



CLEAN
COOKING
ALLIANCE

Fueling the Future: Supporting School Clean Cooking Transitions Across Africa

Introduction

Globally, 466 million children receive daily school meals. In developing countries, most of these meals are cooked with polluting fuels and inefficient stoves, directly impacting the health of students and staff, and contributing to environmental degradation. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, schools burn over 8 million tons of firewood annually—enough to fill over 300,000 logging trucks, lined bumper to bumper, stretching the entire length of Sub-Saharan Africa. This reliance on polluting cooking methods accelerates deforestation, climate change, and exposes millions of students and educators to dangerous levels of indoor air pollution.

The climate and health consequences are severe.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, schools burn an estimated 8 million tons of firewood per year, emitting 12–14 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Daily meal preparation exposes educators and children to harmful smoke and fine particles, increasing their risk of respiratory disease and other noncommunicable illnesses, and undermining the health and learning outcomes school feeding programs are meant to support.

CCA has enabled millions of households to adopt cleaner cooking solutions, delivering major health, climate, and economic benefits. Yet despite proven impact, over 2 billion people still lack access to clean cooking—especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where only 30% use clean fuels or technologies to cook their daily meals. School feeding programs in particular are a largely untapped opportunity to cut indoor air pollution and protect millions of children and educators from preventable health risks.

Shifting school meal programs to clean cooking delivers wide-ranging benefits: improved health, environmental protection, stronger learning outcomes, and enhanced food security. It also strengthens national commitments to provide safe, reliable, and dignified meals for every child.

Despite the potential for school clean cooking transitions to deliver health, cost, and educational gains across communities, current efforts remain fragmented and small-scale. Achieving large-scale impact will require coordinated national strategies, robust data, technical expertise, and sustained investment. Countries like Kenya and Sierra Leone are already pioneering national institutional clean cooking programs that anchor demand and deliver broad community benefits. In both countries, the Office of the President has formally requested CCA's support to lead a full national transition away from toxic polluting fuels.



The Proposed Solution

A Continental Model for Clean Cooking in Schools

The governments of Kenya and Sierra Leone have recently committed to transforming their school cooking systems—positioning themselves as pioneers for the rest of the Continent. In both countries, the Office of the President has formally requested CCA's support to design and implement national strategies for this transition. Together, Kenya and Sierra Leone serve more than 13 million students, creating an opportunity for large-scale impact.

Adopting clean cooking in school meal programs delivers a wide range of benefits for students and communities, from improved health and environmental protection to stronger learning outcomes and enhanced food security.

CCA is well-positioned to deliver this change, having established Clean Cooking Delivery Units within the Office of the President in both countries. Each unit is led by a dedicated CCA-appointed Head, embedded to drive strategy and implementation.

