamics of fund using in the first quarter of the year indicate growing trust in the Program:

- January — UAH 2.9 million
- February — UAH 7.5 million
- March — UAH 12.8 million

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and WFP experts conducted two major meetings (on January 17 and March 7), regularly informing communities and schools and explaining the mechanisms for participation in the Program.

Preparations are currently underway for the next tranche calculations, planned for distribution by the end of April 2025.



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Approval of the methodological recommendations on procurement in the field of food organization by the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Efficient organization of school nutrition is impossible without well-structured procurement processes. To support communities in implementing them properly and in compliance with regulations, the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine approved the [Methodological recommendations](#) on procurement in the field of food organization.

The recommendations include two sample tender documents:

- [Sample tender documentation for the procurement of catering services](#);
- [Sample tender documentation for the procurement of food blocks services](#).

This document was developed with consideration of the practical challenges noted by educational institutions. It provides clear guidance for conducting procurements of food products and food services — both through school food blocks and catering providers.

The main objective is to ensure transparency, efficiency, and compliance with quality standards at every stage of the procurement process.



SECTION II – IMPLEMENTATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Implementation of the subvention for modernization of school food blocks in 2024

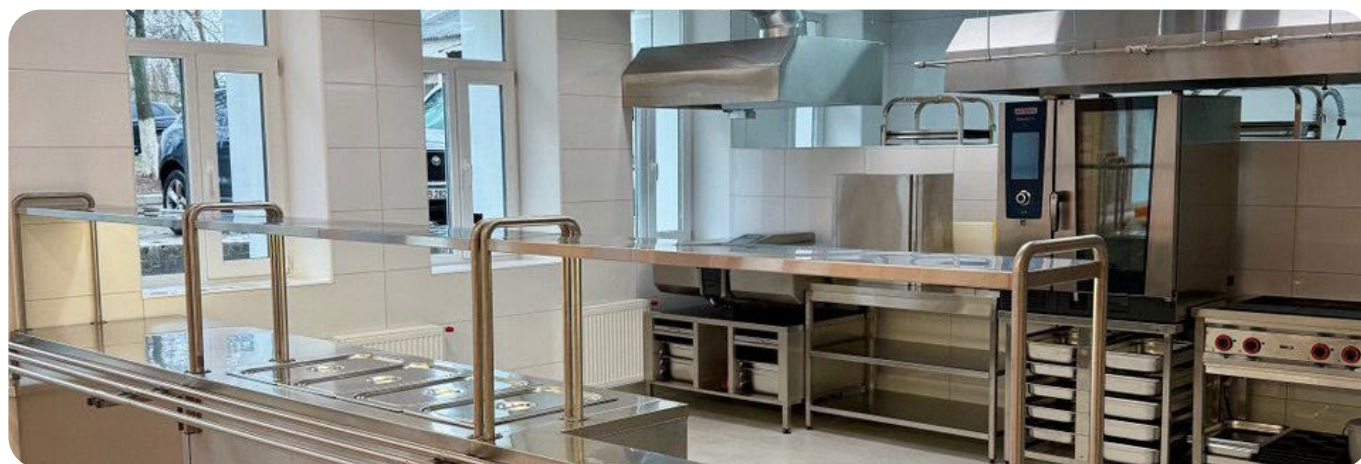
The modernization of school food blocks is one of the most extensive areas of the school nutrition reform, requiring significant financial resources. In 2024, the Government allocated UAH 1.5 billion subvention for the renewal of school food blocks, covering 173 projects, including:

- 139 projects following the “basic kitchen” technological model;
- 27 projects following the “support kitchen” technological model;

- 7 projects as recipients from kitchen-factories.

At the end of 2024, the implementation status of the 173 projects was following:

- 51 projects – full use of the allocated subsidy funds;
- 75 projects – either fully used the allocated amount of funds, completed construction work, or used more than 40% of the project value;
- 31 projects – used less than 40% of the allocated funds;
- 6 projects – has not started work yet.



Joint Project with the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI)

The modernization of food blocks in educational institutions, as part of the second phase of the school nutrition reform, is being implemented through the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the School nutrition reform team, and with

the support of the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI). EUACI is a leading international anti-corruption program in Ukraine, financed by the EU and co-financed and implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The main goal of the initiative is to ensure that all schoolchildren receive high-quality and safe meals.

