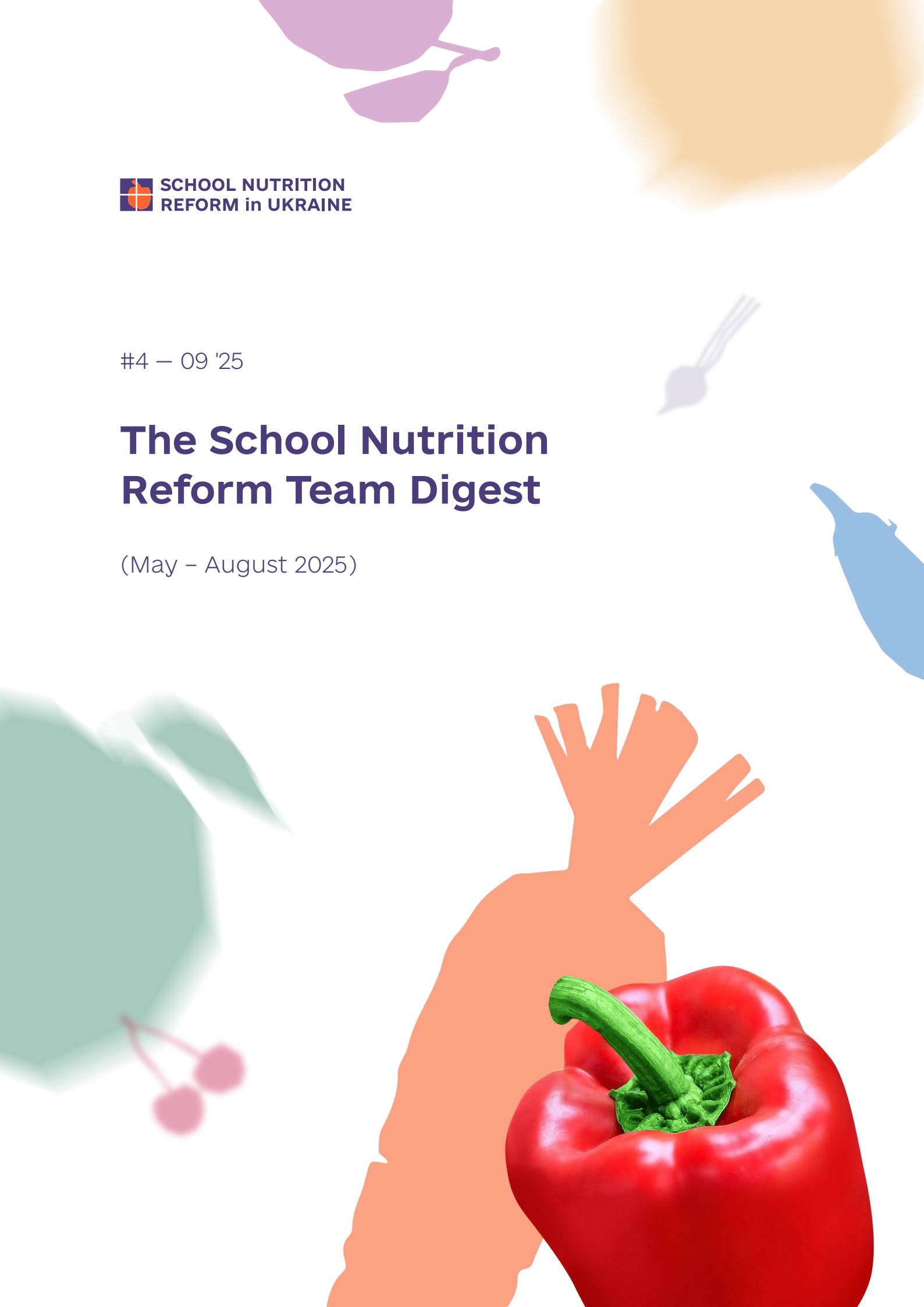


#4 — 09 '25

The School Nutrition Reform Team Digest

(May – August 2025)



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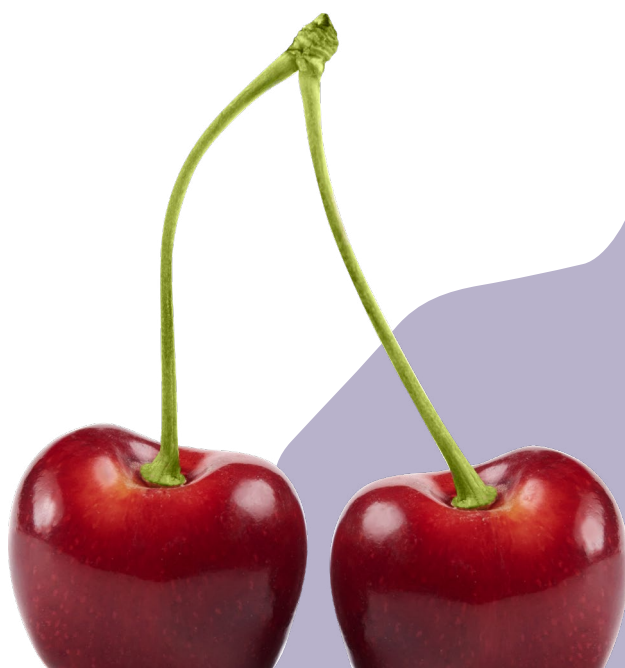
Welcome! We present the fourth Digest of the School nutrition reform team, which highlights the key events in the implementation of the reform for May-August 2025.

While pupils were enjoying their summer holidays, we continued to reform so that as many children as possible could eat in renovated food blocks from the new school year.

Over the course of four months, we worked to scale up cooperation with international partners, strengthen communities' capacity to implement the reform, improve the qualifications of cooks, and integrate healthy eating into the daily lives of Ukrainian families.

This issue features the most important news, events, and useful materials for your information and dissemination. We thank everyone who is involved in the implementation of the reform and continue to change the school meals system together.

Enjoy reading!



I – INTERNATIONAL WORK OF THE REFORM TEAM

April 25 – partner strategic session “Conscious choice of healthy nutrition and international cooperation for sustainable reform development”

The School nutrition reform team works daily to make healthy lifestyles the norm for Ukrainians. That is why we systematically communicate with children, parents, educators, and communities about the importance of balanced nutrition.

On April 25, 2025, with the support of the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI), the School nutrition held a strategic session entitled “Conscious choice of healthy food and international cooperation for sustainable reform development.”

The event was attended by more than 30 representatives of central executive authorities, international organizations, relevant experts, public initiatives, and management teams involved in the implementation of the reform.

