



WORKING PAPER

School Meals Case Study: **Angola**

Prepared by the Research Consortium for School Health and
Nutrition, an initiative of the School Meals Coalition

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Table of Contents

Historical background.....	1
Country profile	1
Population and economics	1
Education	1
Food security, nutrition and health'	2
Design and Implementation of the school meal programmes	3
Description.....	3
Objectives	3
Coverage	3
Targeting.....	4
Meal type.....	5
Nutritional norms	5
Food procurement.....	6
Legal framework and public policy evolution.....	6
Costs of implementation	6
Financing.....	7
Monitoring and evaluation.....	8
Lessons learned and best practices.....	9
Challenges	9
Related resources and data sources	9
Corresponding author	11
Required citation	11
Annex.....	12

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Historical background^a

Angola, situated in southwestern Africa with an extensive coastline, has made significant strides in economic and political development since the civil war ended in 2002. Despite this progress, the country's economic growth has been inconsistent and heavily reliant on oil, resulting in high levels of poverty and inequality. Moreover, Angola's agricultural potential is not fully utilized, and the nation faces various climate-related risks, including recurring droughts in the southwest.

Insufficient rainfall in the southern and central regions greatly hampers agricultural output, which is the primary food source for rural households. The overall increase in food prices further limits the purchasing power of these households. Food insecurity and undernutrition are pressing public health issues, exacerbated by factors such as poverty, limited dietary diversity, inadequate sanitation and hygiene, and gender inequality.

Country profile

Population and economics

Table 1: Key data on population and economic indicators

Total population (2023)	Total number of population aged 5 to 19	Total number of population employed in agriculture sector	Gross Domestic Product per capita (2023)
33,086,278 ^b	13,884, 801 ^c	5,967,252 ^d	3,000 USD ^e

Education^f

The Angolan legislation on the Education and Teaching System, outlined in Law No. 17/16 of October 7, 2016, establishes a comprehensive educational framework consisting of six educational subsystems: Pre-school, General, Technical-Professional, Teacher Training, Adult Education, and Higher Education. This system is structured into four tiers: Pre-school, Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education.

Primary education spans six grades (ages 6 to 11) with automatic promotion occurring in the second, fourth, and sixth grades, ensuring progression. General secondary education is divided into two cycles: grades 7 to 9 (ages 12 to 14) focus on building upon primary education, while the second cycle caters to ages 15 to 18. The second cycle offers a university preparatory track (PUNIV or Liceu) and technical secondary education, preparing students for higher education or direct entry into the workforce. Additionally, adult education aids those unable to complete general education within the specified age range, providing opportunities to finish their education satisfactorily.

The law stipulates that education should be provided without charge, covering enrolment, attendance, materials, and social assistance such as school meals for primary education in public institutions.

^a [WFP Angola Country Brief, May 2023 - Angola | ReliefWeb](#)

^b [INE-Instituto Nacional De Estatísticas \(gov.ao\)](#)

^c [Projeção da população angolana 2014-2050](#)

^d [Indicadores de emprego e desemprego em Angola](#)

^e [GDP per capita \(current US\\$\) - Angola | Data \(worldbank.org\)](#)

^f [Vista do Modelo de merenda escolar no ensino primário em Angola \(unesp.br\)](#)

Table 2: School meal programme statistics in Angola

Total number of students	Total number of schools	Average class size	Number of children involved in school meal	Percentage of children eligible for free school meals
8,481,458 ^g	14,157 ^e	49 ^e	1,890,610 ^h	6.1 ⁱ

Table 3: School system structure and enrolment numbers across age groups^g

Education level	Age	Enrolled Students			Retention rate
		Male	Female	Total	
Preschool	6	413,028	386,174	799,202	89.3%
Primary Education	6-11	2,664,272	2,553,668	5,217,940	75.1%
I Cycle of Secondary Education	12-14	833,212	727,907	1,561,119	70.2%
II Cycle of Secondary Education	15-18	485,936	417,261	903,197	69.1%
Total		4,396,448	4,085,010	8,481,458	

Food security, nutrition and health^{j,k}

Angola faces severe nutritional challenges, with food insecurity driven by economic instability and climate change. Many households struggle to access sufficient and nutritious food, resulting in widespread malnutrition among children.

Stunting affects 43.6% of children under five, but specific data for children aged 5 to 19 years is unavailable. However, the persistent effects of malnutrition suggest that this age group continues to face significant risks. Similarly, while thinness affects 8% of children aged 5 to 19, data on other indicators like wasting or severe malnutrition within this age bracket remains limited. Micronutrient deficiencies, such as anemia and vitamin A deficiency, are prevalent, with anemia affecting 60% of children under five. Unfortunately, detailed data for children aged 5 to 19 years is not provided, though it is likely that older children are similarly impacted, given the ongoing challenges in food security.

Overweight and obesity trends are also concerning. Among children under five, 3.9% are classified as overweight or obese, with this figure rising to 11% for those aged 5 to 19. However, data on the nutritional state of younger children within this older group (specifically aged 5 to 9 years) is sparse, leaving gaps in understanding the full scope of the problem.

This "double burden" of malnutrition underscores the need for comprehensive interventions. Efforts should focus on enhancing food security, improving access to nutritious foods, and developing targeted programmes, particularly for age groups where data gaps hinder effective planning and response.

^g [Anuário estatístico da educação em Angola 2021/2022](#)

^h [Programas de alimentação escolar em Angola](#)

ⁱ [Perfil da criança em Angola 2018/2019](#)

^j <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/ebe19244-9611-443c-a2a6-25cec697b361>

^k [The State of the World's Children 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination \[EN/AR\] - World | ReliefWeb](#)

Design and Implementation of the school meal programmes

Description^{l,m}

Before the first national regulation of school meals in Angola, established in 2013, in the 1990s, there was a cooperation programme between the Ministry of Education and the United Nations through the World Food Programme (WFP), which benefited 1600 children in two pilot schools in Luanda (the capital of Angola). The impact showed a significant increase in enrolment, academic performance, and a decrease in dropout rates.

In 2013, Angola launched a nationwide school feeding programme with the goal of addressing academic underachievement, improving student retention rates, and ensuring that school-age children can meet their educational responsibilities in a nutritionally supportive environment, thus promoting their overall well-being, growth, and development. This initiative benefits students enrolled in both public and private primary schools through a cost-sharing system, particularly in schools where the government contributes to teacher salaries. Free school meals are provided 3-5 times per week throughout the school year, during pedagogical breaks and vacation periods.

The management of the programme has been entrusted to the Ministry of Social Action, Family, and Women's Promotion, while the Ministry of Education establishes the programme's guidelines. At the local level, municipal administrations oversee the programme's implementation using decentralized funds. This programme serves as a vital component of the Integrated Municipal Programme for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation

Objectives^m

- Stimulate children's capacity for knowledge acquisition;
- Favor the formation and balanced development of all children's potentials;
- Prevent situations of academic failure and dropout;
- Supplement the nutritional needs of students;
- Contribute to the formation of healthy eating habits;
- Promote attendance and the effective fulfilment of compulsory schooling.

Coverageⁿ

The school meal programme is implemented nationwide, targeting primary education students, with a strong focus on rural and disadvantaged areas. The implementation, however, may vary by region, particularly in areas where infrastructure or resources are limited. For example, in rural regions where schools might not have canteens, meals are prepared in community kitchens, managed by a committee of parents, teachers, and community members.