In 2025, the state subvention program continues, and a new selection of projects for a total of UAH 960 million is underway.

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has established a Commission for reviewing and prioritizing project applications, which will submit consolidated proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers for final allocation of funds.

Given the scale of investments and potential risks at various implementation stages, there was an urgent need to introduce a transparent monitoring system to ensure the effective use of the state subvention.

Therefore, in May 2024, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine approached EUACI with a request to assess project and cost documentation for potential corruption, technical, and technological risks, aiming to ensure transparency and efficiency in project implementation.

The joint integrity project between EUACI, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the Reform team is being implemented in three stages:

Stage 1: Review of project documentation

As part of the modernization effort, EUACI experts conducted a comprehensive review of all prioritized and selected projects via the DREAM system. The review was carried out in two phases. During the first phase, 187 projects were analyzed, revealing issues such as: expenditures not covered by the subvention terms, inflated prices, equipment sourced from sanctioned countries, and technical non-compliance with equipment standards. Concrete recommendations were provided after each assessment and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. After adjustments based on these recommendations, 159 revised projects were re-evaluated.

Overall, the two stages of review identified unjustified expenses totaling UAH 132.9 million, allowing the redistribution of funds to support an additional 20 schools.

Ultimately, 183 projects were recommended for continued funding.



Stage 2: Monitoring the public procurement procedures for construction and modernization of food blocks

The NGO 'Center for public monitoring and research' joined EUACI experts in conducting a detailed analysis of tender documentation, including cost estimates.

In total, 233 procurement procedures were analyzed: 14 cases revealed significant legal violations, 64 cases showed minor deficiencies, such as excessive requirements for bidders or potentially discriminatory conditions. Following the monitoring, 35 official notices were sent to procurers and Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. As a result: three procurement cases were referred to the State audit service of Ukraine, which confirmed violations. Thanks to the experts' recommendations, changes were made to the tender documentation in nine cases, and contract terms were adjusted twice.

Special attention was paid to cost estimates: in one case out of 18 reviewed procurements, an additional agreement was signed that allowed reducing construction costs by UAH 1,108,154.

Stage 3: Monitoring of construction works

For remote monitoring of project implementation in schools, EUACI experts developed an interactive [dashboard](#). Progress of construction works, financial disbursements, procurement activities, and photo reports from project sites are visualized in it.

Construction assessments are based on 80 indicators, including photo documentation, HACCP compliance, and adherence to current building legislation. All information is regularly shared with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for decision-making.

As of March 2025, 126 objects were inspected. Across 20 regions, 87 violations were recorded.

The monitoring tools introduced through this project not only allow violations to be detected but also enable prompt corrective actions. Effective communication among experts, procurers, and contractors ensures swift problem resolution and enhances the quality of project implementation.

These approaches enable communities to effectively implement infrastructure initiatives in partnership with international organizations, ensuring the transparent use of public funds.

Methodological support and training

As part of the modernization initiative, EUACI experts provided comprehensive methodological support to procurers and contractors.

EUACI experts developed several key manuals:

- [Recommendations on conducting fair procurement for the modernization of food blocks and dining halls in secondary education institutions;](#)
- [Recommendations on technical supervision during the reconstruction and](#)

[major repair of canteens \(food blocks\) in secondary education institutions;](#)

- [Guidelines for photo reporting during technical supervision.](#)

To support effective adoption of these materials, four training sessions were held, involving more than 1,500 participants. Additionally, throughout project implementation, coordination meetings were organized, providing practical consultations on the preparation and implementation of construction works.

From the outset, the priority has been the creation of modern, safe food blocks in schools that meet quality standards and are implemented with integrity principles in mind.

A highly effective project implementation model was developed, encompassing transparency, monitoring, analytics, training, and process support. This approach has already proven its effectiveness and can be applied to other areas of public administration. Moreover, the developed control system can be adapted for international initiatives.

EUACI and the School nutrition reform team continue their fruitful collaboration to ensure the integrity-driven implementation of changes within the framework of the school nutrition reform.

