SCHOOL NUTRITION REFORM in UKRAINE

AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE FIRST LADY OLENA ZELENSKA

#7 — 10 ‘26

THE SCHOOL NUTRITION REFORM TEAM DIGEST

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2026



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Welcome! We are pleased to present the seventh Digest by the School Nutrition Reform Team, covering the key events and achievements of July–September 2026.

The main development during this period was the expansion of the free hot school meals programme. From 1 September, it was extended to pupils in grades 1–11 (12) at municipal general secondary education institutions attending classes in person or through blended learning. Overall, the programme covers around **3 million children across Ukraine**.

The expansion required extensive preparation at both national and local levels. Ahead of the 2026/2027 academic year, a series of organisational activities helped strengthen coordination between government authorities and communities on practical aspects of providing school meals. At the same time, individual regulations were reviewed, practical guidance and recommendations were prepared for communities, school food blocks continued to be modernised, and solutions were developed for institutions with different infrastructure capacities and security conditions.

In the period of July–September there was a wide range of communication activities. Healthy nutrition festivals in Kyiv, Chernivtsi and Odesa regions brought together children, parents, educators and specialists through hands-on activities that made conversations about healthy habits accessible and engaging. Cooperation with international partners also continued, from supporting frontline regions and equipping school food blocks to exploring new opportunities for expert and business involvement.

This issue looks at how these decisions and initiatives worked in practice, what changed in communities and educational institutions, and the developments that defined the reform in the third quarter.

Enjoy reading!



SECTION 1. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CAPACITY



School meals funding as of 1 September 2026



State subvention for school meals: The 2026 state budget provides UAH 14.4 billion, of which UAH 13.3 billion (92.7%) has been allocated to local budgets. From January to August 2026, local budgets received UAH 5.89 billion and used UAH 3.28 billion (55.8%).

Remaining funds from the special fund of the educational subvention allocated for school meals: UAH 76.8 million remained at the beginning of 2026. As of 1 September, UAH 28.6 million (37.3%) had been used.

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) support: Funding for 2026 totals UAH 246.9 million. As of 1 September, local budgets had used UAH 163.3 million, or around 66% of the total. The remaining UAH 83.6 million (34%) was allocated in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 968.

Government expands options for organising meals in educational institutions

Ahead of the expansion of the free school meals programme, the Government updated the Procedure for organising meals in educational institutions and children's health and recreation facilities for the period of martial law.

The amendments to the Procedure are linked, among other things, to the extension of free meals to pupils in grades 1–11. For many institutions, this means a significant increase in the number of children who receive free hot meals during the school day.

Educational institutions with insufficient dining hall capacity may therefore use other spaces for meals, including assembly halls, open common areas, classrooms and temporary dining areas.

These spaces may be used only if they meet sanitary and food safety requirements.

This gives institutions greater flexibility when their existing dining halls cannot accommodate all the pupils covered by the programme.

To support the implementation of these changes, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Science and the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection jointly prepared recommendations for organising meals in adapted premises in general secondary education institutions. The document sets out the main requirements for preparing these spaces and serving meals in them.

Amendments to Resolution No. 305.

Recommendations for general secondary education institutions on organising meals in adapted premises.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE | MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF UKRAINE | THE STATE SERVICE OF UKRAINE ON FOOD SAFETY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

10 July — series of meetings on expanding the free school meals programme begins



On 10 July, the first in a series of online webinars held throughout July brought together representatives of regional military administrations and executive bodies of territorial communities to discuss the expansion of the free school meals programme from 1 September 2026. Representatives of more than 1,000 territorial communities joined the meeting, which focused on practical preparations for the new academic year and providing meals for pupils in grades 1–11 (12).

The meeting was initiated by and held with the participation of Ms. Tetiana Berezhna, Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy of Ukraine and Minister of Culture of Ukraine. Other participants included Ms. Anastasiia Sofiienko, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine; Mr. Ihor Kuzin, Deputy Minister of Health and Chief State Sanitary Doctor of Ukraine; Mr. Oleh Osiian, Deputy Head of the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection; Mr. Orest Stepanyak, Head of the School Nutrition Reform Team; Mr. Oleksandr Bondar, Coordinator for the Implementation of the School Nutrition Reform Strategy; representatives of territorial communities; and DECIDE Swiss-Ukrainian Project experts Ms. Yana Brusentsova and Mr. Serhii Yatskovskyi. The first meeting was moderated by Ms. Nadiia Petruniak, Coordinator of the Decentralisation portal.

Participants discussed updated rules for using the state subvention, organising meals in educational institutions, using alternative dining spaces, solutions for institutions with limited food block capacity, procurement procedures and food safety requirements. Much of the discussion addressed practical community concerns, including staffing, equipment upgrades, meal schedules, co-financing from local budgets and arrangements for institutions where food block renovations are still under way or which are located in frontline regions.

The online meetings provided an opportunity to discuss current issues, challenges and practical solutions needed to organise school meals in the 2026/2027 academic year.

The questions most frequently raised by communities were compiled into a guide entitled "Frequently Asked Questions on Organising Hot Meals for Pupils in the 2026/2027 Academic Year".

The serie was organised with the support of the DECIDE Swiss-Ukrainian Project, which provided a platform for dialogue between territorial communities and government authorities.

Guide: "Frequently Asked Questions on Organising Hot Meals for Pupils in the 2026/2027 Academic Year"

23 July — winners announced in the VARTO: RECIPE OF CARE grant competition»



On 23 July, the Ukrainian Veterans Fund announced the winners of the VARTO: RECIPE OF CARE grant competition, which supports veteran entrepreneurship in the school meals sector.

Two projects were selected. Sole proprietor Dmytro Opanasenko received 297 points for "Modern School Meals for Children in Hatne". Sole proprietor Rostyslav Hrytskiv received 292 points for "Stay Healthy! — Providing Hot Meals to Educational Institutions in Lviv".

Before the final stage of the competition, participants completed a week-long culinary and business training course from 6 to 10 July, focused on modern approaches to school meals provision. Veterans studied standardised recipe and process cards, HACCP food safety principles, logistics and financial management, and developed their own business models. All participants received certificates upon completion.

The winners will receive grants ranging from UAH 500,000 to UAH 3 million to develop their school meals projects. Funding may be used to support veteran-owned businesses, including establishing and modernising food blocks and dining halls, and providing school meals in general secondary education institutions across communities.

The programme is implemented by the Ukrainian Veterans Fund of the Ministry for Veterans Affairs and the School Nutrition Reform Team, with support from the MHP-Hromadi Charitable Foundation, as part of the MHP Poruch programme providing individual support to service members, veterans and their families.

