

CATEGORY WORKFORCE NUTRITION



CATEGORY CONTEXT

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the workplace as a pivotal setting for promoting health and addressing malnutrition.¹ Given that 58% of the global population will spend at least a third of their adult lives at work, workforce nutrition programmes are key agents to improve public health.^{1,2} The benefits to businesses are clear, with studies estimating returns on investment for workforce nutrition programmes to be as high as 6:1.³ As a result, such programmes are gaining increasing traction in the private sector, particularly those focusing on direct employees.⁴

Kenya is currently facing a triple burden of malnutrition, which—along with diet-related non-communicable disease—negatively affects its workforce through decreased productivity and increased absenteeism.^{5,6} The resulting loss of workforce productivity is estimated to cost Kenya approximately USD 38.3 billion in GDP between 2010 and 2030.⁷ Improving workforce health can enhance companies' financial performance and contribute to broader economic wellbeing over the long term.⁸

FINDINGS

Five of the 12 companies assessed—Coca-Cola, Flora FG, Kapa Oil, Kevian and Nestlé—shared information on the practices they have in place for at least one of the four workforce nutrition pillars (see examples in Table 1).

TABLE 1
POLICY LANDSCAPE

National Policy or Regulation	Summary
Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (KNAP) 2018	Provides a national strategic framework for promoting healthy diets through community initiatives, nutrition education, health screenings to prevent diet-related disease, and supporting optimal breastfeeding in the workplace. ⁹
Employment Act	Codifies the rights of employees to be properly fed, circumstances under which employers can provide food rations, and the duration of paid maternity (12 weeks) and paternity leave (two weeks). Specifies that female employees have the right to resume the positions they held prior to leave or to different suitable job terms. ¹⁰
Health Act	Stipulates the right to maternity care. Specifies that all employers establish lactation stations in the workplace with refrigerators and other necessary equipment and that employees are entitled to a one-hour break for every eight hours worked. ¹¹
The Breastfeeding Bill (2019/2024)	Requires employers to provide private and hygienic lactation stations for mothers to express milk, refrigerators to store milk during working hours, and appropriate programmes to support child development. Entitles individuals to 40-minute breastfeeding breaks every four hours worked and to flexible working arrangements. ¹²

TABLE 2
EXAMPLES OF COMPANIES' WORKFORCE NUTRITION ACTIVITIES

Company	Healthy food at work	Nutrition Education	Nutrition-focused health checks
Coca-Cola	Daily food options in the company canteen*	Provides employees access to an online app with wellbeing tips and habit tracking features	Nutritional assessment (blood sugar, body mass index (BMI), blood pressure) provided to office employees through an annual wellness day
Flora FG	Daily food options in the company canteen	Online workshops and healthy talks available to office employees	-
Kapa Oil	-	-	Provides regular nutrition-focused health checks for office employees
Kevian	Provides refreshments and meals to office workers *	-	-
Nestlé	'Healthy' meals (including free and subsidized fruit) provided in canteens*	Healthy Lives programme provides office workers with online modules on nutrition education	My Health Numbers programme provides office workers with a health risk assessment including biometric tests (BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels)

* It is unclear whether all food options provided in the canteen are free or subsidized for employees

Note: Breastfeeding support is not included in this table, as none of the companies have initiatives in place that exceed local regulations.

None of the companies were found to have policies and/or practices that extended beyond Kenyan regulations which mandate private lactation rooms for breast milk expression, refrigeration facilities and reasonable break time for breastfeeding mothers to express milk of up to one hour per 8 hour working period. Although the Breastfeeding Bill (2019/2024) addresses flexible working arrangements, it has not yet been enacted into regulation and none of the companies reported that they offered this to their workers in Kenya. Additionally, three companies were found to have parental leave policies that exceed the minimum duration specified by Kenyan labour regulations—12 weeks of paid maternity leave and two weeks of paid paternity leave—for at least one caregiver:

- Nestlé has a gender-neutral global policy which provides paid parental leave of 18 weeks to primary caregivers, and four weeks to secondary caregivers, for all employees with full-time contracts.

- Flora FG's global policy for parental leave provides Kenyan employees with 17 weeks of paid maternity leave and 12 weeks of paid paternity.
- Coca-Cola's parental leave policy provides 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and four weeks of paid paternity leave in Kenya.

Kapa Oil has published a parental leave policy that aligns with Kenyan regulations.

Due to a lack of disclosure, it remains unclear whether the remaining Kenya-headquartered companies have workforce nutrition programmes that go beyond existing legal requirements or how Kenyan regulations are implemented in practice.

INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that food and beverage companies invest in employees' nutritional health in Kenya, companies are encouraged to:

- Develop a comprehensive workforce nutrition program for all employees in Kenya (including at manufacturing sites, and where possible, in supply and distribution chains), which includes:
 - 1) Healthy food at work;
 - 2) Nutrition education;
 - 3) Nutrition-focused health checks;
 - 4) Breastfeeding support and parental leave.
- Set and publicly report against outcome-focused targets or key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress on implementing the program in Kenya.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Kenya has regulations in place mandating certain aspects of workforce nutrition programmes, including healthy food at work and breastfeeding support. Policymakers are encouraged to make use of this research to help build a roadmap for industry and policymakers of policy measures to expand current regulatory landscape to cover all elements of workforce nutrition programmes.



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