January 20 — start of the project competition for the modernization of food blocks in educational institutions



The state budget of Ukraine for 2025 includes 960 million UAH subvention to local budgets for the implementation of investment projects to purchase equipment and modernize food blocks in educational institutions, including military lyceums and lyceums with enhanced military and physical training.

Who can participate in the competition:

- • Military lyceums;
- • Schools with 200 or more pupils;
- • Schools with 100 or more pupils, if they are the only ones in the community;
- • Institutions that conduct in-person or mixed-format of education and have shelters or plan to equip them by the end of the year.

The main requirements for participation include: developed project documentation; necessary conditions for organizing supplies; confirmed co-financing from the local budget.

Types of projects:

“Basic kitchen” — for schools with 200–600 pupils.

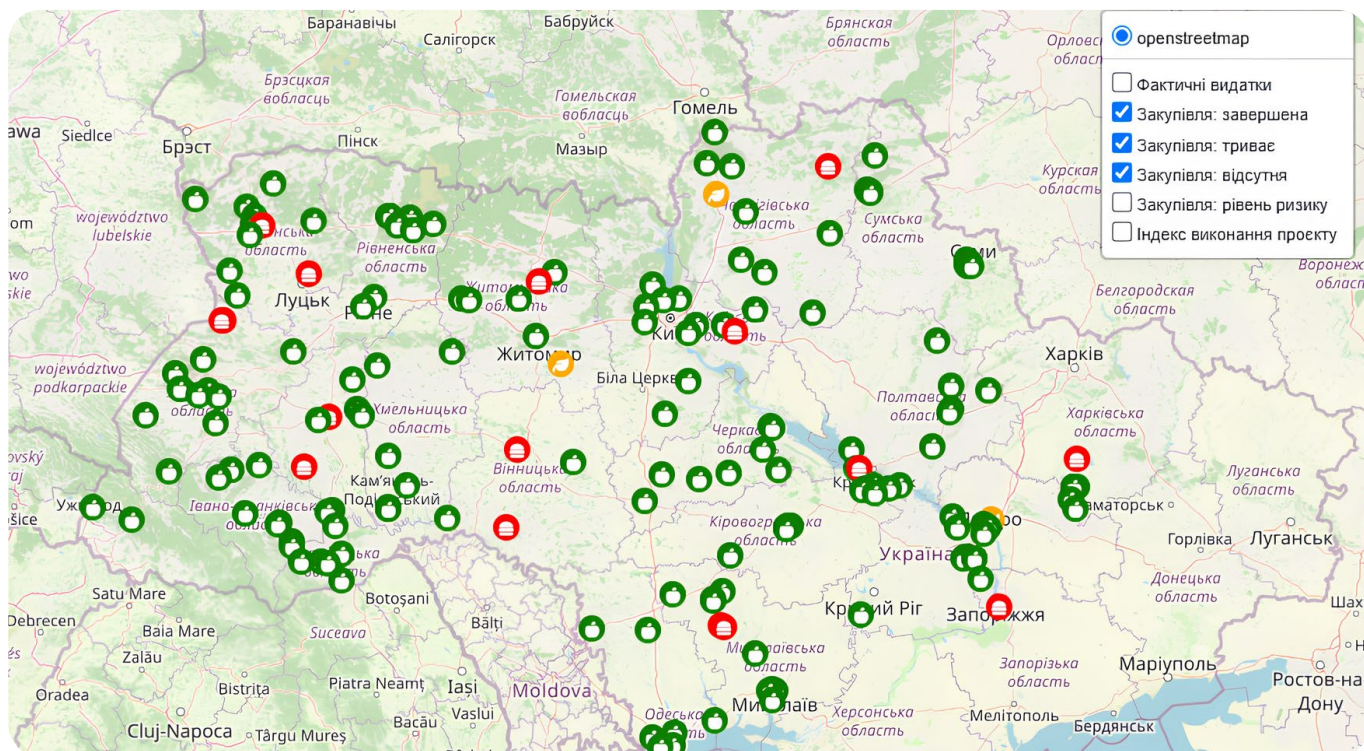
“Support kitchen” — for schools with 700–1500 pupils. The project should include food blocks in educational institutions, where a support kitchen and several recipients of hot meals from adjacent educational institutions will be located.