The programme was first presented in May at the discussion event "VARTO: Recipe of Care. Veteran Entrepreneurship and School Meals: A Practical Case Study of a Kitchen-Factory". Three food blocks models — the basic kitchen, support kitchen and kitchen-factory were introduced to participants. They also went to the HOTUIMO kitchen-factory in Bucha.

The programme connects support for veteran entrepreneurship with the needs of the school meals system. It gives veterans an opportunity to develop their own businesses and helps communities involve new service providers in delivering safe, high-quality meals for children.

Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine

SCHOOL NUTRITION REFORM in UKRAINE

MHP | Hromadi CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

MHP

1 September — free hot meals programme expanded to pupils in grades 1–11 (12)



Ukraine's 2026 state budget provided almost UAH 14.4 billion for meals for pupils in general secondary education institutions.

Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 869 of 1 July 2026 outlined allocation of UAH 7.45 billion funding in the form of subvention for September–November 2026.

From 1 September 2026, pupils in grades 1–11 (12) at municipal general secondary education institutions who study in person or through blended learning receive free hot meals. This covers around 3 million children across Ukraine.

The programme's expansion marked one of the largest milestones in the school nutrition reform. By the start of the new academic year, more than 2,000 school food blocks had been modernised, 38 culinary hubs established, and more than 9,500 cooks trained or provided with professional development opportunities.

At the same time, communities are selecting the most suitable technological model — a basic kitchen, support kitchen or kitchen-factory — and method of meal provision according to the needs of educational institutions, available infrastructure and logistics.

Transparency in the use of public funding remains another priority. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI) are developing and implementing a digital system to monitor food procurement for general secondary education institutions.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE

EUACI EUROPEAN UNION ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

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The expansion followed several years of work to modernise infrastructure, train staff, develop financing mechanisms and strengthen communities' capacity to provide meals for more children.

September — guide to organising hot meals in the 2026/2027 academic year prepared

The start of the new academic year and the expansion of the free hot meals programme raised many practical questions for communities and educational institutions. To bring key explanations together in one place, a guide entitled "Frequently asked questions on organising hot meals for pupils in the 2026–2027 academic year" was prepared.

The guide was developed with contributions from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine; Ministry of Health of Ukraine; Ministry of Economy and Environment of Ukraine; State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection; State Tax Service of Ukraine; Prozorro State Enterprise; Professional Procurement State Institution; School Nutrition Reform Team; DECIDE Swiss-Ukrainian Project; and European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI).

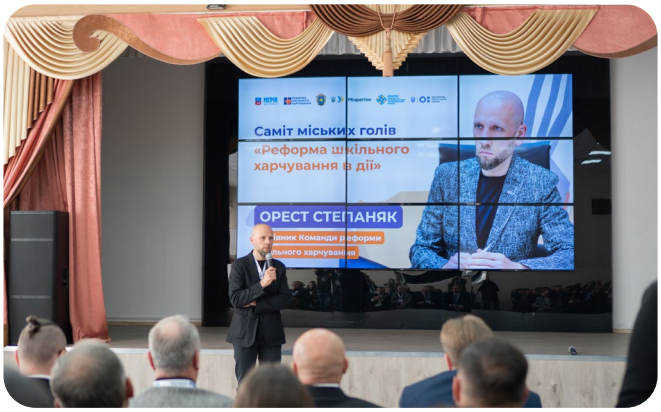
In particular, the guide answers questions about:

- organising free hot meals for pupils in grades 1–11;
- documents required to arrange meal provision;
- organising meals when dining hall space or food block production capacity is insufficient;
- using several meal sittings, staggered schedules and adapted premises;
- programme financing mechanisms and the use of state subventions;
- procuring food products, catering and outsourced food services;
- amending existing contracts;
- modernising food blocks and obtaining state funding;
- choosing a kitchen model based on community needs.

The guide has been sent to regional military (state) administrations with a request to share it with territorial communities and founders of general secondary education institutions for use in organising school meals during the 2026/2027 academic year.

The guide is available via the link.

28 September — Mayors’ Summit and Dialogue with Communities on School Nutrition Reform held in Cherkasy



On 28 September, Cherkasy hosted the **Mayors’ Summit “School Nutrition Reform in Action”** and the **“Dialogue with Communities”** as part of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities under the President of Ukraine.

The programme consisted of two parts. The first part gave participants an opportunity to learn about school meal provision in Cherkasy through visits to local educational institutions. The second part was focused on the practical implementation of the reform at the local level, bringing communities together to share their experiences and discuss solutions already being put into practice.

The Summit was organised by Cherkasy City Council in cooperation with the Cherkasy Regional Military Administration, the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine (Minregion), and the School Nutrition Reform Team.

The practical programme began at Cherkasy Gymnasium No. 9, named after O. M. Lutsenko, where participants learned about the city’s approach to organising school meals and

visited a school kitchen modernised with funding from the city budget. Director of the school Iryna Topchii and School meals coordinator Larysa Nesterenko explained how the canteen operates and how meals are provided to pupils in grades 1–11.



The next stop was Cherkasy Secondary School No. 26, named after I. F. Momot, where participants toured a renovated school kitchen and learned about the results of a modernisation project supported by a state subvention. Director of the school Halyna Tytarenko shared the school’s experience of providing meals as the programme expands. Participants also had the opportunity to observe the lunch service and see the menu offered to pupils.



Dialogue with communities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities under the President of Ukraine

CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES UNDER THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

The **“Dialogue with Communities”**, held as part of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities under the President of Ukraine, focused on implementing school nutrition reform at the local level. The event brought together community representatives to discuss the quality of school meals, local responsibilities and the decisions that shape how school meal provision is organised in each community.

The event was also attended by **Viktor Mykyta**, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine and Chair of the Presidium of the Congress; **Vitaliy Bezhin,** Minister for Communities, Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine; **Andrii Butenko**, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine; **Viktor Liashko**, Minister of Health of Ukraine; and Liliia Pashynna, Head of the Congress Office.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE
Ministry for Communities, Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF UKRAINE

First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska also joined the event. She emphasised the importance of helping children develop healthy eating habits and ensuring that every child has access to equally high-quality school meals, regardless of where they live. School nutrition reform is now entering a new phase, with the expansion of the free school meals programme to approximately 3 million pupils in municipal general secondary education institutions. Following updates to the regulatory framework, infrastructure modernisation and the gradual expansion of the programme, the key priority is now to ensure that the reform is implemented effectively at the local level.