During the session:

- the conclusions on implementation of the action plan within the strategic goal “Conscious choice of healthy food by Ukrainians” for 2024 were summarized;
- key priorities for 2025 were identified, taking into account security challenges and the need for sustainable development;
- ideas for communication campaigns designed to create trust in change and shape conscious eating habits were presented;
- views on strengthening international support were exchanged.

By combining the efforts of the state, communities, experts, and international partners, the reform is shaping a healthy future for Ukrainians.



May 13 – visit of the representatives of the Embassy of Finland in Ukraine

Finland was one of the first countries in the world that introduced a system of free hot meals for all pupils more than 80 years ago. Its experience has become a benchmark for the implementation of reform in Ukraine. On May 13, the School nutrition reform team demonstrated the changes that have been achieved despite security challenges to the representatives of the Finnish Embassy in Ukraine.

The delegation visited:

- Lyceum 'Zmina' in Kyiv, where, after the modernization of the food facility, updated standards have been implemented and children receive balanced hot meals every day;
- Lyceum 'Lingvist' in Irpin, Kyiv region, which has been restored after the destruction caused by the full-scale invasion. Classes have now resumed, but the food block needs to be repaired.

• The "Hotulmo" kitchen-factory in Bucha, Kyiv region, where over 7,500 meals are prepared every day. This is a model ready for scaling up in other regions where schools do not have their own facilities for food preparation. Thanks to centralized cooking, children in various educational institutions receive safe and high-quality food, and communities save resources and make food organization more efficient.

Representatives of the Embassy of Finland in Ukraine tasted the school lunch and saw the real qualitative changes that are taking place thanks to the reform.

Finally, they discussed potential areas of cooperation between Finland and Ukraine. International partnership is a key resource for the development of School nutrition reform in Ukraine.



May 19 – participation of the School nutrition reform team in the World Health Assembly in Geneva

The World Health Assembly is a key international platform where strategic decisions in the field of health are made. One of the leading topics this year was the transformation of school nutrition as a tool for preventing child malnutrition, chronic diseases, and social inequality.

During a separate event organized by the Permanent Missions of Ukraine, France, and Japan in Geneva with the support of UNICEF and the Rockefeller Foundation, representatives of Ukraine presented the progress and achievements of School nutrition reform. Initiated in 2020 by First Lady Olena Zelenska, the reform continues to bring systemic changes in communities despite the war.

The reform focuses not only on an updated menu, but on the complete modernization

of the system: infrastructure, quality, safety standards, and the formation of food culture from childhood.

Ms. Sanni Grahn-Laasonen, Minister of Social Affairs of Finland, delivered the opening remarks at the event, and Mr. Yannick Neuder, Minister of Health and Access to Healthcare of France, spoke about mobilizing global commitments in the field of nutrition. In particular, the ministers expressed their support for Ukraine in implementing school nutrition reform.

Ukraine's participation in the World Assembly is not just about presenting its own experience. It is about participating in shaping the global agenda in the field of nutrition and demonstrating effective solutions that can be scaled up to other countries.



June 11 – sharing experience with representatives from Indonesia

At the outset, School nutrition reform in Ukraine was based on studying European approaches, with a focus on balance, safety, and rationality in nutrition. Today, Ukraine's experience is becoming a source of solutions for other countries. In particular, Indonesia is considering the Ukrainian reform model as an example for scaling up its own initiative.

Indonesia recently launched a presidential program called "Free nutritious food" for more than 90 million children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers. One of the sources of inspiration for its launch was the Ukrainian reform.

A delegation from Indonesia led by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Arief Muhammad Basalamah, participated in the presentation of the School Meals Case Study: Ukraine, which was adopted and made publicly available by the Research

Consortium for School Health and Nutrition. Indonesia also participated in the European Regional School Meals Summit, which took place in Kyiv in 2024.

The Indonesian side was impressed by the systematic approach: an updated menu, a review of the regulatory framework, training for cooks, and modernization of infrastructure. A project to monitor state subventions in partnership with the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative, which is unique in the Ukrainian context, was presented and caused admiration.

Head of the School nutrition reform Orest Stepanyak shared practical insights in an interview with Indonesian journalist Agus Putranto. Ukraine's experience in reforming school nutrition is already providing support to countries that are just beginning their programs.



June — participation of Zaporizhia and Brovary, member cities of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, in the Milan Pact Awards in the category “Sustainable Diet and Nutrition”

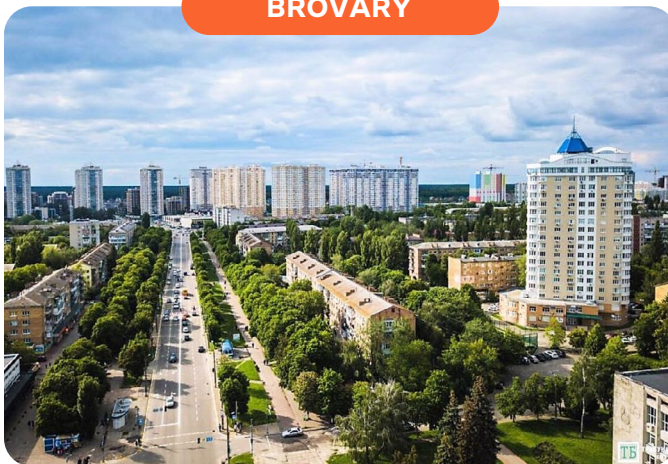
Ukrainian cities are participating for the first time in the prestigious Milan Pact Awards 2025, which annually recognizes best practices in sustainable urban food systems. The event is organized by the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in partnership with Fondazione Cariplo. Winners receive grant support to develop their initiatives – prize fund is €20,000.

Two cities represent Ukraine in the “Sustainable Diet and Nutrition” category: Zaporizhzhia and Brovary. Projects will be evaluated according to three key criteria: innovation, impact on the system, and inclusiveness.

ZAPORIZHZHIA



BROVARY



Representatives from Zaporizhzhia has focused on updating its approach to food service: catering has been introduced instead of outsourcing, seasonal vegetables and fruits have been added to the menu, which is based on local products, and a communication campaign has been created, involving 83 schools and 21 kindergartens. The budget for the practice is €1.96 million.

Representatives from Brovary are working to expand access to quality food: a menu with a choice of dishes has been introduced, free hot meals are provided for all primary school pupils and preferable groups, drinking fountains have been installed, and more than 1,500 educational events have been held. The total budget for the program is €9.9 million (2019–2028).