While the overall goal is the same across the country, namely to keep children in school and provide them with nutritious meals, the way the programme is carried out can differ depending on the availability of local resources and the logistics involved in food procurement

^l [Annual Country Reports - Angola | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)

^m [Decreto Presidencial n.º 138/13 de 24 de setembro | Direito Angolano](#)

ⁿ [Carrinho Group | annual report 2022](#)

and delivery. A specific example of a regional adaptation is in the southern provinces, where drought and food insecurity have led to special efforts to support schools with food distribution.^o

The school meal programme is centralized at the national level but involves strong collaboration with local administrations for on-the-ground execution. The Presidential Decree 138/13 of 2013 establishes that the programme should be universal in public and private primary schools, with co-participation from local institutions. This ensures the programme's coverage across the entire country, while local adaptations may be made to address specific challenges.^p

Table 4: Coverage of school meal programmes in Angola^{q,r,s,t}

Initiative	Implementing Institutions	Coverage
National School Meals Programme	Government of Angola	Nationwide, covering various state and private primary schools, though less than half of the country's educational institutions are covered
School Feeding Programme	World Food Programme (WFP) Government of Angola	7 provinces: Benguela, Bié, Huambo, Huíla, Cunene, Namibe, and Cuando Cubango, reaching 158,994 vulnerable people
Carrinho Group School Meal Programme	Carrinho Group, Local Government	5 provinces: Benguela, Huambo, Bié, Huíla, and Luanda, reaching 150 schools and approximately 75,000 students
Integrated Cabinda Project (PIC)	World Vision International Local Government	Cabinda Province, specifically in Chinfuca community, Cacongo municipality, benefiting 142 students
ForAfrika School Feeding Programme	ForAfrika (formerly JAM Schweiz) Local Government	5 provinces: Benguela, Huambo, Bié, Huíla, and Luanda, reaching 200 schools and Approximately 100,000 students

Targeting^{p,u}

In Angola, the school meal programme primarily targets children in primary education, particularly those in rural areas and from disadvantaged or low-income families. This focus is part of a broader initiative to combat poverty and improve educational outcomes. The government's strategy, supported by the National Development Plan, prioritizes keeping children in school by providing nutritious meals that support their learning and well-being. The programme also seeks to promote local production by incorporating locally sourced food into the meals.

^o [Annual Country Report | World Food Programme](#)

^p [Modelo de merenda escolar no ensino primário em Angola](#)

^q [Transformative Impact of the Cabinda Integrated Project Supported by AzuleEnergy](#)

^r [Schoolmealscoalition | National commitments](#)

^s [Children, Food Security and Nutrition in Angola](#)

^t [JAM International 4th quarter Report 2018](#)

^u [Annual Country Report | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)

Meal type^{v,w}

The school meal programme offers both snacks and hot meals to children. There are two main types of meals provided:

- **Dry snacks** – This includes dry, easy-to-carry food items, typically given during the school day.
- **Hot or semi-liquid meals** – These are prepared either in school canteens or community kitchens in rural areas. The meals are based on nutritious foods such as proteins, carbohydrates, and vitamins, aiming to enhance children's dietary intake.

The type of food distributed through school feeding programmes varies significantly depending on the implementer and the region of intervention. For example, in the Cabinda Integrated Project (PIC), foods such as *papa Ndkila*^q—a porridge made from soy and maize flour—and cassava soup were selected by World Vision Angola nutritionists. These dishes are based on crops cultivated by local communities, aiming to integrate and promote underutilized traditional food habits. The World Food Programme (WFP), one of the major implementers, distributed six fortified food items across the country: rice, Corn Soya Blend (CSB), canned beef in sauce, vegetable oil, sugar, and salt. These enabled schools to prepare two main meals—soy or maize porridge and rice with beef—served at the start and end of the school day. In emergency settings such as Luanda, Uíge, and Bié, children received lighter meals including 200 ml of chocolate milk and 20 g of biscuits. Meanwhile, the NGO Joint Aid Management (JAM) provided MannaPack^t fortified meals, consisting of white rice, textured soy protein, dehydrated vegetables, and vegetarian flavoring enriched with essential vitamins and minerals. This diversity in food types reflects each implementer's nutritional strategy, availability of local ingredients, and operational context.