Communities and educational institutions have a particularly important role to play at this stage. They are directly responsible for organising school meals, managing procurement and ensuring that children receive high-quality food.

A key part of the Dialogue was dedicated to sharing successful local approaches to implementing school nutrition reform. The heads of six communities — **Cherkasy, Kolomyia, Zaporizhzhia, Avanhardivska, Hatnenska and Rozhnivska** — presented their experiences.

These communities differ in size, location and the conditions in which they are implementing the reform. Each shared practical solutions that are already working in their schools.



Since 1 September, Cherkasy has provided free meals to all pupils in grades 1–11 attending school in person or through blended learning.

Kolomyia shared its experience of modernising school canteens, locally known as “school restaurants”, and working with private school meal providers selected through open auctions.

In the **Rozhnivka community**, kitchens in three lyceums have been modernised, and all children attending school in person now receive hot meals.

The **Avanhard community** has upgraded school kitchens in all its educational institutions and uses a combination of basic and hub kitchen models to provide meals.

In **Hatne**, the local lyceum’s kitchen and dining area have been renovated. More than 1,400 children receive meals there every day, and a veteran-owned business has also been involved in school meal provision.

Zaporizhzhia shared its experience of providing school meals close to the frontline. Hot meals are currently provided to pupils in underground schools through catering services. At the same time, the city is preparing to develop its own network of a food factory, hub kitchens and basic kitchens.



While the state sets the standards and provides funding, many of the key decisions are made locally. Communities and educational institutions develop menus and approve them in accordance with established procedures, manage procurement and select the school meal provision model best suited to their circumstances.

One of the main themes of the discussion was ensuring that children receive high-quality school lunches regardless of where they live, whether in a large city or a small community, in a region further from the frontline or one directly affected by the war.

Participants also discussed the importance of gathering feedback from children and parents on their satisfaction with school

meals and listening to their suggestions for improving menus.

Providing every child with a free hot meal is an important achievement of the reform. The next priority is to ensure consistently high-quality meals in every community while helping children develop healthy eating habits they can carry from the school canteen into everyday family life.



19 August — webinar on transparent and effective procurement for school meals

On 19 August, an online webinar entitled "Transparent and effective procurement of food products and meal services for general secondary education institutions" brought together representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, regional military administrations, founders and heads of educational institutions, procurement specialists, experts from the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI), and the School Nutrition Reform Team.

The webinar focused on the practical procurement of food products and meal services, including those funded through state subventions. Participants reviewed legislative requirements, changes introduced by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 957, stages of the procurement process, planning, preparation of tender documentation, contract signing, procurement of catering and outsourced food services, and case studies drawn from monitoring results.

Speakers included Anastasiia Sofiienko, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine; Olha Kolodochka, Head of Construction Risk Mitigation at EUACI; Orest Stepanyak, Head of the School Nutrition Reform Team; Myroslav Simka, Chair of the NGO Centre for Public Monitoring and Research and a public procurement expert; and Oksana Dziavronyk, a public procurement monitoring expert.

Orest Stepanyak emphasised the role of procurement across the school meals system. To achieve good results, communities need to assess their needs accurately, choose the appropriate model and method of meal provision, plan funding, analyse the market, encourage competition and monitor the quality of products and services after contracts are signed.

The webinar also presented work on a food and meal service procurement monitoring dashboard being developed by the School nutrition reform team and EUACI. The tool is intended to support systematic procurement analysis, price comparisons between communities and regions, identification of significant discrepancies and detection of recurring issues requiring additional guidance or methodological support.

The webinar formed part of wider efforts to strengthen the capacity of communities and contracting authorities to conduct transparent, effective procurement that reflects the actual needs of educational institutions.

22 September — interim results of parent survey on school meals published

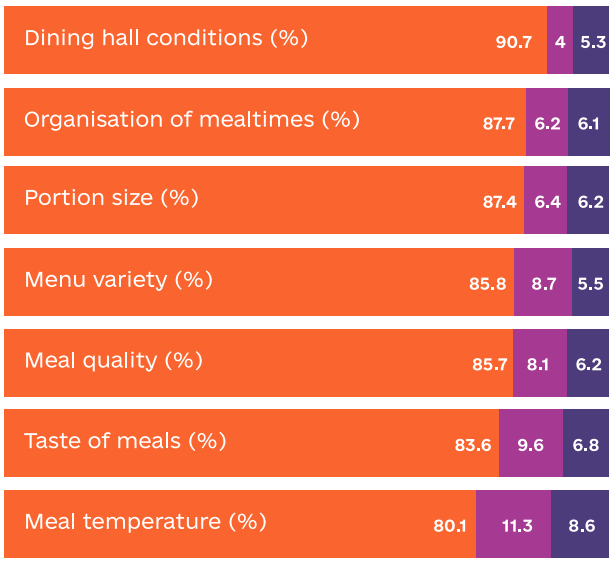
The State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine published interim findings from a parent survey on meal provision in general secondary education institutions. The monitoring is being conducted at the request of the Prime Minister of Ukraine to gather family feedback on the availability, quality and organisation of school meals.

The interim findings are based on questionnaires completed by parents of children attending school in person.

2162
parent questionnaires

Participation was voluntary, so the findings reflect the views of respondents and are not representative of the entire general secondary education system.

How parents ratedschool meals



What parents would like to improve:

- menu variety — 37%
- taste of meals — 37%
- meal quality — 22%
- meal temperature — 20%
- time allowed for meals — 11%
- portion size — 10%
- special dietary needs — 6%
- organisation of meals / queues — 6%
- dining hall conditions — 5%
- **31% — no changes needed**



Which aspects of school meals need the most attention?

1. Taste of meals:
   - 37% suggest improvements
   - 9.6% rate it negatively
2. Menu variety:
   - 37% suggest improvements
   - 8.7% rate it negatively
3. Meal quality:
   - 222% suggest improvements
   - 8.1% rate it negatively

4. Meal temperature:
    - 220% suggest improvements
    - 11.3% rate it negatively
5. Portion size:
    - 10% suggest improvements
    - 6.4% rate it negatively
6. Organisation of mealtimes:
    - 6% suggest improvements
    - 6.2% rate it negatively
7. Dining hall conditions:
    - 5% suggest improvements
    - 4% rate it negatively

Further details of the interim survey results and parents' ratings of individual aspects of school meals are available on the State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine website.

School meals monitoring: preliminary results from the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection

The State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection has published the first results of its comprehensive assessment of how meals are organized in general secondary education institutions. The monitoring aims to identify problems and ensure that shortcomings are addressed promptly at the school level.