“Kitchen-factory” — for schools that will receive catering services from a kitchen-factory, if such a model has been implemented or will be implemented in the region during the current year.

Stages of selection::

- • Submission of applications in the digital system DREAM: January 20–29, 2025;
- • Evaluation of projects by regional administrations: January 30 – February 5;
- • Verification by the Ministry of Education and Science and formation of the list of projects: from February 6.

218 applications have been submitted for the competition, amounting to over 2.29 billion UAH. The verification of applications is ongoing, including checking compliance with design standards and the HACCP system.



March 4 – the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Resolution No. 241: continuation of funding for the modernization of school food blocks

In 2024, as part of the school nutrition reform, dozens of initiatives for the reconstruction of food blocks in schools all over Ukraine were launched. To support these projects at the final stage and avoid the loss of already invested resources, the Government adopted a decision on additional funding.

On March 4, 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved Resolution No. 241, which defines the procedure and conditions for providing an educational subvention from the state budget to local budgets. The subvention is aimed at the purchase of equipment, reconstruction, and modernization of food blocks in general secondary education institutions.

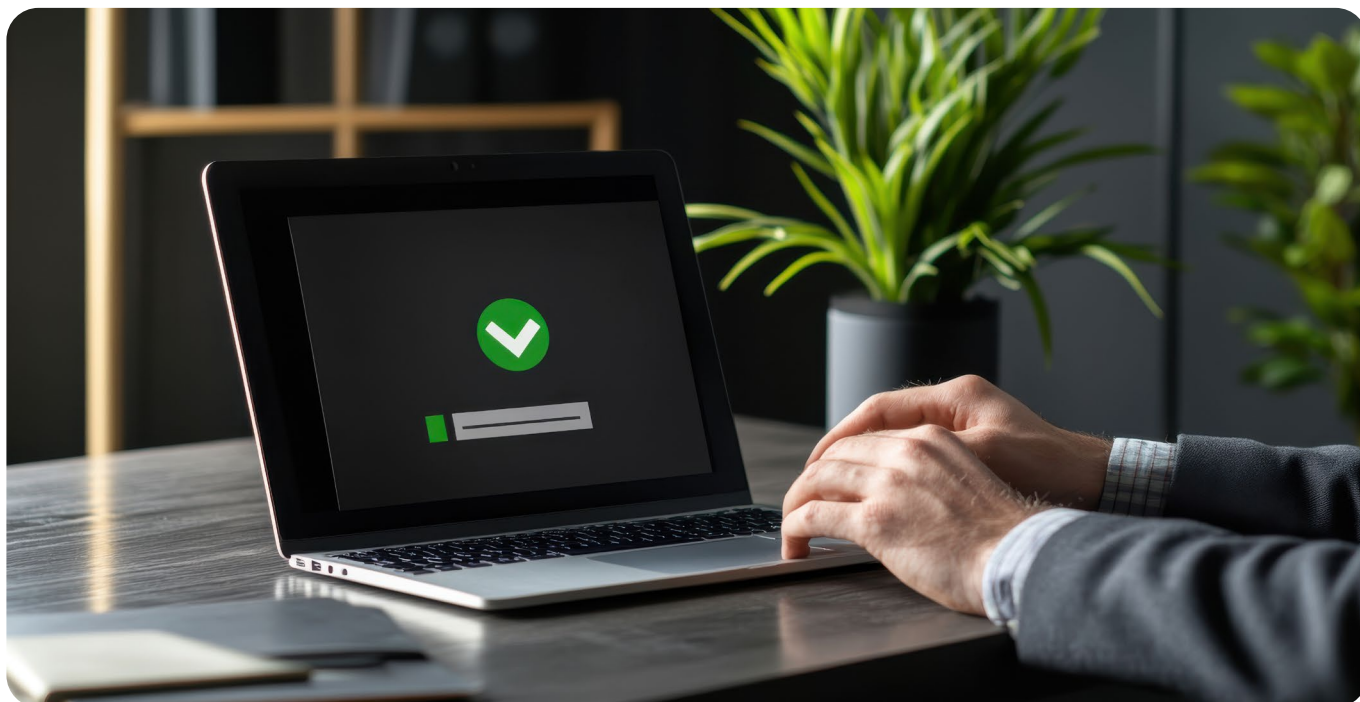
The funding covers 75 projects that in 2024 had been implemented by more than 40%. The total amount of the subvention is UAH 256.4 million, which will make it possible

to complete renovation works in already launched modernization projects.

