

# 2021 Global Survey of School Meal Programs

## Glossary

### Agriculture subsidy

*Government-provided monetary assistance to farmers or agri-businesses.*

- A subsidy is granted—usually by the government or a public body—to an economic sector, business or industry (such as agriculture or the arts), generally to keep the price of a service or commodity low and/or to promote an economic or social policy. In most cases, the subsidy is provided because the commodity or service is deemed important to the public interest. Farm and food subsidies, for example, are generally intended to ensure citizens are able to afford key commodities.
- Agriculture subsidies related to school feeding programs involve monetary assistance provided to farmers or agri-businesses to produce food for the program.
- Agriculture subsidies may also include in-kind support and discounted or free inputs provided to farmers, such as seeds, tools, and land.

### Agriculture-related laws, policies, or standards for school feeding programs

*Official mandates or guidelines that link domestic agriculture and school feeding in any way.*

- These may take the form of a mandate or support for production or procurement from local farms, small-scale farmers or cooperatives, etc., specifically linked to the school feeding program.
- For example, in some countries, the government provides inputs or other support for farmers specifically producing commodities for use in the school feeding program; in other countries, a specified percentage of food purchased for the school feeding program must come from small-scale or family farms; in other cases, there are program-specific guidelines for procurement procedures to be used for school feeding purchases.

### Bio-fortified foods

*Food crops that have been fortified through plant growth rather than after harvest.*

- