

The Dignity Project

TDP Nutrition Report February 2025

Aim

The Dignity Project (TDP) funded a purpose built community kitchen at Wonderkids English School in 2024 to support a daily meals program for 176 young people and 15 staff (14 of whom are women) from the school. The kitchen provides a rotating breakfast 6 days per week and employs a cook and helper, both female. There is no limit to how breakfast students and staff can eat each day. Thrive Kitchen and its associated meals program aims to provide a nutrient-rich daily breakfast to malnourished and underweight young people from families deemed below-poverty-line in Khajuraho, a small town in regional India.

Highlights and key achievements:

- 34,837 breakfasts served in 2024: 3.75 percent more than a year earlier
- Breakfasts provided on 230 days
- Total breakfast spend: 571,137 rupees (\$10,344 AUD)
- New kitchen (Thrive Kitchen) constructed and fully operational
- New menu and meals roster implemented from October 2024
- Jigyasa Tripathi appointed Thrive Kitchen manager in January 2025
- Monthly weight checks of all students since October 2025
- Average weight of all classes increased in 5 month period October-to-February
- Deficit in average weights-to-age vs Indian averages narrowed in all age groups
- Reversal of deficits to surplus in 5-year-old boys and girls, 6 year-old boys and 8-year-old girls
- 139 young people of the total 155 cohort include in weight check group gained weight over the five month period
- Average weight gains as a percentage were double digit for Class 2 boys and both male and female students in Class 5.

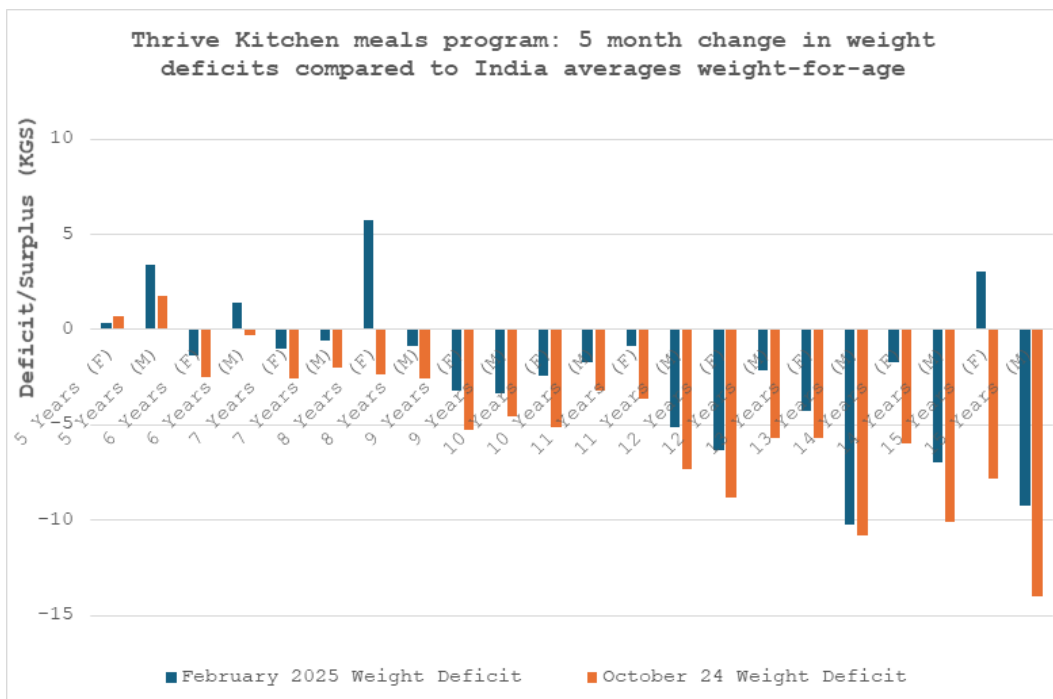
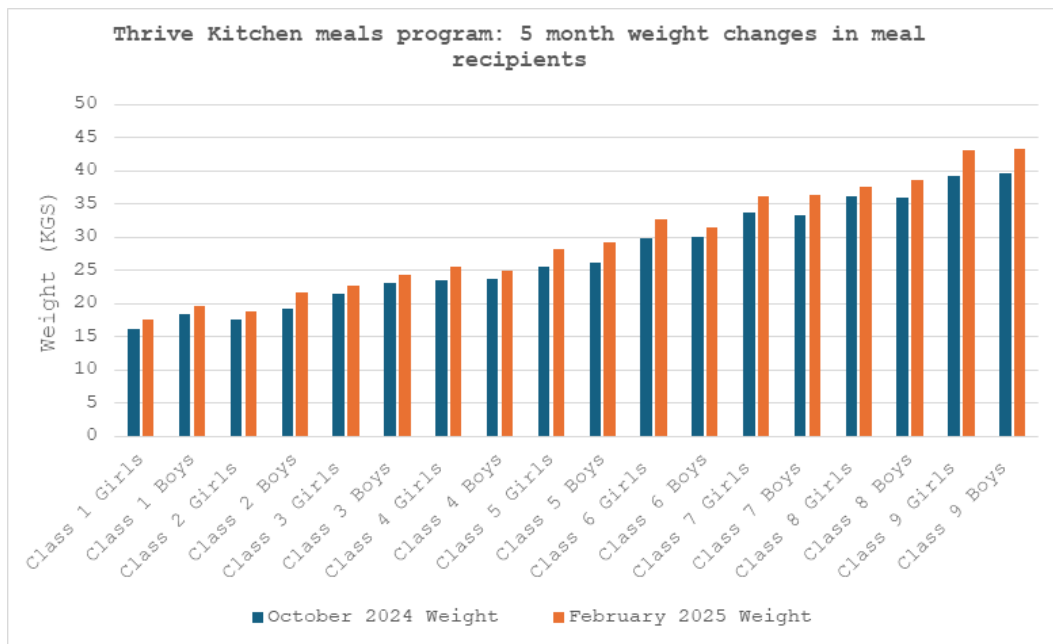


In detail:

In October, The Dignity Project implemented a new rotating menu at its Thrive Kitchen in Khajuraho. This came after careful research and planning to add dishes with increased protein profiles, higher calorific intake and a greater amount of nutrients. A set menu with detailed recipes, specific ingredients and quantities was provided to the kitchen staff and itemised supplies ordered and delivered to the school from a new local groceries' supplier. At the same time, in October TDP recorded the height and weight profiles of almost 160 young people receiving daily meals. (For many of these children this was the first time their height and weight had been recorded and this in itself caused a lot of interest among students and staff!) The collection of this initial data revealed the depth of malnutrition prevalent among young people receiving meals from Thrive Kitchen. In October, 17 of 18 categories of students failed to meet Indian averages for weight-for-age and deficits against global weight-for-age standards were greater still.



In the five months since the new meals program has been delivered at the school, the students have been weighed again on the first of each month to track changes in weight. Since October, as a result of the meals program, average weights of both boys and girls have increased across all classes. Significant gains have been made in the weights of the eldest male students - Class 9 boys at an individual level; however, improvements in Class 9 girls at an individual level have been limited. Other highlights include registering surpluses in the average weights-to-age in male and female students age 5, male students age 6 and female students age 8.



Moving forward, some small adjustments to the menu will be made as ingredients for the current Tuesday menu item are not always available. Looking ahead, the biggest areas to focus on are narrowing the weight-for-age gaps which are more pronounced in the students from age 11 onwards and the potential for weight loss as school closes for two months of the summer break. TDP and Thrive Kitchen are considering options to potentially correct this when school resumes mid-June.