Nutritional norms^o

A critical but generally overlooked strategy in the school meal programme in Angola focuses on meeting children's nutritional needs through thoughtfully designed meals, integrating local food production, and involving community participation.

These meals are designed to supply at least one-third of the daily caloric intake, equivalent to 700 Kcal/day, as recommended by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs). They contain a balanced mix of macronutrients—carbohydrates, proteins, and fats—as well as essential vitamins and minerals.

Emergency interventions have been introduced in areas like Luanda, Uíge, and Bié, providing 200 ml of chocolate milk and 20 g of biscuits per child during the school day. However, these provisions fall significantly short of nutritional goals, contributing only 10% of daily energy, 11% of macronutrients, and 4% of vital micronutrients like iron, calcium, and vitamin A.^v

To improve the programme's effectiveness, there is an urgent need to conduct comprehensive studies across the country to evaluate the nutritional content of school meals. These assessments would determine whether the meals align with RDAs and identify areas for improvement. Conducting such studies is essential to develop a strong, evidence-based approach to addressing nutritional deficiencies and ensuring equitable benefits for all children.

^v[A Distribuição da Merenda e o Abandono escolar](#)

Food procurement^w

One of the programme's key public policy innovations is its emphasis on local procurement. The government encourages the use of locally grown food in school meals, which supports regional economies and promotes sustainable agricultural practices. This policy ensures that the food served in schools is fresh and diverse while contributing to local livelihoods.

Small-scale farmers provide grains, roots/tubers, legumes, and vegetables for the programme, and they enter into purchase agreements set prior to harvest (forward contracts). The private sector is engaged in food trading and transport. The school community supports the implementation of the programme through the Commission of Parents or Guardians, and this is done without remuneration.

Legal framework and public policy evolution^m

Angola's school meal programme has evolved significantly, particularly in the post-independence era, with a focus on improving nutrition for students and addressing poverty. The foundation of Angola's school meal programme began after independence in 1975, with efforts to promote basic education and provide necessary support to keep children in schools, particularly in rural areas. Initial policies aimed to address widespread food insecurity and poverty, but the system was fragmented due to the country's long-standing conflicts and limited resources.

A significant step in formalizing the school meal programme came with the Presidential Decree No. 138/13 of 24 September 2013, which established the National School Meal Programme (in Portuguese Programa de Merenda Escolar). This decree created a legal framework for providing free meals to students in public and co-participating private schools at the primary level. The 2013 decree also defined nutritional criteria for the meals provided, energy foods (carbohydrates and lipids), regulatory foods (vitamins and minerals that support body functions) and builder foods (proteins for growth and tissue repair). This diversity ensures a balanced diet, promoting the physical and mental development of students.^q

The Law No. 17/16 of 7 October 2016 further solidified the structure of the education system and reaffirmed the state's responsibility to provide free and nutritious meals in public primary schools. This law emphasizes the right to education and social support, including school meals, ensuring that all children, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to essential services.

The Angolan government, with support from international organizations like WFP, is working on further programme expansion. The focus remains on enhancing coverage, improving the nutritional quality of the meals, and ensuring sustainability through local food systems.

Costs of implementation

In Angola, school meal cost per student is often not disclosed in the reports of different implementing partners. Costs typically vary depending on the region and the types of ingredients or food items each company provides to students. For instance, Joint Aid Management (JAM) distributed 3.76 metric tons of fortified rice packs (MannaPack)^t as take-home rations and reached 57,116 children with Corn Soya Blend (CSB) meals across 181 schools as part of their school feeding programme in six municipalities of Benguela Province. These meals are composed of white rice, textured soy protein, dehydrated vegetables, and vegetarian flavoring enriched with a blend of vitamins and minerals. Although the cost per school meal was not provided in JAM's reporting, it is noted that, at the time of writing, one

^w [Angola School Meal Programs](#)

375g packet of MannaPack^x fortified rice (equivalent to six servings per bag) costs approximately USD 12.50 on the local market.