The implementation of each project is accompanied by monitoring – a digital [dashboard](#) displays key indicators:

- current level of progress;
- compliance with working documentation;
- condition of communications and engineering systems;
- compliance with HACCP principles;
- availability of necessary technological equipment;
- confirmation of completed works.

The continuation of funding demonstrates a systematic approach to the implementation of the school nutrition reform. The completion of ongoing projects is an important stage that allows avoiding inefficient use of resources and ensures real changes for thousands of pupils across the country.



March 14 – the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine announced a competition for applications under the program “Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings in Ukraine” by the European Investment Bank

Energy efficiency in educational and health-care institutions is becoming an increasingly urgent topic, especially in the context of post-war recovery and rising energy costs.

That is why, on March 14, 2025, [the fourth phase of project selection](#) was launched under the “Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings in Ukraine” program, implemented by the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine with the support of the European Investment Bank. Educational, healthcare, and social institutions are invited to apply for funding for energy-efficient solutions.

The program includes:

- Thermal modernization of schools, hospitals, kindergartens, sports facilities, and other public buildings;

- Repair of damaged buildings and adaptation of premises to the needs of internally displaced persons.

The application period will last until July 31, 2025.

The School nutrition reform team recommends considering the possibility of a comprehensive upgrade of school infrastructure by combining energy-efficient solutions with the modernization of food blocks. This approach would address several critical objectives at once: ensuring compliance with sanitary and energy standards, creating safe and comfortable conditions for food preparation, and reducing the operating costs of educational institutions.



Expansion of kitchen-factories. Visit of regional representatives to Bucha for experience exchange

The innovative technological model of food organization known as the “kitchen-factory” has proven its effectiveness within the framework of the school nutrition reform. In March 2025, interest in this food service format was confirmed by a visit of representatives from ten regions to the kitchen-factory in Bucha, which produces up to 10,000 meal portions daily. The visitors saw the process of meal preparation and the logistics of dish delivery using the Cook&chill technology.

The operating principles of the kitchen-factory include the complete preparation of meals, rapid cooling of ready dishes, and their storage under stable temperature control conditions (between 3°C and 5°C), followed by reheating in a combi steamer before serving. This approach guarantees food safety and promotes equal access for pupils to high-quality nutrition,

regardless of the technical capacity of individual educational institutions.

As part of the visit, participants also toured schools in the Bucha community, observing how food distribution is organized in different settings – from a small school in the village of Blystavitsa to a large urban school in Bucha. Together with pupils, they ate meals, asked for children’s impressions, and assessed the quality and taste of the lunches.

Scaling up the kitchen-factory model is one of the next stages of the reform. The introduction of such innovative enterprises in various regions of the country will allow more children to be provided with high-quality, balanced meals – efficiently, rationally, and without compromising quality.

SECTION III – INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SCHOOL NUTRITION REFORM TEAM



February 7 – Meeting with the delegation of the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Ukraine, headed by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Mateja Prevolšek, and the School nutrition reform team

During the visit, the progress of the reform in educational institutions was presented: the modernized food block at Zmina Lyceum in Kyiv, where meals are prepared; the meal delivery format from the kitchen-factory to Bucha Lyceum No. 9; and the innovative “kitchen-factory” enterprise in Bucha, which provides balanced meals daily to more than 7,500 pupils.

The demonstration of achievements, open discussions, and readiness to embrace new approaches enable the implementation of effective solutions and the adaptation of global experience to Ukrainian realities. The meeting strengthened international cooperation between Ukraine and Slovenia in the field of school nutrition, opening new prospects for the implementation of best European practices.

March 13 – International School Meals Day 2025 Webinar

On March 13, the International School Meals Day 2025 Webinar was held, organized by the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition – the scientific platform of the School Meals Coalition.