567

educational institutions have undergone a comprehensive assessment of how meals are organized

No food safety violations were found in approximately half of the institutions inspected. However, issues requiring corrective action were identified in 293 institutions. The most common involved refrigeration temperature control, separate storage of different types of food, implementation of HACCP procedures, food waste management, staff hygiene training and pest control.

Compliance with sanitary requirements was being assessed separately. More than 80% of the institutions inspected comply with these requirements, but 104 institutions had issues that needed to be addressed. These included following approved menus and nutrition standards, staff hygiene, medical examinations, storage of daily food samples and food preparation procedures.

An important part of the monitoring concerns the meals children actually receive. Specialists have reviewed **276 four-week seasonal menus**, nine of which were returned for revision. Samples of ingredients, drinking water and prepared meals, as well as conditions in educational institutions have also been collected for laboratory testing.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection continue to exchange information promptly on monitoring results and the correction of identified shortcomings. The Service's regional offices also review submitted menus and provide feedback to educational institutions so that changes can be made as quickly as possible.

Monitoring is continuing across Ukraine's regions. Its aim is to ensure consistent compliance with food safety requirements, proper food storage and preparation conditions, approved menus and nutrition standards.

More information on the preliminary monitoring results is available on the website of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

SECTION II. MODERNIZATION OF FOOD BLOCKS



Modernization of food blocks in frontline regions with World Food Programme support



The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) continues its programme to equip school food blocks in Ukraine's frontline regions. This is part of the 2025–2027 activity plan for WFP's School Meals Programme in Ukraine and its strategy for supporting educational institutions during the winter.

Modern kitchen equipment has been provided to **298 educational** institutions in Kherson, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Sumy, Chernihiv and Zaporizhzhia regions.

In the first phase, **79 institutions** received electric stoves, combi steam ovens, roasting ovens, electric water-heating boilers and fuel for generators. Another 219 institutions received electric stoves, combi steam ovens, electric cooking kettles, vegetable slicers and hood-type dishwashers.

WFP procured the equipment, and suppliers arranged delivery. The Government of France funded the second phase, which covered **219 institutions**.

The total value of the assistance exceeded USD 2.8 million, benefiting more than 100,000 pupils. This support was made possible thanks to the governments of France, Finland and Sweden.

The programme is continuing in 2026. By the end of the year, additional 28 educational institutions in the Kharkiv region are expected to receive equipment. Energy storage systems, including hybrid inverters and batteries, are also planned for 14 institutions in Kherson and Mykolaiv regions. These are designed to keep food blocks operating independently for six to eight hours during power outages.

Such solutions are especially important in frontline regions, where uninterrupted food block operations depend on both modern equipment and the ability to keep preparing meals when electricity supplies are disrupted.

WFP World Food Programme

19 August — Modernized food block was presented at Novopetrivskyi Lyceum



On 19 August, a modernized food block was presented at Novopetrivskyi Lyceum in Kyiv region. With support from Enabel, Belgium's development agency, the institution's facilities were renovated, modern kitchen equipment was installed and the shelter was also upgraded.

During the visit, Orest Stepanyak, Head of the School Nutrition Reform Team, presented

the reform's results to international partners and spoke about food block modernization in different regions, current challenges and next steps.



The visit was attended by Maxime Prévot, Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation; Luc Jacobs, Ambassador of Belgium to Ukraine; Jean Van Wetter, CEO of Enabel; Dirk Deprez, Country Director of Enabel in Ukraine; Andrii Butenko, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine; Yaroslav Melnyk, Ambassador of Ukraine to Belgium; and Zhanna Osypenko, Deputy Head of the Kyiv Regional Military Administration.



A short workshop on making Belgian waffles was also part of the visit. Participants could decorate the waffles themselves with berries and fresh fruit.

The visit showed how international support transforms into tangible improvements at the level of an educational institution, from renovated facilities and new equipment to better working conditions for staff and better organization of meals for children.

Enabel

25 September — Meeting in Bucha on the development and expansion of Ukraine's kitchen-factory network



On 25 September, representatives of central government, communities, international partners and the School nutrition reform team met in Bucha to discuss further development of the kitchen-factory network and preparations for new projects. Participants included Andrii Butenko, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine; Oleksii Riabykin, Deputy Minister for Restoration, Infrastructure and Transport of Ukraine; and representatives of the European Investment Bank, UNDP in Ukraine and local communities.

The event took place at HOTUIMO, Ukraine's first kitchen-factory. Participants saw how it operates, learned about its production processes and how large quantities of meals

are prepared, and had an opportunity to taste a school lunch.

The event took place at HOTUIMO, Ukraine’s first kitchen-factory. Participants saw how it operates, learned about its production processes and how large quantities of meals are prepared, and had an opportunity to taste a school lunch.



The panel discussion “Strategies for Developing School Nutrition Infrastructure” was focused on the reform’s results, the role of kitchen-factories in the school meals system, partnerships between the government, communities and international organizations, and further expansion of this model. It was moderated by Orest Stepanyak, Head of the School Nutrition Reform Team.



The programme continued with a workshop entitled “School Nutrition Reform: From Successful Experience to Expanding the Kitchen-Factory Network”. Participants reviewed experience from completed projects, the roadmap for network development and practical steps for communities planning to establish their own kitchen-factories. The workshop also included an open discussion with interested communities.

A key outcome of the meeting was the signing of memoranda of cooperation with Vinnytsia, Vyshneve, Sheptytskyi, Lebedyn and Zaporizhzhia. These communities are beginning work on five new kitchen-factory projects which, according to preliminary estimates, could provide meals to around 181 educational institutions, including schools and kindergartens in rural areas.

Preparing these projects involves constructing kitchen-factories, equipping them with professional kitchen equipment, organizing deliveries and preparing the educational institutions that will receive the meals. Next steps are being developed jointly by the communities, the European Investment Bank, UNDP in Ukraine and the School nutrition reform team.

European Investment Bank
UNDP
SCHOOL NUTRITION REFORM in UKRAINE

At the same time, potential sites for a further phase of kitchen-factories are being explored in Mykolaiv, Rivne, Poltava, Kremenchuk, Chortkiv, Kolomyia and Odesa. Expanding the network would give communities more options for the centralized preparation and delivery of hot meals to many educational institutions within one or several communities, including those with limited food block capacity.

SECTION III. HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



More than 5,000 responses: what monitoring reveals about professional training for school cooks



To carry out the tasks set out in the minutes of the meeting of 2 April 2026 (No. 13512/0/1-26), chaired by Tetiana Berezhna, Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy of Ukraine and Minister of Culture of Ukraine, and to implement the Action Plan of the School Nutrition Reform Strategy, tools were developed to monitor the quality of professional training for school canteen staff.