Table 5: implementation cost for school meal programmes in Angola^{s,t,u}

Initiative	Time Frame	Total Costs	Details
School Feeding Programme (WFP)	Ongoing, with annual reviews	\$30 million annually	Includes food procurement, transportation, storage, distribution, and monitoring and evaluation
National School Meals Programme	Ongoing, scaling up coverage	\$16 million for 2024	Covers food procurement, logistics and administrative costs
Carrinho Group School Meal Programme	Ongoing, with periodic expansions	Not publicly disclosed	Significant investments in local food production and distribution infrastructure
ForAfrika (formerly JAM Schweiz) School Feeding Programme	Ongoing, with annual evaluations	\$5 million annually	Includes food procurement, logistics and programme management
World Vision Integrated Cabinda Project (PIC)	Ongoing, with periodic evaluations	\$1.2 million annually	Covers food procurement, kitchen facilities, and community engagement activities

Financing

School feeding programmes rely on public, private, and donor financing to provide nutritious meals for children. The 2024 General State Budget (GSB) increased funding for the School Meal Programme by 70%, reaching \$16 million compared to \$9.4 million in the previous budget, primarily funded through taxation and decentralized funds managed by local governments. The allocation by province is illustrated in figure 1.^y

^x [Food Product guide Specifications and usage recommendations](#)

^y [Orçamento Geral do Estado | 2024 Dotação Orçamental Por Órgão](#)