The winners will be announced in October during an awards ceremony in Milan. In the meantime, Ukrainian communities continue to work systematically on changes that will shape a healthy future for children.



Milan Pact Awards Ceremony 2025

Milan, 15 October 2025
During the MUFPP Global Forum

More info:

globalforum2025.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org - mufpp.secretariat@comune.milano.it



July 10-11 – Participation of the School nutrition reform team in URC 2025

On 10-11, July School nutrition reform Team participated in Ukraine Recovery Conference 2025 – an annual international event on post-war recovery in Ukraine, held in Rome, Italy. The conference brought together representatives of governments, international organizations, business, and civil society, focusing on four areas: human, business, local, and European integration.

School nutrition reform was presented as an example of systemic change in the social sphere. This is one of the striking examples of the “human dimension” of recovery, which First Lady Olena Zelenska described in detail during the panel discussion.

At the conference, the School nutrition reform team presented an information stand with a dashboard where all the projects implemented as part of the modernization of food blocks could be viewed.

The centerpiece was an improvised show kitchen based on the Cook&Chill model. Over two days, Ukrainian chefs prepared more than 2,000 dishes from the school menu.

Among the guests who visited the stand and show kitchen were European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Swiss government representative Jacques Gerber, AFD Director Jérémie Pellet, French Ambassador to Ukraine Gaël Vessier, and Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrii Sybiha.

Participation in URC 2025 was an important step in the international positioning of the reform. The team gained new opportunities for partnership, exchange of experience, and further scaling of changes.

We would like to thank our partners who made our participation in the conference possible: the Swiss-Ukrainian DECIDE project and the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI).



July 22 — French architect Martin Duplantier visited the “Hotulmo” kitchen-factory in Bucha

School nutrition reform is spreading to more and more regions, and with it, the implementation of effective meal organization models is scaling up. One such model is the kitchen-factory, an innovative technological enterprise that began operating in 2024 in the city of Bucha.

In July, French architect Martin Duplantier, founder of the Arch4UA charitable foundation visited the kitchen-factory, which supports projects for the restoration of Ukraine and the preservation of its cultural heritage. During his visit, he was familiarized with the technological processes, space organization, logistics, and safety standards

of the enterprise. As part of the collaboration, Martin Duplantier and his team will join the design of a new kitchen-factory in Zaporizhzhia.

7,500 meals for educational institutions are prepared by “Hotulmo” kitchen-factory every day. Cook&Chill technology is used, which allows meals to be prepared in large quantities, cooled to +3 °C, and then safely delivered to schools, where they are reheated in combi steamers. This approach ensures the quality, safety, and taste of the meals.

International interest confirms that the School nutrition reform is on the right track.



July 23 – visit of a delegation of Heads of Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad to the “Hotulmo” kitchen-factory

“Hotulmo” kitchen-factory in Bucha became a demonstration site for more than 100 representatives of diplomatic institutions. The purpose of the visit was to familiarize guests with the practical implementation of School nutrition reform and technological solutions that are already working in this field.

During the visit, the entire production cycle – from receiving products to serving ready-made meals was introduced to guests. Particular attention was paid to the implementation of Cook&Chill technology, which allows meals to be prepared centrally, cooled to a safe temperature, and delivered to educational institutions without losing quality or taste.

During the visit, five strategic goals of reform development were presented. Particular attention was focused on international cooperation: expanding partnerships, joint projects, and exchanging experience with countries working in the field of school nutrition.

The final part was tasting the meals that children eat every day. This allowed participants not only to see, but also to personally evaluate the quality of the school meals.

The information obtained will enable representatives of Ukrainian diplomatic missions abroad to work professionally with international partners to scale up the reform.



July 24 – presentation of School nutrition reform at the European Child Guarantee national forum in Kyiv



The European Child Guarantee, launched by the European Union in 2021, is a strategic initiative aimed at overcoming child poverty and social exclusion. Its main goal is to ensure that every child in a vulnerable population group has equal access to basic services, including:

- high-quality and healthy food,
- education,
- medical care,
- housing,
- participation in cultural and social life.

The initiative pays special attention to children in difficult life circumstances – homeless children, internally displaced children, children with disabilities, children from low-income families, and children with mental disorders.

The School nutrition reform in Ukraine is one of the key elements in implementing this guarantee. As First Lady Olena Zelenska noted during a national forum in Kyiv, the reform not only fulfills an educational or nutritional function – it is also a tool for care, stability, and social protection.

Today, free hot meals in schools cover 1.6 million pupils in grades 1–4 and preferable categories. From September 2025, the program will be extended to pupils in grades 5–11 in frontline regions.

The European guarantee is a step towards Ukraine's systematic integration into EU social standards and towards ensuring equal opportunities for every child. The School nutrition reform team continues to work to ensure that support is available where it is most needed.



July 24 – meeting with the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova

Over the past five years, the School nutrition reform team has gone from making the first changes to implementing modern school nutrition standards across the country. The experience gained today is becoming a benchmark for countries that are just beginning their transformation in the field of nutrition.

On July 24, a working meeting was held with the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Ukraine, Valeriu Cîveriu, and his team. The School nutrition reform team presented the key results of the reform's implementation: 1.6 million pupils receive free hot meals every day, 1,236 educational institutions have been modernized, and more than 6,000 cooks have been trained.

Special attention should be paid to the practical tools that ensure the sustainability of the reform:

- thorough research before the launch of the reform,
- updating the regulatory framework,

- attraction of state funding and international support,

- models of food organization (basic, support, kitchen-factory).

The Ambassador highly praised the pace and depth of the transformations in the organization of school meals in Ukraine. Following the meeting, it was agreed to exchange best practices and potential areas for further cooperation.

We are pleased to see that Ukraine's experience is becoming part of the international dialogue on healthy nutrition and a safe educational medium.



July 25 – meeting with representatives of the Embassy of Japan in Ukraine and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)



The School nutrition reform team held a meeting with representatives of the Embassy of Japan in Ukraine and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Japan is a country that has been developing one of the world's most successful school meals systems for decades.

During the meeting, we presented the key achievements of the five-year reform process: today, more than 1.6 million Ukrainian pupils receive free hot meals every day. Representatives of the Japanese delegation noted that the implementation of such a large-scale project during a period of full-scale war is an impressive achievement.

In turn, our Japanese colleagues shared the principles that form the basis of their national model:

- integration of “nutrition education” into the school curriculum;
- use of seasonal, fresh, and local products;
- limiting portion sizes and salt content;
- universal access to lunches for all pupils;

- involving children in serving food and cleaning up after meals.