A key stage of the monitoring was a large-scale survey of cooks working in educational institutions. It examined their experience of professional training, the quality of that training, opportunities for practical learning and the extent to which they can use the knowledge gained in their daily work.

In total, 5,349 responses were received from all regions of Ukraine. For the first time, this volume of data allows such a detailed assessment of cooks’ professional training, both across individual training programmes and at the regional level.

The first results show several positive trends and help identify areas where further improvements are needed.

One particularly encouraging finding is the high level of satisfaction with training. In most regions, more than 90% of the cooks who attended training rated it 4 or 5 out of 5. Overall, approximately 95–96% of participants gave positive ratings for the quality of training.

Some regions have also achieved high levels of participation in professional training. Their experience shows that successful regional practices already exist in Ukraine and could help guide the further expansion of the training system.

However, access to training remains uneven. Overall, approximately 29% of respondents had not received specialized professional training, and in some regions this share exceeded 40–50%. The next steps will therefore include sharing successful practices and improving access to training in the regions where it is needed most.

Another important finding is that the knowledge gained is being put into practice. Cooks regularly apply modern cooking techniques, sanitary requirements, food safety principles, HACCP procedures, workplace organization skills and equipment operation skills.

Training also has broader benefits. Among the soft skills gained, staff most often mention teamwork, communication, self-organization, adaptability and creativity. Professional training therefore develops technical skills and strengthens the overall working culture of school food blocks.

The monitoring also highlighted the sector’s strong workforce potential. In many regions, a significant share of cooks have more than ten years of experience. This provides a solid basis for mentoring and passing practical knowledge on to new staff.

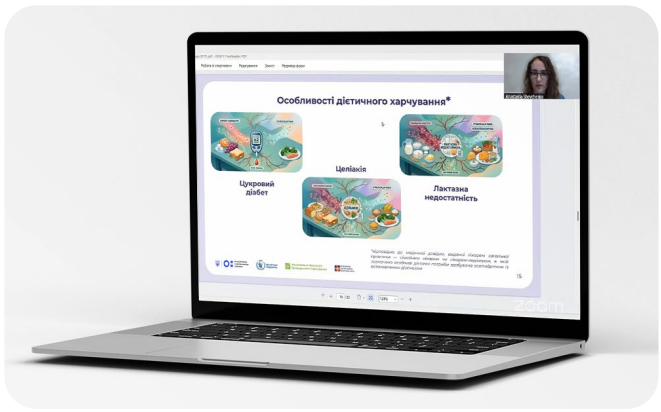
The practical component of training is one area that needs further attention. According to the overall results, about 42% of those who received training had no practical sessions.



The monitoring also helped identify the topics cooks would like to study more. These include working with modern equipment, new cooking techniques, HACCP, menu planning, record keeping, reducing food waste and organizing meals for children with special dietary needs.

The next step is to use the results to develop a systematic model of professional training for cooks, combining successful regional practices, regular professional development, practical instruction, modern equipment and a common set of core competencies.

More than 2,300 participants joined online training on organizing school meals



From September 21 to 25, the first stage of the training programme "Basic Principles of Organizing School Meals: Current Requirements and Challenges" took place. It was designed to strengthen the professional skills of cooks working in educational institutions.

Over five days and 13 hours of online training, participants worked with experts to examine the main elements of a modern school meals system, from food block operations and food safety requirements to menu development and the use of modern equipment.

The programme covered the following areas:

- school nutrition reform — its development from the first steps towards a sustainable system;
- organization of meals in educational institutions — service arrangements, technological models and current challenges;
- the HACCP system — practical approaches to implementation and the most common areas of non-compliance;
- modern food block equipment — combi-steam cooking technology, multifunctional cooking systems, mechanical, cooking and refrigeration equipment, and safe operating procedures;
- school nutrition standards under Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 305, the use of organic products and the organization of meals for children with special dietary needs;
- developing standardized recipe cards and four-week seasonal menus, record keeping, cost calculations and reporting.

Participants were from nine Ukrainian regions: Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Kyiv.

The programme's online broadcasts received a total of 13,300 views, with more than 2,300 unique viewers. At the end of the first stage, 869 cooks completed an assessment of what they had learned.

The online course is only the first stage. Next, 220 cooks will be selected to continue their training in person at culinary hubs. They will practise working with modern equipment, preparing recipe cards and menus, maintaining records, calculating costs, conducting food quality checks and using modern cooking techniques for educational institutions.

The project is implemented by the NGO National Foodservice Association in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), with support from the Kingdom of Sweden.

The programme combines theory with practical training. It aims to help school food service professionals work confidently to modern standards and provide children in educational institutions with safe, high-quality meals.



SECTION IV. COMMUNICATION OF HEALTHY NUTRITION



Healthy nutrition festivals

Healthy nutrition festivals have become one of the ways communities can actively promote healthy eating habits. These events make it possible to talk to children and families about healthy nutrition through cooking together, games, experiments and discussions with specialists.

Between July and September, communities in Kyiv region, Bukovyna and Odesa region actively took part in this initiative. Each festival had its own programme, but all of them created spaces where healthy nutrition became an accessible, relevant topic for children, parents and entire communities.

July 17 — Healthy nutrition festival in Kyiv region

On July 17, a Healthy nutrition festival was held in Boryspil district, Kyiv region. It brought together children, parents, educators, cooks, community representatives, government officials and international partners to discuss healthy eating habits and changes in the school meals system.



The festival took place simultaneously at four venues and attracted around 2,750 participants. Twenty-six activities were organized for children from grade 2 to upper secondary school, parents and educators. The programme combined cooking, educational, creative and physical activities, allowing participants to explore healthy nutrition through practical experience.



The festival was attended by Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine; Tetiana Berezhna, Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy of Ukraine and Minister of Culture of Ukraine; Viktor Liashko, Minister of Health of Ukraine; Katarína Mathernová, Ambassador of the European Union to Ukraine; Allan Pagh Kristensen, Head of the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine; as well as representatives of government agencies and international organizations, educators, school food service workers, pupils and parents.



Throughout the day, participants prepared different types of syrnyky (Ukrainian cottage

cheese pancakes) and healthy burgers, created their own “menu of the future” and joined SmakoQuiz, quests and cooking challenges. At FoodLab, children explored the properties of different foods, spoke with nutrition specialists and learned more about the profession of a cook. Each of the four venues had its own programme representing different areas of the reform, from food block modernization and professional training to building healthy eating habits among children and families.