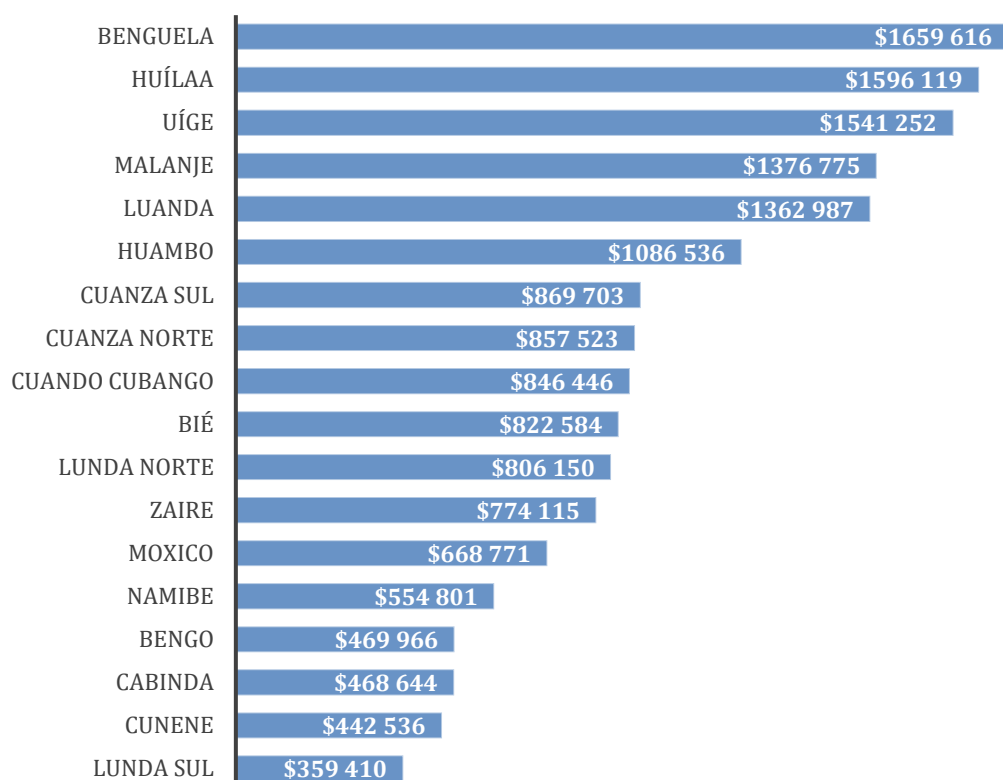


Figure 1: Allocation of the GSB designated for school meals by provinces

The private sector actively supports these programmes, with companies like Empresa Carrinho, NGO like ForAfrika and Word Vision providing school lunches and resources. International donors, such as the WFP and UN agencies, contribute through grants, concessional funding, technical assistance, and capacity building. Donor contributions fluctuate, often increasing during emergencies or specific projects addressing urgent needs. However, the overall budget remains unclear, as contributions from the private sector are not always transparently defined, with a primary focus on basic education.^y

Despite these efforts, funding remains insufficient and inconsistent with programme goals. Many primary schools are not covered, and nutritional targets are unmet due to resource limitations. Issues like infrastructure, logistics, and resource management undermine efficient fund use, emphasizing the need for improved oversight and monitoring.^y

Monitoring and evaluation Erreur ! Signet non défini.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the school meal programme plays a vital role in ensuring its effectiveness and sustainability. A national monitoring system tracks the programme's implementation and impact across regions, while an inter-sectoral coordination committee, comprising stakeholders like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Action, Family, and Promotion of Women, and the WFP, ensures seamless collaboration. Local governments and communities actively participate, making the process more responsive to specific needs. Efforts continue to focus on improving monitoring quality and expanding the programme's reach to benefit more children.

Lessons learned and best practices^p

- The School Lunch Programme in Angola responds to problems that contribute to school failure in rural communities and among low-income children, and it improves the teaching and learning process. For example, in the Chinfuca community, the PIC led to higher attendance and better performance in subjects like Mathematics
- Inter-sectoral coordination committee, comprising stakeholders like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Action, Family, and Promotion of Women and WFP
- Leveraging locally sourced food has proven effective in supporting local agriculture and enhancing the sustainability of the programmes. In the PIC project, the kitchen operations are managed collaboratively with Field Schools and supervised by World Vision Angola to ensure strict adherence to the School Meal Regulation. This regulation mandates the provision of one-third of the daily caloric needs per meal, emphasizing balanced nutrition through an appropriate mix of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and essential micronutrients, while maintaining high standards of food hygiene practices.
- Children have expressed happiness and relief at receiving regular meals, which helps them focus better in class.^z

Challenges^p

- Since 2020–2021, the funding has not been sufficient to cover all primary schools, as stipulated in the Basic Law of the Education and Teaching System (Law No. 17/16 of 7 October). The national government allocates an equal monthly amount to each municipality, irrespective of the number of students. Despite the School Lunch Programme being approved through a Presidential Decree, the budget for this initiative is ultimately determined by the Ministry of Finance, raising questions about the adequacy and fairness of the distribution of resources.
- During the implementation of the school meal programme, one significant hurdle emerged: transporting food to remote schools. Many of these areas were plagued by poor infrastructure—unreliable roads, limited transportation options, and harsh weather conditions that often delayed or disrupted deliveries.
- As the school meal programme expanded, ensuring the nutritional quality and safety of meals became a critical concern. This challenge was particularly pronounced in areas with limited resources, where access to fresh ingredients, proper storage facilities, and regular quality checks was scarce.
- Inadequate oversight and monitoring, making it difficult to track distribution, ensure quality, and maintain accountability.

