

-serving gold in schools

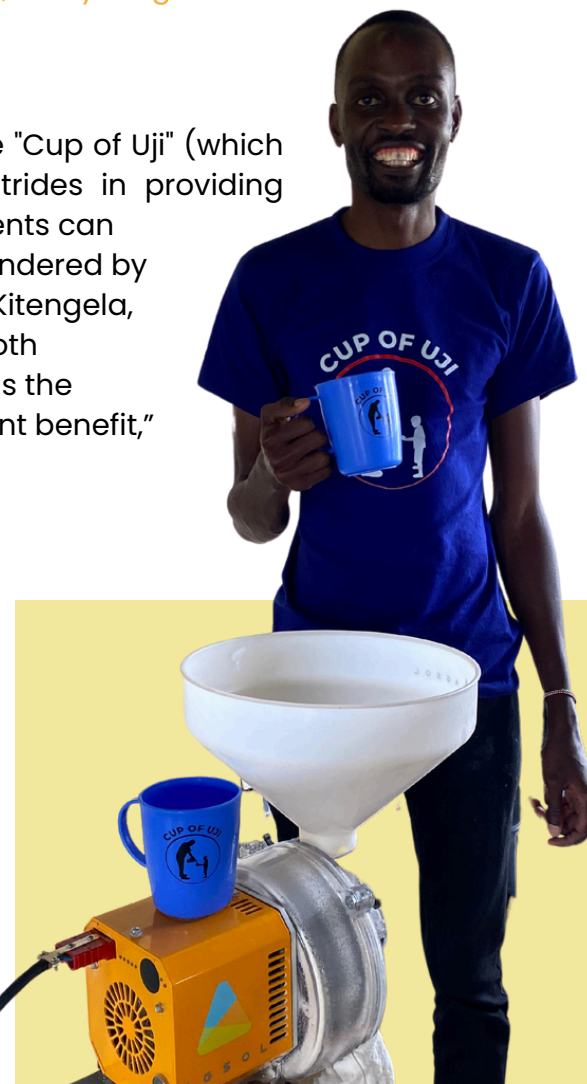


In this series, we delve into the world of school feeding initiatives and how the MicroMill can empower schools to produce healthy, affordable meals on-site, reducing costs and administrative burdens. Our innovation has the potential to impact millions of children in Sub-Saharan Africa who rely on that crucial school meal. **So, what do school feeding programs and the MicroMill have in common? As it turns out, everything!**

Meeting Cup of Uji

Francis Amonde, the founder of the school feeding initiative "Cup of Uji" (which translates to "cup of porridge"), has made significant strides in providing nutritious meals to children. This initiative ensures that students can focus in class and advance their education without being hindered by hunger. We meet at Athi-River GK Prisons Primary School in Kitengela, where over 2,000 pupils enjoy a daily cup of uji and lunch, both freshly prepared on-site. A standout feature in their kitchen is the MicroMill. "I didn't realize it was so portable; that's a significant benefit," Francis remarks.

The journey began in 2011 in Homabay County. At 20, Francis, then a college student, used his own funds to provide 100 hungry pupils with a daily cup of uji. "I just wanted to help," he says. The promise of breakfast quickly drew more students. By 2014, crowdfunding efforts enabled him to support the entire school of 500 students. Thirteen years later, Cup of Uji has become a well-known NGO in the school feeding sector. They support over 15,000 learners across five counties in Kenya with daily breakfast, lunch, or both. The program operates on a sustainable model where parents contribute towards a subsidized meal prepared on the school premises.



Serving Kenyan Gold

In Kenya, ugali (corn meal) is often referred to as “Kenyan gold.” Cup of Uji, in collaboration with nutritionists, has now incorporated healthier and more affordable ugali, ground on-site by the MicroMill, into their balanced menu. “We are the only school feeding program that serves ugali! Others find it a hassle, but we know the children love it, and wholegrain ugali fits well in our diet,” says Francis. Health and safety were also crucial in his decision to invest in in-house milling. “By milling in the central kitchen, we control the environment and flour quality,” he adds.

Francis aims to feed 100,000 schoolchildren by the end of this year. However, charity comes at a cost. Despite the generosity of individual and institutional donors, he is always looking for ways to cut expenses to serve more children. The MicroMill has significantly reduced outsourcing costs, enhanced quality control, and kept electricity bills low. “It’s expensive to go to a posho mill. We consume around 180 kilos of maize weekly, costing us 3,000 KES for milling. With the MicroMill, we save 12,000 KES per month, which helps to feed 60 more children per month with a cup of uji.”



I end my morning with Francis in the humblest way: by serving children a cup of steaming hot porridge. Many returned for seconds and thirds with cheeky smiles. Afterwards, Francis and I talk about the future of the organisation. The idea is to make on-site milling the gold standard, with a mill in every school kitchen. “And a huge central farm where we can produce our own food”, Francis adds.

So, what do school feeding and the MicroMill have in common?

They both serve Kenyan gold!



Payback? That Was Way Back!

Cup of Uji’s story echoes that of our other customers: cost reduction, local value addition, and providing healthier, cleaner flour with minimal electricity costs. Francis’s organization recouped their investment in just seven months. Interested in seeing how the MicroMill can benefit your school or business?

Contact: willeke@agsol.com.