At Revne Lyceum in the Hirska community, participants visited the modernized food block, joined cooking workshops, prepared different types of syrnyky and put together a balanced lunch during the Healthy Burger challenge. Boryspil Lyceum “Lider” hosted games and educational activities, including SmakoQuiz, while parents attended a separate session on developing healthy eating habits in the family.

Another venue was the culinary hub at Boryspil Vocational College, established in 2023 to train and provide professional development for school food service workers. Visitors learned about modern equipment, vocational education opportunities and training for cooks working in educational institutions.

At Shchaslyve Academic Lyceum, cooking activities were accompanied by quizzes, sports activities and meetings with nutrition specialists. A separate area was organized by the nationwide mental health programme “How Are You?”, initiated by First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska. Children completed activities about emotional well-being, listened to calming music and made fruit, vegetables and other foods from modelling clay. The venue also presented vocational education opportunities and the kitchen-wfactory as one of the technological models of organization of school meals.



The festival focused on both what children eat and how everyday habits affect physical development, concentration, memory, energy levels and emotional well-being. Particular attention was paid to families, since healthy eating habits need to be supported at home as well as in educational institutions.



July 28 — Bukovyna health food

On July 28, Bukovyna hosted Bukovyna Health Food, the third major Healthy nutrition festival of 2026, following events in Khmelnytskyi and Kyiv regions. Venues in Chernivtsi and Horishni Sherivtsi brought together children, parents, educators, cooks, community representatives and specialists to explore healthy eating habits.

The programme combined practical and educational activities, including food quizzes, experiments with different products, cooking classes and meetings with specialists. Particular attention was paid to how everyday eating habits develop and how emotions and stress can influence food choices.

One of the main festival venues in Chernivtsi was Vocational School No. 8, which has a culinary hub for training school food service workers. In the Food Lab area, children explored the properties and composition of familiar foods, learned to make more thoughtful food choices and took part in experiments, games and food quizzes.



In a modern, fully equipped kitchen, children and parents prepared healthy breakfasts and drinks, including smoothies. The same facilities are used to train educational institution staff in standardized recipe cards, menus developed under the reform and the use of modern equipment.

The “Healthy Habits Start at Home” area offered parents an opportunity to discuss family eating habits with a nutrition specialist and participate in an interactive Mentimeter survey. Other activities explored the relationship between emotional well-being and eating behaviour.



At Horishni Sherivtsi Lyceum, festival activities took place in the renovated dining hall and food block. The programme included a “Healthy Taste Workshop” and a practical session for parents on developing healthy eating habits within the family.



Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine, and Andrii Butenko, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, also attended the festival. During the visit, participants discussed progress in implementing the school nutrition reform in Chernivtsi region and the region’s next priorities.



In the region, 32 food blocks have been modernized across 331 general secondary education institutions. The “basic kitchen” model operates in 305 institutions and the “support kitchen” model in 13. A total of 693 food block staff have completed professional development, and two culinary hubs have been established to train cooks. The region also holds a “Super Canteen/Food Block” competition, with the local authorities rewarding winners with new equipment.



Bukovyna Health Food brought together several areas of the reform: engagement with children and parents, professional development for cooks, infrastructure modernization and discussions on next steps at community level. The festival’s practical format showed how the principles of healthy nutrition can become part of families’ everyday habits beyond educational institutions.

August 18 — School nutrition reform team at the “Serpneva” education conference

On August 18, Kyiv hosted the annual “Serpneva” education conference, which traditionally brings together teachers, heads of educational institutions, community representatives and education officials ahead of the new academic year.

This year, school meals featured prominently in the programme. Ahead of the expansion of free hot meals, the School nutrition reform team presented its key results and three elements essential to a stable system: modern infrastructure, transparent processes and professional teams.

The results included more than 2,000 modernized food blocks, 38 culinary hubs and over 9,500 cooks who had received training and professional development.

The presentation also highlighted cooperation between the School nutrition reform team, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI). Their joint work aims to ensure that modernization projects are selected and implemented transparently and effectively.

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EUACI EUROPEAN UNION ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

Funded by the European Union

UK International Development
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Over three years, experts identified UAH 362.9 million in unjustified expenditure. The savings made it possible to fund 39 additional projects.



At the School nutrition reform team’s stand, conference participants could explore step-by-step instructions and training materials, and discuss practical issues related to food block modernization, work organization and staff training.

During the conference, Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine and initiator of the reform, also emphasized the role of educational institutions in developing healthy eating habits that can stay with children throughout their lives.

The “Serpneva” conference provided an opportunity to present the reform’s results and discuss practical tools for its further implementation ahead of the new academic year.



September 1 — First Lady visited Chaiky Gymnasium in Kyiv Region



On September 1, Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine and initiator of the school nutrition reform, visited Chaiky Gymnasium in Kyiv region together with representatives of the School nutrition reform team.

Around 700 pupils receive hot meals at the gymnasium. As the newly built institution continues to admit more children, the community is also planning how to provide meals for a larger number of pupils in the future.

Meals are currently provided through catering. At the same time, the gymnasium is expanding the capacity of its food block and considering a transition to the “support kitchen” model.



In the future, this kitchen could prepare meals for the gymnasium and two other educational institutions in the community.

The visit showed how long-term planning of a school meals network can work at community level. This involves deciding where to maintain or establish basic kitchens, which institutions could operate as support kitchens and which should receive prepared meals.

This approach helps communities plan the required food block capacity, equipment, staff, meal deliveries and the order in which facilities should be modernized. After the expansion of the free meals programme, such decisions have become particularly relevant for communities across Ukraine.

September 2 — Healthy nutrition festival in Odesa region

On September 2, a Healthy nutrition festival took place at two venues in Odesa region: Prylymanskyi Lyceum and Chornomorets Stadium in Odesa. The event continued a series of regional festivals previously held in Khmelnytskyi and Kyiv regions and in Bukovyna. It brought together children, parents, educators, cooks, specialists and community representatives to explore healthy eating habits.

Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine, visited both venues. The Odesa event was also attended by Oleh Kiper, Head of the Odesa Regional Military Administration, and Serhii Lysak, Head of the Odesa City Military Administration.

At Prylymanskyi Lyceum, the festival took place in fully renovated facilities. Almost two years earlier, major repairs and modernization of the food block were underway with funding from a state subvention and support from UNICEF and the Swiss-Ukrainian DECIDE Project. At the same time, work was carried out to make the institution energy-independent and equip it with a modern shelter, which can now be used for regular classes and events as well as during air raid alerts.



