Milan Pact Awards 2025	**MEDELLÍN**						
Country	Colombia						
Population	2,634,570						
Title of practice	Sustainable School Canteens						
Subtitle	Feeding the Future: Innovation and Tradition in Sustainable School Canteen Strategy						
MUFPP Recommended Action	Reorient school feeding programmes and other institutional food service to provide food that is healthy, local and regionally sourced, seasonal and sustainably produced. - SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY.						
Starting year	2022	**Ending year (if any)**				already submitted in the past	
Actors and stakeholders' involvement	**Municipal departments**	**Other public institutions**	**NGOs CSOs**	**Research centres**	**Private sectors**	**International organizations**	**Other**
	2	437					
Budget	In 2024, the School Feeding Program had a budget of $219,906,552,904 COP (approximately €46,400,282). This funding came from the Medellín District and co-financing from the National Government through the School Feeding Unit (UApA).						
Brief description	The School Feeding Program (PAE) in the District of Medellín provides daily free food supplements to students in urban and rural public educational institutions. Its purpose is to promote support, retention, and nutritional well-being for children, adolescents, and young people throughout the school year. The Medellín Mayor's Office implements the PAE through the School Feeding Unit (UApA), adhering to the guidelines set by the National Ministry of Education. The program offers various modalities, including breakfasts and lunches prepared on-site, transported meals, industrialized rations, and milk servings. Beneficiary selection follows national criteria, prioritizing those facing the highest levels of vulnerability. In 2024, the program benefited 232,000 students and delivered over 12,000 tons of food with no operational interruptions. This large scale necessitates intensive resource management, particularly for water, and generates waste such as used cooking oil and plastic containers. To address these challenges, the District is leading efforts to enhance the program's sustainability. This involves aligning with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by incorporating best practices to reduce the environmental impact of the school food system.						
Innovation	Medellín's School Feeding Program, which serves over 230,000 students, is a large-scale operation with significant water consumption and waste generation. In response, the District has implemented innovative strategies that integrate environmental sustainability and operational efficiency into the school food system. One solution involves reusing gray water from food washing and disinfection. This water is collected, treated, and then used for non-potable tasks, such as cleaning utensils and surfaces. In 2023, this practice allowed for the reuse of nearly one million liters of water, particularly in on-site meal preparation facilities. Regarding waste, 1,950 kg of used cooking oil (UCO) were recovered, preventing its discharge into water sources. Additionally, 278 kg of plastic waste are recovered daily and repurposed to produce school furniture, which is then provided back to the same educational institutions. This pioneering experience in the region offers a replicable model for school programs in both urban and rural settings. It contributes to achieving SDG 6 and SDG 12, thereby strengthening food governance from an environmentally responsible perspective.						

Impact	In 2024, Medellín's School Feeding Program (PAE) helped 232,251 students in urban and rural areas by providing daily food portions that met 20% to 30% of their nutritional needs, depending on the program type. Socially, the PAE prioritizes vulnerable children and adolescents, including Indigenous populations, migrants, victims of armed conflict, and people with disabilities. This promotes educational inclusion and ensures the human right to food, aligning with the MUFPP's equity approach. Environmentally, the program recovered 1,022,877 liters of wastewater, which was reused for non-potable tasks. It also managed 1,949 kg of used cooking oil and collected plastic waste from industrialized portions for circular economy initiatives. The PAE also enhanced its food waste monitoring, recording 57.85 tons, data that will guide future reduction plans. Economically, the program operated on a budget exceeding €46 million. This generated jobs for logistics operators, food handlers, and local suppliers, boosting the care economy and strengthening local supply chains.
Inclusion	Medellín's School Feeding Program (PAE) adopts a comprehensive approach that integrates various facets of the food system: school nutrition, local sourcing, dignified employment, environmental sustainability, and circular economy principles. Through its different delivery methods (industrialized rations, milk servings, and on-site prepared meals) it provides daily nourishment to students in urban communes and rural districts, prioritizing areas with higher poverty rates and a greater risk of school dropout. The program's governance is intersectoral and multi-level, with leadership from the Secretariat of Education and coordination among the Secretariat of Social Inclusion, the Food Security Team, and territorial partners. Logistical operators, food handlers, nutritionists, teachers, and community representatives all participate. Furthermore, mechanisms like School Food Committees and citizen oversight bodies boost inclusion, ensuring shared family responsibility, social control, and localized decision-making. This school food policy model actively promotes equity, sustainability, and territorial cohesion, directly aligning with the MUFPP principles.