The event, titled “The Surprising Science of School Meals: Learning from 1,000 Experts,” gathered more than 1,000 professors, researchers, and practitioners representing 105 countries around the world. The webinar served not only as a platform for knowledge exchange but also as a celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Coalition – an

initiative that emerged in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the webinar, Ukraine prepared video, demonstrating its experience in transforming school nutrition, highlighting the implementation of modern standards, the upgrading of infrastructure, and the expansion of international partnerships. The presentation generated significant interest among the international community, demonstrating that Ukraine’s approach to reform is actively integrating into global best practices in the field of child nutrition.

March 19 – visit of First Lady Olena Zelenska to Finland



Free school meals are one of the fundamental elements of the Finnish welfare model. The system, operating since 1943 and determined in legislation, guarantees that pupils across the country are provided daily with hot and balanced meals. This approach, which once served as an inspiration for the Ukrainian reform, continues to be a valuable source of experience. During the visit of the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska, to Finland on March 19, she had the opportunity

to see firsthand how this model functions in the everyday life of schools and to discuss its features with local experts.

Nowadays Ukraine is actively advancing the reform even under wartime conditions. Modern quality standards are being implemented, food blocks are being upgraded, kitchens-factory are being built, and school menus are increasingly enriched with healthy and balanced dishes. Finland is not only an example to follow but also a reliable partner: the country consistently supports Ukrainian educational reforms, including “New Ukrainian School” program.

The First Lady visited a local school together with the Minister of Education of Finland, Anders Adlercreutz, and the First Lady of Finland, Suzanne Innes-Stubb. They observed how school function, including its shelter system.

The example of Finland inspires us to do everything possible to ensure that Ukrainian children are happy and healthy.

March 27–28 – Ukraine's participation in the international summit "Nutrition for Growth 2025 Paris" in Paris



Ukraine presented its own experience in school nutrition reform at the global summit dedicated to food security issues. The international event was attended by high-level representatives, including the President of France Emmanuel Macron, the Prime Minister of France François Bayrou, the Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme Cindy McCain, ministers, heads of international organizations, diplomats, and experts.

The Ukrainian delegation, led by Deputy Minister of Education and Science Andrii Stashkiv, Head of the Reform team Orest Stepanyak, and Director of the Department of Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kyra Spyridonova, presented the achievements of the reform that continues even under conditions of full-scale war.

During the summit, Andrii Stashkiv officially signed the Global Nutrition Integration Compact. Representatives from more than 40 countries joined and confirmed their readiness to act systematically to ensure healthy nutrition for children.

In addition, the delegation joined a meeting with the State Minister for Development of Latin America and the Caribbean in the UK Government, Jenny Chapman, to discuss accelerating global efforts to combat malnutrition.

Special attention was paid to the outcomes of the reform, particularly the large-scale infrastructure upgrades, the implementation of new standards, and the development of a healthy nutrition culture among school-children. In 2024, 126 infrastructure projects were implemented with state funding, and for 2025 an additional UAH 960 million has been allocated.

Today, over 1.6 million children receive high-quality and balanced meals daily as part of the reform.

The Nutrition for Growth Summit became not only an important diplomatic event for Ukraine but also a platform for strengthening international cooperation. As noted by the Head of the Reform team, Orest Stepanyak: "The school nutrition reform is not just about improving menus in school canteens. It is about investing in the health of our children, their future, and the resilience of our nation. The Nutrition for Growth Summit provided us with an opportunity to demonstrate that Ukraine is on the right path and has chance to stand alongside the leaders in healthy nutrition at the international level."



April – First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska met with Jacques Gerber, the Swiss Government Special Envoy for Ukraine

The First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, held a meeting with Jacques Gerber, the Swiss Government's Special Envoy for Ukraine, joined by Deputy Minister of Education and Science Andrii Stashkiv and Head of the School nutrition reform team Orest Stepanyak. One of the main focuses of the meeting was discussing the next steps in reforming the school nutrition system.

The participants acknowledged Switzerland's comprehensive assistance to Ukraine during the war, as well as participation in global initiatives supporting Ukraine.