Around 1,600 children attend the lyceum. The modernized food block received UAH 20 million from the state budget and another UAH 6 million from the local budget. The facilities were equipped with modern equipment that helps streamline some daily processes and reduce staff workload. One of the systems installed in the kitchen combines seven functions, allowing certain stages of meal preparation to be completed more quickly. The infrastructure modernization also brought changes to the menu: it became more varied, with more fresh vegetables and modern approaches to planning daily meals.



The festival programme at Prylymanskyi Lyceum combined practical and creative

activities. Children joined healthy cooking workshops, took part in a mini-competition and exhibited their work in “Healthy Nutrition Through Children’s Eyes”. Instructors and students from the culinary hub at Pivnichnyi Vocational College also participated. As part of the reform, the hub trains and provides professional development for cooks working in educational institutions.

Some cooking activities focused on alternatives to familiar snacks and sweets. Participants prepared vegetable spring rolls with different sauces and desserts made with Greek yoghurt, chia seeds, fruit and other ingredients. These practical activities showed children how familiar foods can be combined in new ways to make everyday meals more varied.

On the same day, a Healthy Nutrition Lesson was held across Odesa region.

The second part of the festival took place at Chornomorets Stadium in Odesa, where six family teams prepared dishes with professional chefs and visitors voted for their favourites.



Nearby, there were also educational and practical activity areas. The Museum of Interesting Science presented “The Science of Healthy Nutrition”, a show that explained what carbonated drinks contain and demonstrated what happens to vegetables when frozen.

A separate area hosted a fair featuring artisan producers from Odesa region and local vocational education institutions. Odesa National University of Technology held workshops called “Sweets Without Excess Sugar” and “The Healthy Eating Plate”, as well as sessions on preparing healthy rolls and sandwiches.

Children and parents also joined the cooking activities, preparing pancake rolls with cheese, raisins and seasonal fruit and taking part in a competition for the best healthy breakfast.

This time, healthy nutrition went far beyond the school canteen. From the modernized food block at Prylymanskyi Lyceum to family cooking competitions at Chornomorets Stadium, the festival showed different ways to engage children and adults in discussions about food through cooking, experiments, games and shared experiences.

SECTION V. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE REFORM TEAM



July 8 — Meeting with EastCham Finland on cooperation opportunities with Finnish businesses

On July 8, the School nutrition reform team met with representatives of EastCham Finland, an organization that helps Finnish businesses explore opportunities and operate in Ukraine.

The School nutrition reform team presented its key projects, including infrastructure projects, current needs and plans for further development. Participants also discussed approximate funding requirements for implementing different technological models of organization of school meals and modernizing food blocks.

EastCham Finland representatives said they planned to present cooperation opportunities to Finnish manufacturing companies and include information about the school nutrition reform in their materials. They also described support mechanisms available to Finnish businesses interested in operating in Ukraine.

The parties identified a pilot project as one possible next step. This could involve supplying equipment for different technological models of organization of school meals, or specific equipment for a kitchen-factory where only part of the facility's needs can be covered rather than a complete equipment package.

Participants included Henri Riihimäki, CEO of EastCham Finland; Hanna Kuzmenko, Senior Market Analyst at EastCham Finland; Denys Dmytruk, Market Analyst at EastCham Finland; Yuliia Bulhakova, Commercial Officer at the Embassy of Finland in Ukraine; and representatives of the School nutrition neform team.

The meeting was part of continued efforts to involve international partners in developing school nutrition infrastructure and find practical ways for Finnish businesses to contribute to projects in Ukraine.

EAST/CHAM FINLAND

Ministry of Education and Science and WFP to provide about UAH 350 million for school meals in eight frontline regions



Ahead of the 2026/2027 academic year, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) agreed on practical steps to implement their joint school meals programme in eight frontline regions.

Andrii Butenko, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, met with Richard Ragan, WFP Country Director in Ukraine, and representatives of the School Nutrition Reform Team.

The meeting covered the funding schedule, implementation of the programme in communities, the readiness of school food blocks, provision of modern equipment for kitchen-factories, staff training, digital

reporting and options for adapting support quickly to changing security conditions.

The meeting followed up on an agreement signed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and WFP in June 2026 for nearly UAH 350 million. The funding is intended to provide free hot meals to primary school pupils in eight frontline regions during the 2026/2027 academic year.



The Ministry and WFP have cooperated on school meals since 2023. During the 2025–2026 academic year, the programme supported 275,000 pupils in almost 2,500 educational institutions across eight frontline regions. Over that period, children received approximately 40 million free hot lunches.

The support also covers infrastructure. Modern equipment has been provided to 298 school food blocks, while 79 educational institutions have received fuel cards to keep their food blocks operating without interruption.

Since September 1, this work has continued in the context of the expanded free school meals programme. All pupils in Grades 1–11 (12) at municipal general secondary education institutions who study in person or in a blended format receive free hot meals.

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WFP World Food Programme

ACTED supports food block modernization in 23 educational institutions in Chernihiv region

The French humanitarian NGO ACTED, which has worked in Ukraine since 2015 and supports war-affected communities, has contributed to the modernization of school nutrition infrastructure in Chernihiv region.

The project covered 23 educational institutions in 12 communities across Chernihiv region. The improvements benefit a total of 13,758 children and 1,738 staff members.

Four institutions received comprehensive renovations of their food blocks and canteens: Chernihiv Gymnasium No. 20, Chernihiv Gymnasium No. 33, Desnianskyi Lyceum and Nizhyn Gymnasium No. 14. The work included renovating the premises and installing 642 pieces of equipment. The total cost of modernizing the four institutions exceeded EUR 603,000.



Another 19 educational institutions received new kitchen equipment. A total of 325 items, worth nearly EUR 140,000, were purchased and installed. These included Chernihiv Gymnasiums Nos. 5, 6, 11, 15, 16, 27, 28, 29 and 31; Novhorod-Siverskyi Lyceum No.1; Starobilouskyi, Kyinskyi, Tupychivskyi, Dmytrivskyi, Rivchak-Stepanivskyi, Krupychpilskyi and Mykhailo-Kotsiubynskyi lyceums; and Piskivska School.





In total, the institutions received 967 units of equipment through the project. The food blocks were equipped with combi steam ovens, professional electric stoves and cooking kettles, refrigerators and freezers, vegetable slicers, dough mixers, dishwashing equipment, furniture, kitchen utensils and other equipment needed for daily operations.

The renovations improved both the food blocks themselves and the way they operate. The new equipment makes cooking easier, helps ensure proper food storage, simplifies ingredient preparation, automates some dishwashing and utensil-cleaning tasks, and improves the conditions for serving prepared meals.