Japan demonstrates how school meals can not only meet health standards but also be an integral part of the educational process, shaping a culture of nutrition from childhood.

The discussion finished with a dialogue on potential areas of cooperation between Ukraine and Japan in the field of nutrition and education. We would like to thank Mr. Masashi Nakagome, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Ukraine, and the Embassy team for their trust, constructive conversation, and interest in the transformations already taking place in Ukrainian schools.



July — cooperation with Enable in the implementation of projects to modernize school food facilities in the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions

The School nutrition reform team is embarking on a new phase of cooperation with the Belgian international development agency Enabel that implements government development programs aimed at supporting sustainable international partnerships. Enabel operates in more than 20 countries around the world and supports recovery in Ukraine through infrastructure modernization projects.

The Belgian international development agency will join the restoration and modernization of six educational facilities in the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions:

- Skif Lyceum (Shpytky village, Kyiv region);
- Velyka Dymerka Lyceum (Kyiv region);
- Novi Petrivtsy Lyceum (Kyiv region);
- Zazymya Lyceum “Academy of Success” (Kyiv region);

- Bila Tserkva Lyceum-Gymnasium No. 12 (Kyiv region);
- Chernihiv Center for Vocational and Technical Education (Chernihiv region);
- Nosivka Lyceum No. 1 of the Nosivka City Council (Chernihiv region)/

For the School nutrition reform team, cooperation with Enabel is strategically important. Modernizing the infrastructure of educational institutions is one of the key areas of School nutrition reform. International cooperation helps to renovate school food blocks faster, creating better conditions for children and comfortable workplaces for staff. In times of full-scale war, support from partners such as Enabel is an investment in a happy future for children



August 15 – meeting with partners from ABC Cooking Studio from Japan

Partners from Japan, who are developing their own ABC Cooking Studio project, visited Ukraine. It was important for them to see how our country is implementing School nutrition reform – from the creation of modern kitchens and modernized food facilities to the training of future specialists.

The first location was the Boryspil professional college. It has a culinary hub where students can practice their skills. This is an example of how the reform provides training and creates conditions for quality education.

At the “Zmina” Art Lyceum in Kyiv, the Japanese guests saw a modernized food

facility equipped to modern standards. Here, children have the opportunity to study successfully in comfortable conditions.

The final stage was a meeting at the National University of Food Technologies. This is a leading institution in its field, which trains specialists capable of setting new standards in the field of nutrition.

This visit was an opportunity to demonstrate that the synergy of infrastructure changes, new approaches, and education creates favorable conditions for ensuring healthy nutrition for children.



II – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CAPACITY. CASCADE METHOD OF REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

Expansion of the free school meals program from September 1, 2025

With the start of the new school year, we are making an important step in expanding the state program of free meals for pupils. From September 1, in general secondary education institutions, free hot meals will be provided not only to pupils in primary school in all regions, but also to all pupils (grades 5-11) in secondary school in the Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv regions.

To this end, the government is providing a subvention from the state budget to local budgets. [The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine](#) has already allocated UAH 779,771,800 for local budgets to provide meals for pupils in September. The subvention is provided based on the cost of a single hot meal of 50 hryvnias for pupils in grades 1-4 and 60 hryvnias for pupils in grades 5-11 who study offline or in a blended form.

Also, on August 20, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [amended the Law of Ukraine “On the State Budget for 2025”](#), which provides for the allocation of UAH 4.59 billion from the state budget to local budgets to provide meals for pupils of general secondary education institutions. The distribution of subvention funds for October-December 2025 will be carried out in the near future.

In total, from September 1, 1,076,458 primary school pupils and 424,517 secondary school pupils in nine frontline regions will receive free hot meals.

Healthy and nutritious hot meals in schools are an important element of caring for children in the context of Russian aggression and the foundation for their healthy future. Balanced, high-quality school meals will contribute to improving the quality of education and equalizing opportunities for pupils regardless of where they live – in a large city or a small community.



Support for the Free School Meals Program by International Partners

The free school meals program is being implemented with the active support of international partners, which ensures stable financing and allows the program to expand access to quality meals for children.

Funding from the European Commission

Under the Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the European Commission, €65 million has been allocated and directed as a state budget subvention to local budgets to provide free meals to primary school pupils from January to May 2025.

In addition, the European Commission has allocated UAH 4.6 billion to support the free school meals program for the period of October–December 2025 through the Ukraine Facility mechanism. These funds will be distributed as subventions to local budgets to cover meals for primary school pupils across Ukraine, as well as for pupils in grades 5–11 in nine frontline regions. A draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on this matter has been prepared by the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine and is currently under review.

Cooperation with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)

The Ministry of education and science of Ukraine continues its strategic partnership with WFP.

The dynamics of the program demonstrate a significant increase in the scale of support:

- In 2022, WFP covered 58 schools in Kyiv region, where 9,000 pupils received 171,000 meals. Investment was UAH 8 million.
- In the 2024–2025 academic year, WFP provided UAH 151.4 million for subventions to local budgets to improve the quality of meals for primary school pupils.

This support covered 151,000 pupils in 1,428 educational institutions across 310 communities in 16 regions.

- For the 2025–2026 academic year, a new agreement has been signed between WFP and the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine to provide UAH 531.2 million for support. These funds will be used for subventions to local budgets for financing meals for primary school pupils.

The subvention is provided to co-finance 30% of meal costs, amounting to UAH 15 per meal per day for primary school pupils in general secondary education institutions with full-time or blended learning formats. In eight frontline regions – Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv – support will be provided to 252,000 pupils in 2,492 schools across 364 communities.

The Government has already distributed the first tranche of the subvention, totaling UAH 118.5 million for September–October 2025. A second tranche of UAH 91.3 million will be distributed for November–December.

The continuation of this strategic partnership with WFP will strengthen the sustainability of the President of Ukraine's initiative to ensure free school meals for pupils.

July 17 – Ministry of education and science of Ukraine meeting on preparations for organizing meals for pupils in grades 5-11 in frontline regions



On July 17, an online meeting was held on the organization of school meals for communities in the Kherson region, which will switch to a mixed form of education in September 2025. The focus was on safe nutrition in wartime.

Key topics discussed:

- Changes to the regulatory framework prepared by the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine that will regulate meals in shelters – in particular, the possibility of providing meals from a buffet.
- Features of the arrangement of premises (areas) for the organization of meals in protective structures in accordance with the methods of organizing meals;
- Updated support from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) – starting in September, co-financing of meals for pupils in grades 5-11 in frontline regions is planned.
- Ensuring HACCP requirements are met when feeding children in shelters.