Special attention during the meeting was paid to the school nutrition reform. Thanks to cooperation with the Embassy of Switzerland and the Swiss-Ukrainian projects "DECIDE" and "Act for Health," a number of important initiatives have been successfully implemented, including:

- the creation of the national information portal "Znalmo";
- the organization of webinars and online courses for educators and administrators;
- the development of a recipe collection with the participation of chef Yevhen Klopotenko;

- the establishment of 17 culinary hubs, 6 of which were supported by Switzerland.

At the same time, new challenges arise that require further solutions. Currently, only 20% of school food blocks meet modern standards, and the need for professional training of school chefs continues to grow. In the future, there are plans to expand the network of culinary hubs to 60 all over the country.

Plans for expansion the free meals program launched in 2024 were also discussed at the meeting. Already covering 1.6 million primary school pupils, the program is expected to be expanded to secondary school pupils in frontline regions starting September 2025.

The First Lady expressed her confidence in further strengthening cooperation with Switzerland to achieve the main goal – ensuring high-quality, healthy, and accessible meals for all Ukrainian schoolchildren.



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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



DECIDE

SECTION IV – PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT PROJECTS



March – the Yellow Blue Wings Foundation announced a competition to select general secondary education institutions in communities of Ternopil, Kyiv, Khmelnytskyi, Lviv, Odesa, Rivne, and Chernivtsi regions for the implementation of food blocks and dining halls modernization projects

During the European Regional School Meals Summit held on November 12–13, 2024, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine, the NGO 'National Foodservice Association', and the Charitable Foundation "Yellow Blue Wings."

The Memorandum lays the foundation for cooperation in the modernization of food blocks through a comprehensive approach and the implementation and adherence to HACCP standards.

Within this partnership, on March 28, the "Yellow Blue Wings" charitable foundation [announced a competition](#) for the selection of schools to implement the project "Strengthening the social protection of children in Ukraine through the implementation

of HACCP standards and the modernization of school food blocks." General secondary education institutions from Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Rivne, and Chernivtsi regions are invited to participate.

The project includes:

- the procurement and installation of modern kitchen equipment and furniture;
- training of school chefs and administrators on the implementation of HACCP standards and the operation of new equipment;
- mandatory co-financing of up to 15% of the procurement budget (exclusively in monetary form).

The project is implemented in partnership with ChildFund Deutschland with the support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany.

SECTION V – TRAINING COURSES, WEBINARS, AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



January 24 – training for local self-government representatives, designers, architects, and project organizations

Renovation of school food blocks requires not only funding but also high-quality preparation of technical documentation. This was the focus of the training held on January 24, 2025, in Kyiv – an event that brought together community representatives, architects, and design specialists.

Participants received practical tools for developing project and cost documentation that meets current technical and financial standards. This is especially important considering the planned funding for 2025 – UAH 960 million as subvention allocated in

the state budget for the modernization of food blocks, including those in lyceums with enhanced military training.

The event was held in a hybrid format – with the option for both offline and online participation. The main goal was to enhance the capacity of communities to effectively implement infrastructure projects and ensure the efficient use of public funds.



February 13 – free online course "Basics of healthy nutrition for pupils in grades 5–9"

Healthy nutrition is gradually finding its place alongside basic academic subjects. Within the framework of the school nutrition reform, work continues on creating practical educational materials that help pupils, teachers, and parents develop healthy daily habits.

A new online course, developed with the support of UNICEF as part of the school nutrition reform initiated by the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, and the School nutrition reform team became another important step in this direction. The course is available on the EdEra platform via [link](#).

The course is designed for teachers working with adolescents in grades 5–9. At this age, children begin making more independent decisions, including those related to nutrition. Thus, the task of educators is to provide them with high-quality and accessible information.

The course offers:

- ready-to-use lesson plans for children in grades 5–7 and 8–9;
- four thematic modules with short videos;
- interactive presentations and game-based tasks;
- tools for working with parents;
- a certificate upon completion.

As of the end of April 2025, the course has attracted the interest of over 79,000 people. More than 9,000 have registered, and 3,586 participants have successfully completed it and received certificates. The goal of such initiatives is not only to impart knowledge, but also to foster a conscious approach to nutrition among adolescents.

By engaging educators, parents, and adolescents, these efforts lay the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle, positively influencing children's physical and emotional well-being, academic performance, and overall welfare in the long term.