ACTED’s support is an example of how international partners contribute to modernizing school infrastructure at community level. Renovated food blocks provide better working conditions for staff and help educational institutions serve safe, high-quality meals to children.

September 18–19 — School nutrition reform team at the Carpathian 8 Summit

The first Carpathian 8 Summit took place in Bukovel on 18–20 September. It brought together representatives of Ukraine, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Czechia and Serbia. The summit provided a platform for the Carpathian Integration Initiative, launched by Ukraine, to discuss regional development, cooperation between communities, partnerships and economic opportunities.



The School nutrition reform team presented the reform's results and practical models already operating in communities. The team was joined in Bukovel by HOTUIMO, Ukraine's first kitchen-factory, based in Bucha. It provides meals to 16 educational institutions in Bucha community and prepares around 8,000 portions daily. At the stand, visitors could learn about the kitchen-factory and other reform initiatives, and taste syrnyky and cottage cheese casserole served with cherry and sour cream sauces.



Visitors to the stand included Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, who came with Christine Schwarz-Fuchs, President of the Federal Council of Austria. Tetiana Berezhna, Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy of Ukraine and Minister of Culture of Ukraine; Andrii Butenko, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine; and Mykola Kalashnyk, Minister for Restoration, Infrastructure and Transport of Ukraine, also tasted the food.

Young leaders also visited the stand, asked questions about the reform and spoke with the team. The stand attracted interest from other Ukrainian and international summit participants as well.



A separate discussion was focused on the reform's economic potential. On September 19, a panel entitled "School Nutrition Reform: Opportunities for Ukrainian and European Businesses" examined the opportunities that developing the school meals system offers to manufacturers, local businesses and international partners.

The discussion featured:

- **Tetiana Berezhna** — Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy of Ukraine and Minister of Culture of Ukraine;
- **Andrii Butenko** — Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine;

- **Mykola Kalashnyk** — Minister for Restoration, Infrastructure and Transport of Ukraine;
- **Kristina Mikulova** — Head of the European Investment Bank's Regional Hub for Eastern Europe;
- **Dmytro Kysylevskyi** — Member of the Parliament of Ukraine and Deputy Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Economic Development.



Stepanyak, Head of the School nutrition reform team.

Participants discussed infrastructure modernization, the development of kitchen-factories, the production of professional kitchen equipment in Ukraine, international financing and opportunities for businesses to respond to communities' needs.

September 14–22 — School nutrition reform team on a working visit to France

From September 14 to 22, the School Nutrition Reform Team visited France. The programme included meetings with national and regional authorities and visits to educational institutions, central kitchens, municipalities, agricultural cooperatives and farms in different regions of the country.



During meetings at France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the team presented the current state of the reform and Ukraine's needs, including further modernization of food blocks and development of the kitchen-factory network. Discussions covered possible support for the reform in 2027, involvement of French manufacturers of professional kitchen equipment in Ukrainian projects and stronger Ukrainian participation in the international School Meals Coalition.

Another part of the visit focused on how French municipalities, educational institutions and local producers work together. With representatives of France's Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-Food and Food Sovereignty, the team discussed regional food programmes, support for local farmers and approaches that help match the needs of educational institutions with the capacities of producers in their regions.

The practical part of the programme included visits to educational institutions, central kitchens, cooperatives and farms in Drôme, Besançon and Île-de-France. The team studied how school meals are organized in areas of different sizes and circumstances, from rural and mountain districts to the wider Paris region. Particular attention was paid to procurement methods that consider food quality, origin and environmental criteria alongside price; cooperation with

local producers; the use of organic products; reducing food waste; and gathering feedback from children and parents.



During a meeting with representatives of the Île-de-France region, the participants discussed the possibility of transferring professional kitchen equipment from French school canteens to Ukraine. The equipment remains in good working order after the canteens are modernized. The team shared a list of current needs to help identify equipment that could be useful to Ukrainian educational institutions.



During the visit, the team also attended two conferences dedicated to Ukraine and its recovery. They presented the school nutrition reform, discussed its progress during the full-scale war and the system's current needs, and met with international and humanitarian organizations supporting Ukraine.

The team will review the information and practices gathered during the visit to assess how they could be applied in Ukraine, particularly to strengthen cooperation between communities and local producers, improve procurement and modernize infrastructure.



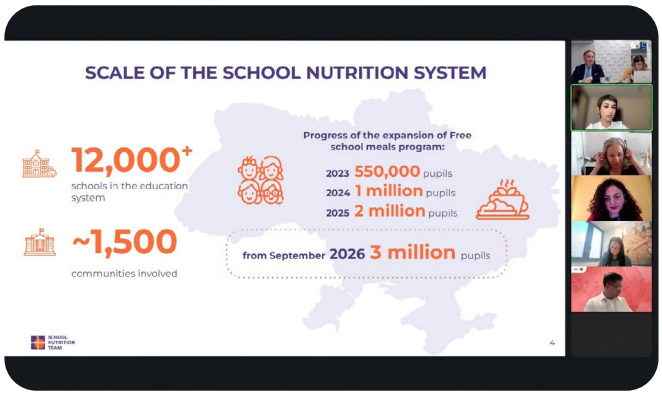
The School nutrition reform team thanks François Grunewald, Honorary President of Groupe URD and President of Comité d'Aide Médicale-Ukraine, for organizing the visit, coordinating meetings, facilitating the exchange of experience with French partners and supporting Ukraine.

September 22 — Reform team presented Ukraine's experience at a School Meals Coalition Working Group Meeting

On September 22, Ukraine's school nutrition reform was presented at a School Meals Coalition working group meeting. The main topic was the expansion of the free school meals programme and new directions for the reform in Ukraine.

Participants were presented with key results of the reform, which now covers more than 12,000 educational institutions in around 1,500 communities. Particular attention was

paid to the expansion of free meals: since September 2026, around 3 million pupils in Grades 1–11 (12) have received hot lunches every school day. The team also presented the modernization of more than 2,000 food blocks, the development of kitchen-factories, a network of 38 culinary hubs and training for more than 9,500 cooks.



The discussion also covered opportunities to share Ukraine’s experience with other countries. The team presented practical solutions developed during the reform, from diagnostic tools and regulatory work to infrastructure modernization models, training programmes and approaches to implementing the system at national and local levels.

To develop international cooperation, Ukraine proposed an approach in which Ukrainian experts would share practical tools and experience, international partners would provide financial and technical support, and participating countries would adapt these solutions to their own school meals programmes. The team also expressed its readiness to contribute expertise to new Coalition initiatives and support countries developing their own school meals programmes.

PARTNERSHIP



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Let’s Reform together!



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