Finally, a feedback session was held with communities to obtain practical recommendations on regulatory changes and financing instruments.

The School nutrition reform team continues to support communities in implementing School nutrition reform.

The Ministry of education and science of Ukraine has prepared amendments to the Norms and procedures for the organization of school meals

The Ministry of education and science of Ukraine has developed a draft resolution amending CMU Resolutions [No. 305](#) (dated 24 March 2021) and [No. 1456](#) (dated 20 December 2024) with the aim of updating the standards and procedures for organizing meals in educational institutions and children's health facilities, taking into account the martial law and food needs in shelters.

Key changes:

- Standardization of nutrition in shelters: introduction of new requirements for the organization of nutrition in civil defense shelters;
- Approval of the recommended list and standards for food consumption while staying in shelters;
- Determination of requirements for the arrangement of premises (areas) for the organization of meals in protective structures in accordance with the methods of meal organization;
- Mechanism for writing off food products and dishes that have become unusable, including due to the impact of martial law, time frames for organizing food, etc.

- Establishment of flexible time frames for organizing school lunches.

These changes are part of the implementation of the Strategy for reforming the school meals system by 2027 and are aimed at ensuring continuous, safe, and high-quality meals even in difficult security conditions.

Nutritional standards for children affected by the Chernobyl disaster have been updated

Amendments have been made to Resolution [No. 258](#) of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which regulates the provision of meals for children affected by the Chernobyl disaster.

Meals for children attending educational institutions located in radioactively contaminated areas and children with disabilities as a result of the Chernobyl disaster will be carried out in accordance with current standards approved by Resolution No. 305 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated March 24, 2021. This is an important step towards updating approaches to social protection and ensuring high-quality, balanced nutrition for vulnerable categories of children.

A draft operational plan for 2025-2027 and amendments to the Strategy for reforming the school meals system have been developed

The Ministry of education and science of Ukraine has prepared a draft operational plan for 2025-2027 and amendments to the Strategy for reforming the school meals system. The updated document makes the reform more specific, relevant, and consistent with current challenges.

The development was carried out in partnership with the School nutrition reform team, representatives of central and local authorities, public organizations, international partners, and experts.

The draft act provides for:

- updating the section on the impact of a full-scale invasion on the school meals system;
- clarification of the mission, strategic and operational objectives;
- strategic objective 1 supplemented with a new operational objective “Ensuring a strategic approach to the implementation of school meals system reform at the regional and local levels”;
- the inclusion of tasks related to free meals for all pupils and the involvement of local producers and service providers;
- addition of a new strategic goal 5: “Integrating Ukraine into international initiatives for the development of school meals and strengthening international cooperation on the implementation of School nutrition reform in Ukraine.”
- clarifying the expected results of the Strategy’s implementation.

The proposed changes cover a wide range of stakeholders, from pupils and educators to local communities and business representatives. The draft changes are currently undergoing the approval process.

May 15 – Working visit of the School nutrition reform team to Volyn region

Volyn region became the next region to present successful examples of School nutrition reform implementation. During the working visit, First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska, together with representatives of the Volyn Regional state administration, the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine, the School nutrition reform team, and the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative.

They visited the following educational institutions:

- Dubivka Lyceum – an example of an effective support kitchen. Thanks to modernization carried out with state subvention, the facility prepares 472 meals daily for its own pupils and three other schools in the community.
- Oblapy Lyceum – provides pupils with hot lunches without having its own kitchen. Meals are delivered from Dubivka Lyceum,

which allows for equal conditions for children regardless of their school's capabilities.

- The Volyn regional Lyceum with military and physical training is an educational institution where more than 500 cadets live, study, and eat four times a day. More than 2,000 meals are prepared here every day.

Special attention was paid to the presentation of a joint project of the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine, the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative, and the School nutrition reform team for monitoring state subventions. This initiative aims to ensure transparency and efficiency in the use of state funds in projects to modernize school food blocks.

This visit once again confirmed that the reform is continuing and continues to expand children's access to high-quality, safe, and balanced nutrition.



April 18 – working visit of the School nutrition reform team to the Mykolaiv region

On April 18, the School nutrition reform team made a working trip to Mykolaiv region. The visit was dedicated to monitoring the implementation of projects to modernize school food blocks and develop educational infrastructure, as well as interacting with communities on the implementation of the reform.

The meeting began with a consultation with the leadership of the Mykolaiv regional state administration. Regional approaches to the implementation of state policy in the field of school nutrition and prospects for expanding the network of modernized facilities were discussed.

They saw practical results in educational institutions:

- Novo-Odesa Vocational College – they inspected the culinary hub that was built in 2024 with the help of subvention finances;



- Novo-Odesa Lyceum No. 1 – delegation visited the dining room and food block area, where major repairs are underway. The cost of the project is UAH 10 million;



- Arbuzyne Lyceum No. 2 named after T.G. Shevchenko – delegation was familiarized with the progress of the modernization of the food block, where work is still ongoing. The cost of the project is UAH 12 million.



Communication with communities is a solution that helps to implement School nutrition reform more effectively. After all, it allows to see the real needs and challenges.

May 31 – visit of the School nutrition reform team to the Khmelnytskyi region

The cascade method is one of the effective tools for implementing changes in the food system. That is why the School nutrition reform team makes working visits to communities. On May 31, they visited Khmelnytskyi region to see the current results and support the further implementation of decisions at the local level.

During the visit:

- meetings were held with the leadership of the Khmelnytskyi regional state administration;
- expert advice on the implementation of various technological models of food organization in the communities of the region was provided;
- renovated school food blocks and culinary hubs were inspected.

Khmelnytskyi region show excellent results:

- In 2024, out of 10 projects submitted for the modernization of food blocks, 8 projects were selected, which have already been implemented at a cost of over UAH 61 million from the state budget.

- In 2025, out of 11 projects submitted, 4 projects were selected in the communities of Netishyn, Krasyliv, Derazhnia, and Kamianets-Podilskyi, which have already received funding of UAH 44.2 million.

The total investment is over UAH 100 million to create safe and high-quality food for children.

Special attention was paid to human resources issues – the development of cooks and the involvement of vocational schools in training specialists in the field of school nutrition.

The reform in the region has broad support, from the level of the Regional administration to the teams of educational institutions, which ensures the sustainability of changes and the scaling of results.