February — study about obesity as part of the WHO European Initiative

In Ukraine, every fifth child aged 6 to 8 has excess weight. According to data from the WHO European Initiative, 23% of Ukrainian children are affected by overweight, that is a serious contemporary challenge.

This directly impacts the quality of life, development, and health of future generations. A [special project](#) by Ukrainska Pravda, published on March 11, explored the issue of childhood obesity and discussed ways to address it.

Among the main causes are a sedentary lifestyle, excessive consumption of sugar and unhealthy fats, as well as a deficiency of fruits and vegetables in the daily diet. Unhealthy eating habits are part of a broader behavioral and cultural problem that begins at home and continues at school.

Although the rate of overweight among children in Ukraine is lower than in some European countries (Cyprus — 42%,

Italy — 37%, Spain — 34%), the situation remains critical.

The school nutrition reform, initiated by the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska, aims to change this situation. It focuses on implementing balanced, high-quality, and safe meals in all schools all over the country. The Reform team actively works on raising awareness — helping pupils, their parents, and teachers better understand the principles of healthy nutrition.

The problem of childhood obesity requires decisive action. The situation can only be changed through a comprehensive approach: healthy meals at school, educational initiatives, family support, and the development of a culture of conscious eating. Implementing solutions today is a guarantee of a healthy, active, and fulfilling life for children in the future.



March 17 – training workshop “How to conduct effective procurement for the modernization of food blocks in educational institutions?”

The event was organized in Lviv by the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI) in cooperation with the School nutrition reform team and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The event served as a logical continuation of the cooperation launched in May 2024, aiming to strengthen transparency and integrity in the use of state subventions for the modernization of school food blocks. In 2024, UAH 1.5 billion was allocated for these purposes, enabling the start of 159 projects in the regions. The program has been extended into 2025 – the selection of new applications for UAH 960 million is ongoing.

More than 500 community representatives participated online and over 20 attended the event in person. Throughout the training, experts shared practices for monitoring the use of subventions, explored procurement monitoring tools, discussed successful cases of food blocks modernization, and

provided specific recommendations for improving processes. The final part of the event included a visit to the newly renovated school food block in the city of Novyy Rozdil, which serves as an example of quality reform implementation at the local level.

Modernization of food blocks is one of the key areas of the school nutrition reform. This process encompasses four strategic goals: strengthening community capacity, renovating infrastructure, enhancing the qualifications of specialists, and promoting healthy nutrition communication.

Holding such a training responds to the growing need of communities for expert support and practical knowledge. Ensuring effective and honest procurement is key to guaranteeing that allocated funds are used efficiently, creating safe, modern, and healthy medium in schools.

SECTION VI — REGULATORY DOCUMENTS APPROVED WITHIN THE REFORM

January 7 — approval of the State educational standard for the profession "Cook of educational institution"



A clear regulatory foundation was created for professional training for cooks and chefs working in schools and other educational institutions has received. For the first time in Ukraine, a state educational standard has been approved that defines the requirements for the knowledge, skills, and competencies of specialists responsible for school nutrition.

The standard was developed in accordance with current legislation in the field of education and professional training, based on a modern competence-based approach. It defines a clear structure of professional qualifications:

- • "Cook assistant of educational institution," Level 3 of the National qualifications framework;
- • "Cook of educational institution," Level 4 of the National qualifications framework;
- • "Chef of educational institution," Level 5 of the National qualifications framework.

The requirements for professional activities is outlined in the standard, taking into account the specifics of working in an educational medium: knowledge of modern sanitary and hygienic standards, HACCP principles, occupational safety rules, and the peculiarities of preparing meals for children of different age groups. It also provides opportunities for retraining and professional development.

The development of the standard involved specialists from vocational education institutions, higher education institutions, representatives of educational and methodological centers, teachers, methodologists, and experts from the School nutrition reform team.

The approval of the standard is a significant step within the framework of the school nutrition reform, strengthening the development of vocational education and raising the professional level of chefs.



We sincerely thank you for your interest in our work!

Your engagement and belief in the school nutrition reform inspire us to move forward and create a better future for Ukrainian schoolchildren.

Together we are changing — **we are Reforming!**

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