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1. Investigation of Food Insecurity at Moi University, Eldoret

How Widespread is it? (The Scale of the Problem)

A study found that 57.6% of students surveyed at MU indicated they were food insecure.

Insufficient Meals: A significant number of students reported having only two meals per day (56.4%), and a vast majority (88.2%) remained neutral or disagreed that they had nutritionally balanced diets, suggesting a lack of diverse, quality food.

HELB Dependency: Most students rely heavily on the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) for upkeep. Over 53% of student respondents disagreed that the loan amount was enough, directly linking financial support inadequacy to food insecurity.

Extreme Measures: The reality is so severe that Moi University administration previously issued an internal memo requesting students who were "starving" to notify the Dean of Students for assistance.

What Barriers Prevent Students from Accessing Fresh, Healthy Food?

The barriers at Moi University and similar Kenyan institutions are primarily financial and structural:

Financial Constraint (The Primary Barrier): The high cost of living and inadequate funding from HELB or work-study programs forces students to prioritize cheap, calorie-dense foods (e.g., maize and cheap processed foods) over fresh, diverse, and nutritious options.

Structural Barriers (Cooking Bans): The ban on cooking in hostels by major public universities in Kenya (as seen in Nairobi and potentially replicated in other campuses) forces students to buy pre-cooked meals. This is often more expensive, limits bulk-buying savings, and prevents students from controlling the freshness, ingredients, and nutritional content (FLOSN) of their food.

Lack of Skills & Time: Students face academic stress, time constraints, and poor cooking self-efficacy, leading them to rely on convenient, processed snacks or to skip meals altogether.

Limited Quality Options: The campus food environment may offer easy access to fast food and convenient snacks, but often lacks healthy, affordable options, pushing students away from a

FLOSN diet.

Impact on Academic Performance, Mental Health, and Well-being

The consequences directly compromise the core mission of the university:

Academic Impact: Food insecurity is directly linked to compromised academic performance. Students may fail to attend classes due to hunger, struggle to concentrate, or even defer studies or drop out entirely to search for survival means.

Mental Health: The constant pressure of worrying about food security—and the need to skip meals—generates high levels of stress and anxiety, undermining the psychological stability required for rigorous academic study.

Health: The poor dietary patterns (low fruit/vegetable intake, reliance on unbalanced diets) lead to poor physical health, which further diminishes the capacity for academic achievement.

Funding Cuts and Access to Meals

The crisis is exacerbated by systemic economic pressure:

Reduced Government Support: A shrinking economy and reduced direct financial support from the government to universities mean less institutional capacity to subsidize catering or welfare programs.

HELB Inadequacy: The main financial mechanism for students, HELB, is often insufficient for their upkeep, a situation worsened by inflation and the general high cost of living.

Lack of Safety Nets: Unlike developed countries, formal government-backed food assistance programs (like the US's SNAP/WIC) are not easily accessible to students, leaving them highly vulnerable to economic shocks.

Organization Highlight: Collaboration with the University of Eldoret (UoE), the World Food Programme (WFP) and Moi University.

Moi University's , University of Eldoret, recently signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with the World Food Programme (WFP) to "fortify and advance agriculture, enhance food security, and foster community development." WFP's work globally and in Kenya focuses on climate-smart farming initiatives to diversify food production and improve harvests.

FLOSN Connection: This collaboration is critical for:

L & S (Local & Sustainable): Promoting sustainable agriculture and linking the university's research to community-oriented agricultural interventions.

F & N (Fresh & Nutrition): Capacity-building in climate-smart food systems directly addresses the long-term supply of fresh and diverse nutritious foods in the region.

Suggested Initiatives for Moi University (FLOSN Focus)

Moi University can leverage its academic strengths (especially in Human Nutrition and Health Policy) to address the crisis:

FLOSN Principle Suggested MU Initiative How it Works and Why it Helps

Local & Fresh Student-Run Campus Shamba (Garden). Utilize available campus land for a student-run farm. Produce (like African indigenous vegetables) would be the primary source of food for a subsidized campus meal program or a student food pantry. This also provides hands-on skill development.

Nutrition & Fresh Subsidized 'FLOSN' Kiosks/Mess. Establish one designated mess/kiosk on campus that offers a nutritionally balanced meal (high in vegetables/protein, low in cheap fats) at a heavily subsidized price. Partner the Human Nutrition Department to design the menu.

Local & Sustainability Co-op/Bulk Buying Scheme .Organize a student cooperative (co-op) to buy essential staples (Local maize, beans, grains) directly from Local Eldoret-area farmers in bulk. This bypasses middle-men costs and increases student savings, making food more affordable.

Systemic Justice HELB-Linked Emergency Fund .Create an emergency university bursary/revolving fund specifically for food, activated for students who receive the minimum HELB upkeep amount. This addresses the immediate financial cause of hunger.

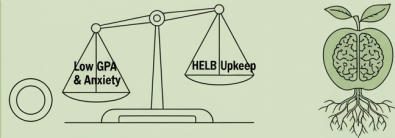
Skill-Building Financial Literacy & Cooking Workshops .The Dean of Students' office, in collaboration with the Finance and Nutrition departments, should institutionalize mandatory training on personal financial management and low-cost, nutritious cooking skills to empower students.

Moi University's Hidden Crisis: Fighting Student Hunger with FLOSN

The Scope

57.6%

of students surveyed
at MU/UOE are student:
REALITY: of survive on
TWO MEALS or less a day



Core Barriers

Financial: Inadequate HELB funds, high cost of living

Structural: Hostel cooking bans = costly food, no bulk buying

Welfare Gap: No easy, stigma-free food aid

The Consequences

Academic Decline: Poor grades, no a focus, dropout risk

Mental Health: Anxiety, depression, hopelessness

Health: Illness, fatigue, endless farmers, endless cycle

Action Steps

1. Start the Shamba
2. Student-Run Campus Garden
3. Fund the Gap MU Inlet Emergency Fund
4. Empower Students Financial literacy & cooking skills



The FLOSN Way Forward

F.L.O.S.N

Fresh, Local, Organic,
Seasonal, Non-GMO

Justice: Equitable access, dignity, health

Affordable, nutritious daily food

4. Empower Students Financial literacy & cooking skills

Action Steps for Moi University

@turninggreenorg @environmentalworkinggroup @organiccenter consciouskitchen
#PC2025