August 27 – working visit of First Lady Olena Zelenska together with representatives of the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine and the School nutrition reform team to Cherkasy region



The delegation visited Cherkasy region to see firsthand how the reform is being implemented in the region. They visited the renovated food blocks and held a working meeting to discuss current issues and challenges.

At school No. 26 in Cherkasy and the 'Leader' Lyceum in Smila, the food service facilities were modernized with state subventions: food blocks and dining rooms were renovated, outdated equipment was replaced with modern equipment, and comfortable spaces for children were created.

Gymnasium No. 9 has a renovated dining hall that serves 1,100 pupils every day. More than UAH 14 million from the local budget was spent on its comprehensive renovation. In most cases, schools receive state support and co-financing from communities, but this example shows a different approach – when the community itself takes responsibility. This is a wonderful example of an active community, which is important for scaling up the reform.

"For many parents, the certainty that their children will be fed at school is an important factor when choosing a community to live in.

This means regional development, economic growth, and stronger communities. In addition, one of the main goals of the reform is equality. We want every child, regardless of where they live—in a big city or the smallest village—to have access to high-quality, safe, and tasty food," said the First Lady.

Olena Zelenska also took part in a meeting dedicated to the Strategy for reforming the school meal system in the region. The Cherkasy Regional state administration presented its achievements and outlined further steps. The region plans to create a culinary hub for training and improving the skills of chefs, as well as holding events to promote conscious choices for healthy eating.

Seven food blocks have already been renovated in the region, one project is at the implementation stage, and two new projects have been selected and have just received funding. In particular, the Cherkasy Regional state administration is providing additional funding for free meals for primary school pupils.

The region is demonstrating its willingness to invest in a healthy future for children.



III – IMPLEMENTATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



April – Culinary hub was established at the Chernihiv vocational education center

The hub was established by the Swiss-Ukrainian project DECIDE as part of its support for two key reforms: vocational education and school nutrition.

It offers the opportunity to explore various culinary professions for pupils in grades 5–9. At the same time, chefs from Chernihiv city and Chernihiv region are trained in modern approaches to preparing healthy and tasty meals for pupils. They also upgrade their qualifications by mastering new, up-to-date recipes.

Vocational training instructors have already completed retraining, and on April 7 the first courses for school chefs began. These programs equip them to prepare meals for pupils across the Chernihiv region in line with modern standards of healthy and safe nutrition, as well as the new school menu.

So far, 48 chefs from 16 local communities in the region have already completed the training

Four stages of distribution of state subvention

As part of the modernization of food facilities in secondary education institutions, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has allocated UAH 960 million in 2025 for the renovation of food facilities. The selection of projects was carried out by a commission of the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine with the participation of independent experts involved by EUACI using the DREAM digital system, which ensured the transparency of the competition.

Communities that meet the competition requirements in accordance with [Resolution No. 120 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine](#) were eligible to participate in the competition.

During the first distribution, 15 projects were selected with a total cost of UAH 194.1 million. At the second stage, 23 projects with a total cost of UAH 307.6 million were selected, at the third stage, 15 projects with a total cost of UAH 184.6 million were selected, at the fourth stage, 13 projects with a total cost of UAH 158.05 million were selected, and at the fifth stage, 11 projects with a total cost of UAH 114.4 thousand were selected.

79 projects were selected for a total amount of UAH 987,000. In addition, two projects with a total cost of UAH 28.3 million were selected, which will be partially financed from the 2025 subvention for the modernization of food blocks, and the rest of the funds will be allocated from the education subventions. These projects are currently awaiting distribution.

May 1 – changes to: SBN V.2.2-3:2018 “Buildings and structures. Educational institutions” and SBN V.2.2-4:2018 “Buildings and structures. Preschool educational institutions”

On May 1, 2024, amendments to SBN V.2.2-3:2018 and SBN V.2.2-4:2018 came into force in Ukraine, concerning the design of food facilities in schools and kindergartens. The update requires the mandatory use of [Code 4:2024](#) in the design of food blocks. These building standards apply to the design of new and the renovation of existing educational facilities.

From now on, when designing food facilities, one of six models for organizing food facility premises must be taken into account:

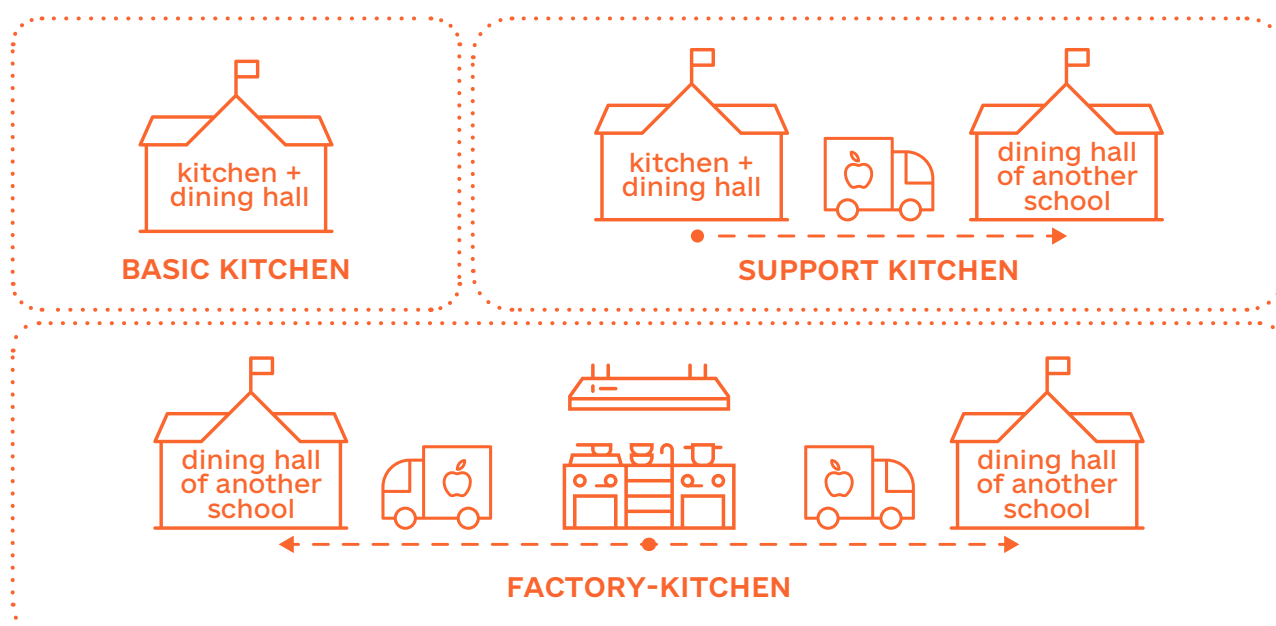
- basic kitchen food block;
- support kitchen food block;
- food block – recipient of ready-made hot meals from educational institutions;
- food block – recipient of ready-made chilled meals from educational institutions;
- food block – recipient of ready-made hot meals for preschool educational institutions;

•• food block – recipient of ready-made chilled meals for preschool educational institutions.

