

RECOMMENDATION No. 33
TO THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION
concerning
SCHOOL MEALS AND CLOTHING
(1951)

The International Conference on Public Education,

Convened at Geneva by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Bureau of Education, and being assembled on the twelfth of July for its fourteenth session, adopts on the eighteenth of July, nineteen hundred and fifty-one, the following recommendation:

The Conference,

Considering that, in many countries, in regard to attendance at school, the distance factor is important;

That so far as possible, compulsory education should not involve the family in additional expenses;

That in many countries women are more and more required to go out to work, and that mothers of families thus working away from home cannot satisfactorily supervise their children's meals;

That rational feeding is an essential factor in the health and school work of the pupils and in the harmonious growth of their personality;

That the feeding tradition of many families does not always conform to the rules laid down as a result of dietetic research, and that all too often it does not take into account the necessity of providing children with a diet which is both adequate and well-balanced quantitatively and qualitatively;

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That the school should furnish the model and the example of a scientifically based nutrition;

That, moreover, other things being equal, the collective organization of school meals, even where a charge must still be made, involves very considerably less expense than similar meals taken at home;

That, in order to attend school, children must be clothed and shod decently and in such a way as to give them adequate protection against the vagaries of the weather;

Submits to the Ministries of Education of the various countries the following recommendation:

1) That, whenever a new school or school group is built, provision be made for a school canteen or for a general purposes room in which a school meals service can be operated;

2) That wherever possible a school canteen be attached to the existing schools or school groups;

3) That the cost of building premises for the canteen and its equipment be met by the authorities paying the building costs of the school;

4) That canteen operational expenses be met by the central or local authorities responsible for the operational expenditure of the school;

5) That school canteens be so equipped as to create a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere for the children, to encourage them to relax as they should after their class work, to enable them to express themselves freely as at home with their parents, to develop their aesthetic sense and to facilitate social training and education through teaching them good food habits, habits of cleanliness, good manners, cooperation and comradeship;

6) That, with these ends in view and as far as possible, the children be seated in rooms, so as to avoid overcrowding, and grouped in each room round separate tables so as to recall the family table atmosphere of the home;

7) That with these ends in view the materials and furniture, rather than being rough and strictly utilitarian, be chosen with the confident feeling that the children will respect pleasing objects and look after them as if they were their own;

8) That school meals should be available to all children without distinction, because of the nutritional and educational benefits they confer on them;

9) That, wherever it is impossible to make school meals completely free, the financial means of the parents could be taken into account in regard to their contribution; it is desirable that such contribution should not exceed the cost of the unprepared food;

10) That the menus of school meals be composed and balanced in such a way as to facilitate children's physical and mental development;

11) That school clothing facilities be operated for the benefit of children coming from families of limited means, wherever children's clothing needs are not covered by family allowances or some other form of social aid to their parents;

12) That school clothing facilities be financed by the central or local authorities, and that distribution be effected with the utmost tact and discretion;

13) That, to give effect to these recommendations and to make possible concrete achievements, it be considered necessary:

a) To make provision for the training of dieticians;

b) To exercise effective control over school meals services on the same lines as control over education by public authorities.