Related resources and data sources

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^z [School Feeding Reinforcement: Outcomes of the Successful School Meal Programme in Cabinda](#)

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Required citation

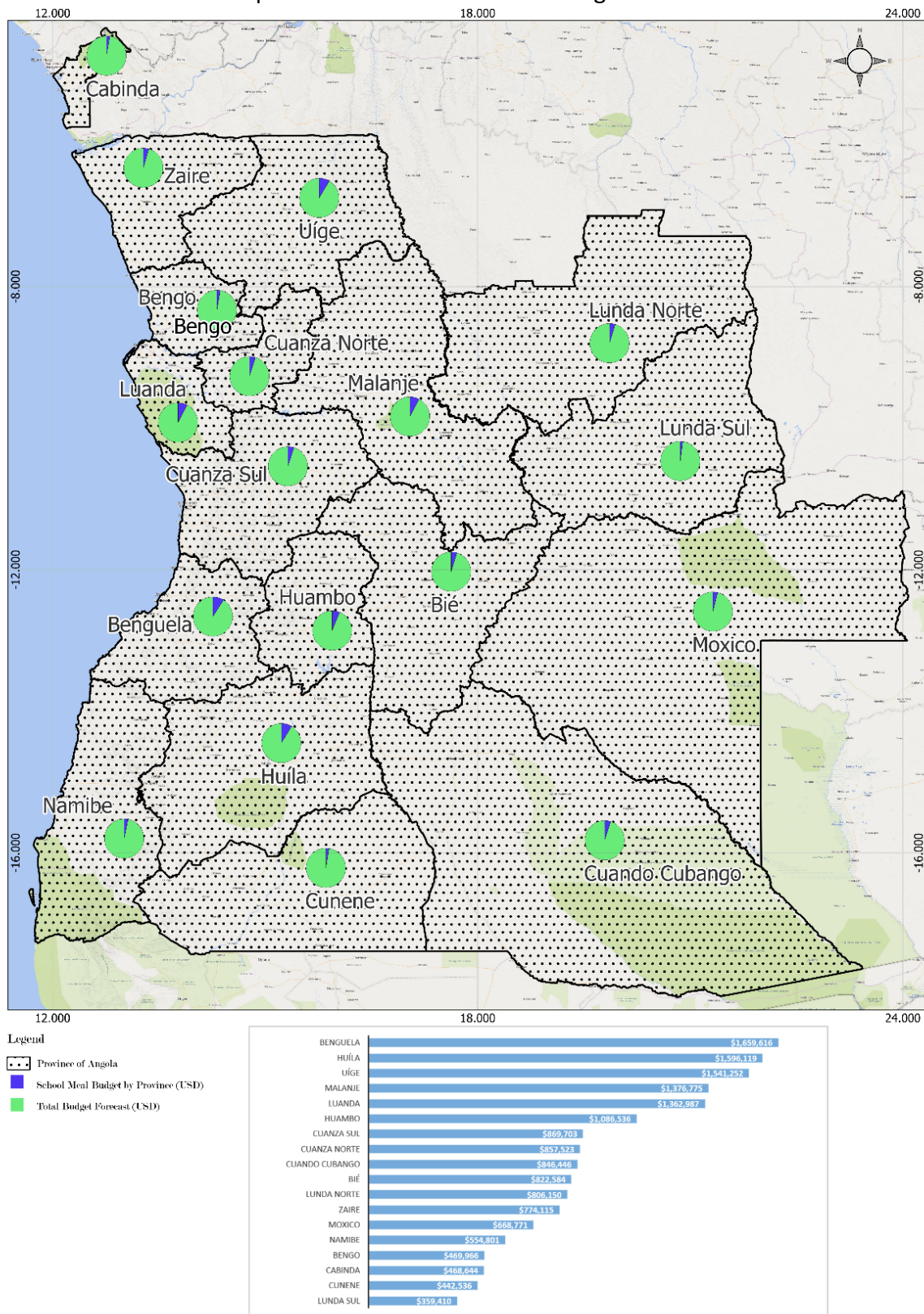
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Annex

Annex 1: Map of the 2024 General State Budget for School Meal



Source: raw data extracted from [Orçamento Geral do Estado | 2024 Dotação Orçamental Por Órgão](#) and processed by André Sinela for the creation of this map