Requirements for placement according to the principle of functional zoning of groups of premises – production, storage, and auxiliary premises in accordance with the model of food block premises organization selected in the project.

Requirements for the placement of food block workshops, which must ensure the sequence of technological processes for processing products and manufacturing goods with minimal functional connections and no intersection of technological and transport flows.

Thanks to these changes, communities receive clear technical guidelines for modernizing food blocks in accordance with the modern approaches.



August – completion of renovation at Gymnasium No. 13 in Chernihiv

The comprehensive renovation and installation of a modern shelter at Gymnasium No. 13 in Chernihiv city made it possible for more than 800 pupils to begin the new school year on September 1.

The school, which has a natural sciences and mathematics focus, is now equipped with state-of-the-art multimedia tools and didactic materials. It features 16 cutting-edge laboratories where pupils can conduct experiments and research alongside their teachers. In addition to creative workshops,

learning spaces, and a modern shelter, the school's food facilities were fully modernized to meet all current standards.

The reconstruction and capital repair project, covering over 3,600 square meters, was made possible through the support of the Government of Switzerland, which invested more than 64 million UAH via the Swiss-Ukrainian project DECIDE. An additional 10 million UAH for landscaping and supplementary equipment was allocated by the local council.



IV – HEALTHY EATING COMMUNICATION

April 30 – Forum “Healthy Eating – a conscious choice for everyone” in the Dnipropetrovsk Region

Healthy eating is, first and foremost, a choice that must be made both at school and at home. It is best to learn in practice as a friendly team. This is exactly what happened in Dnipropetrovsk region, where the forum “Healthy eating – a conscious choice for everyone” was held as part of the School nutrition reform.

At the Special school No. 10 of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional council, families from different parts of the region competed in a live interactive format:

- presented ideas for healthy breakfasts, lunches, and dinners;
- exchanged family life hacks about healthy eating at home;
- took part in quizzes and competitions on food knowledge;
- prepared dishes using affordable but balanced recipes.

Most importantly, the teams supported each other and showed that learning about healthy eating together is funnier.

Every region can become a driver of local transformation. The Dnipropetrovsk Regional state administration showed that all it takes is to get started, and a community ready to take action will form around you.

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May 15 – Political dialogue “Reducing salt intake as a strategy for preventing non-communicable diseases”

Salt is a common ingredient in our daily diet, but excessive consumption is one of the risk factors for chronic diseases. We often do not pay attention to the amount of salt in our diet throughout the day.

This topic was the focus of the policy dialogue “Reducing salt intake as a strategy for preventing noncommunicable diseases,” organized by the World Health Organization Ukraine and the WHO Regional Office for Europe in partnership with the Ministry of health of Ukraine.

During the discussion, attention was paid to:

- the actual salt content in everyday meals;
- Ukrainians’ habits regarding reading labels;

- public policy tools for reducing salt intake;
- ways to raise public awareness.

The School nutrition reform team also joined the dialogue, presenting their approach to menu planning in schools. One of the key principles is adherence to recommended salt intake guidelines.

Eating habits are formed in childhood, so it is very important to instill healthy habits from an early age.



June 25 – new series of informational banners for educational institutions

The modern school meals system involves communicating the conscious choice of healthy eating. As part of the reform, we strive to explain to children why water is healthier than sweet drinks, why excess salt is dangerous, which foods contain the most vitamins, and so on. This became the basis for the creation of new banners – informational materials that can be placed in dining halls, classrooms, shelters, and school hallways.

Each banner is a short and accessible guide on:

- the role of vitamins and their sources;
- the benefits of water and how to maintain proper hydration;
- the harm of excessive salt and sugar consumption;
- examples of healthy alternatives to common snacks.

The daily presence of banners in a child's field

of vision reinforces trust in the information and involuntarily reinforces it in behavioral habits. This is how a new food culture is formed – not only through the food on the plate, but also through the meaningful educational medium around it.

The School nutrition reform team encourages educational institutions, communities, and regional administrations to actively use the materials.



**The banners can be downloaded
for free at [the link](#)**



May 21-22 — event “Healthy eating: learning in action. Presentation of the exhibition-game and training for moderators”

Teaching healthy eating is possible only when you have a basic knowledge of the subject. That is why the School nutrition reform team organizes training sessions for educators, who are the main promoters of a healthy lifestyle among children in schools. On May 21-22, a two-day training session was held in the Rivne region for teachers — a presentation of the exhibition-game “Healthy eating: learning in action.”

The event was organized by the Swiss-Ukrainian project “Acting for Health,” the Rivne Regional center for disease control and prevention, and the School nutrition reform team, with the support of the Rivne Regional state administration’s Department of education and science.

The event aimed to train moderators who will be able to work with the exhibition in schools and communities in the Rivne region.

This tool will help to teach healthy eating more effectively. Six sets of the exhibition have already been handed over to educational institutions in the region and to Rivne State humanitarian university.

On the first day, participants worked on the following topics:

- • “Healthy eating plate”
- • “Sugar, salt, fats”
- • “Substances for life”
- • “Water is the best drink”

On the second day, educators received practical tools for moderating classes. Now they will be able to implement them in their communities. This will make learning about healthy eating accessible, visual, and exciting for children.



V – PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT PROJECTS

May 22 – presentation of the project with EUACI to international partners



On May 22, a presentation of a joint project of the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine, the School nutrition reform team, and the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI) took place. The event, “Partnership for integrity and efficiency,” was dedicated to the practical implementation of transparency tools in the use of state subventions for the modernization of school food blocks.

In 2024, the government allocated UAH 1.5 billion for infrastructure upgrades, with another UAH 960 million to be allocated in 2025. State subsidies require systematic oversight and clear rules. That is why an approach has been developed that allows for the control of financial resources at all stages of modernization projects.

The first results of the project were presented at the meeting, in particular:

- 187 infrastructure projects underwent preliminary verification before the start of construction work, which helped to avoid the misuse of funds;
- 233 procurement procedures were analyzed, with an emphasis on compliance and prevention of violations;

- 126 facilities are under constant monitoring through an interactive dashboard with over 80 technical indicators;
- Over 1,500 participants from communities, schools, and contracting organizations underwent practical training.
- Two practical guides have been prepared for procurement officers and contractors who work daily to implement changes.

