

## Breaking the Cycle of Child Poverty – The Role of School Feeding

Fighting to survive without basic needs such as food, water or shelter is destitution - poverty in its most extreme form. Unfortunately, this is a reality for most children in sub-Saharan Africa. Together with this reality, there is a growing concern in various countries in Africa that the continent has lost the grip on [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 1](#) and its pledge of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 “for all people everywhere.”

The number of children living in extreme poverty in Africa is increasing. According to the World Bank, the proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than that of adults in many African countries. [The Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\) estimates](#) that 304.7 million sub-Saharan African children (aged 0–19) will be living in extreme poverty in 2030. These children will account for 55% of world poverty in 2030, compared with 43% in 2018.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to get an education or fail to reach the last grade of primary school education, making the cost of child poverty high in terms of both human and financial capital. This is one of the reasons why JAM international focuses on promoting School Feeding programmes across Africa - to break the vicious cycle of poverty, *especially* child poverty.

Based on analysis conducted by the [UN World Food Programme](#), when School Feeding is combined with school-based interventions such as health, nutrition, water, sanitation & hygiene and quality training, it contributes to child development and better human capital. School Feeding programmes enable children to attend **and** stay in school, increasing enrolment and reducing drop outs.

JAM’s School Feeding programmes therefore contribute to children’s learning by enhancing cognitive abilities, active learning capacity, alleviating short-term hunger, providing an incentive for children to attend the school regularly and providing micro-nutrient needs. The benefits are especially great for the poorest and most disadvantaged children who continue to suffer exclusion from school entirely and are more likely to drop out.

[Education is the great social equalizer](#) and access to education can level the playing field for disadvantaged children. JAM believes that an educated workforce is essential for stimulating long term economic growth and for reducing food insecurity, malnutrition in Africa. By giving children the chance to receive an education, JAM is opening better opportunities and the chance to escape the cycle of poverty.

On this **African Day of Food & Nutrition Security**, JAM International *urges* African leaders to remove barriers and obstacles that keep the children of Africa out of school and in the vicious cycle of poverty. We call on African governments to develop and promote policies for **National** School Feeding Programmes, especially the idea of Home-Grown School Feeding that brings direct economic benefits to small-holder farmers in the community. Buying local food creates stable markets, boosts local agriculture, impacts rural transformation, and strengthens local food systems and livelihoods of smallholder farmers who are oftentimes the parents with school children, helping them [break inter-generational cycles of hunger and poverty](#).

Increased demand for home-grown food commodities for School Feeding constitute a predictable and guaranteed market for small-holder farmers. If implemented properly, National School Feeding Programmes could promote education as well as local and sustainable food production all at the same time.

[Join us in fight for sustainability and food security in Africa.](#)

*Killen Otieno*  
**Chief Operating Officer**  
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### **About JAM:**

Founded in 1984 by South-African born Peter and Ann Pretorius, **Joint Aid Management (JAM)** is a multi-national non-Government Organisation. Our mission is to provide food security, nutrition, water and sanitation to vulnerable communities in Africa in dignified and sustainable ways. We run a multitude of programmes in Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan and Uganda. JAM has registered affiliate support offices in Canada, Germany, South Africa, Switzerland, the United States, the United Kingdom and representatives in Norway.

For more information please visit: [www.jamint.com](http://www.jamint.com)

***Helping Africa Help Itself has always been our defining motto as we live to see an Africa that thrives!***