The project was presented by the head of the School nutrition reform team, Orest Stepanyak, and the Head of EUACI, Allan Pagh Christensen. The event was attended by representatives of donor programs, international organizations, and expert circles – both existing and potential partners of the reform.

Ensuring integrity is one of the key elements of the successful implementation of School nutrition reform. The School nutrition reform team, in partnership with Ukrainian and international organizations, continues to work systematically to ensure that every child in Ukraine has access to healthy food.



May 25 – podcast “School nutrition reform: why replacing food blocks is not only and not so much about food”

As part of the School nutrition reform, there was a discussion about one of its components – integrity. During the new episode of the podcast “Budget talks” there was discussed why the modernization of food blocks is not only about new equipment, but above all about systemic and transparent changes.

Speakers:



Orest Stepanyak,
Head of the School
nutrition reform team



Taras Sluchy,
Head of projects at the EU
Anti-Corruption Initiative
(EUACI)

During the podcast there were discussed:

- how a transparent management project helped save over UAH 133 million even before the start of repairs;
- why investments in equipment without changing approaches do not produce sustainable results;
- how the anti-corruption component is integrated into every stage, from procurement to technical supervision;
- why reform is needed and how it changes communities.

The podcast is an attempt to talk honestly about the challenges and tools that enable transparency in school nutrition reform. We would like to thank the ‘Budget talks’ team and Fiscal center for their partnership in creating this product.

The podcast is available on various platforms:



[YouTube](#) ←



[Spotify](#) ←



[NV Podcasts](#) ←



[YouTube Music](#) ←



[Castbox](#) ←

VI – TRAINING COURSES, WEBINARS, GUIDES

April 28 – online training “Features of procurement under the Ukraine Facility instrument”

Updating the educational infrastructure is one of the key areas of reform initiated by First Lady Olena Zelenska. In 2024, UAH 1.5 billion is earmarked for the modernization of school food blocks, and in 2025, another UAH 960 million. The comprehensive upgrade must be transparent, effective, and understandable.

This year, the reform became part of the Ukraine Facility program – a framework agreement between Ukraine and the EU for 2024–2027. It enables communities to receive funds and support for changes in schools.

To help communities effectively implement financial support, the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine, together with the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI), conducted an online training course entitled “Features of procurement under the Ukraine Facility instrument.” More than 600 representatives from all over Ukraine took part in the event.

We figured out:

- how to conduct procurement in accordance with the requirements of the Ukraine Facility;
- how to take into account the provisions of the Framework Agreement in tender documentation
- what mistakes are most common and how to avoid them;
- what the State audit service checks.

The better communities understand the process, the more effectively food service modernization projects will be implemented. Our goal is to support those who are implementing changes so that children have a comfortable educational medium and healthy nutrition.



July 25 – training for winners of the competition for projects of food facilities modernization in educational institutions

On July 25, 2025, training was held for communities that won the competitive selection of projects for the modernization of food blocks in educational institutions. The meeting became an important platform for practical discussion of key aspects of project implementation: from public procurement and technical supervision to the preparation of reporting documentation.

The themes discussed at the meeting:

- the specifics of procurement within the Ukraine Facility, taking into account the official recommendations of the Ministry of economy of Ukraine;
- typical violations identified by the State audit service and ways to avoid them in future procedures;

- tender documentation for the procurement of works to modernize food facilities;
- the use of remote technical supervision as a tool to ensure transparency;
- the formation and management of estimates.

The speakers at the event were representatives of the School nutrition reform team, EUACI, the Center for public monitoring and research, as well as experts in technical supervision and public procurement.

Systemic support and expert guidance for communities is the key to the successful implementation of modernization projects within the framework of School nutrition reform.




August 26–27 – Online webinar “Organizing healthy nutrition in educational institutions”

The two-day online webinar “Organizing healthy nutrition in educational institutions” brought together medical workers from general secondary education institutions and educators from different regions of Ukraine. The event became a platform for professional discussion on modern approaches to organizing nutrition for children in schools.


In total, more than 5,000 participants registered for the webinar. As of the end of August, more than 13,600 people had viewed the recordings. Participants discussed the key directions and challenges of School nutrition reform:


- how to make school meals as close as possible to what children eat at home and why this is important;
- the impact of eating habits on children's physiological development;
- the responsibilities of school nurses depending on the form of meal organization;
- weight control and prevention of eating disorders;
- safe food preparation for children with allergies, intolerances, or chronic diseases;
- clinical markers and psychosocial risks of eating disorders in children and adolescents.

The speakers were experts in nutrition, medicine, and psychology, who shared practical advice and experience. This helped participants gain specific tools for working in schools.



You can view the webinar recordings at:

 [Day 1](#)

 [Day 2](#)

The webinar was organized as part of the Ukrainian-Swiss project “Acting for Health” with the support of Switzerland, provided through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



June 19 — launch of a free online course for school leaders “Effective organization of nutrition in educational institutions” on the Prometheus platform

Ensuring high-quality, safe, and most importantly tasty meals in schools and preschools is not an easy task. School leaders know this well, having faced challenges related to food safety, updated regulations, menu planning, procurement, and more.

That is why the course “Effective organization of nutrition in educational institutions” covers the key aspects of managing school meals – from legal frameworks to promoting a culture of healthy eating among children and adults.

As part of the program, participants will learn:

- how to implement the School nutrition reform in their institutions;
- what the HACCP system is and how to ensure food safety;
- how to work effectively with suppliers;
- how to plan menus, manage records, and organize buffets;
- how to communicate with parents, pupils, and the wider community.

The course is designed for:

- heads of educational institutions within local communities,
- representatives of local education authorities.

The program consists of 10 thematic modules, including video lectures and curated resources, some of which are required for self-study.

It features ongoing and final assessments. Successful completion provides participants with a certificate of professional development (30 hours / 1 ECTS credit).



Registration is available [here](#)

The course was developed by the Swiss-Ukrainian project DECIDE – Decentralization for Improved Democratic Education, implemented in Ukraine by a consortium comprising DOCCU and PH Zürich with the support of Switzerland.

It was created in partnership with the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine, the School nutrition reform team, the State institution “Professional procurement,” NGO ‘National foodservice association’, NGO “Cult Food,” and the E-Tender electronic auction platform.

This initiative is part of the School nutrition reform launched by the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska.

Creating a better future for our children together!



Click here for our resources:

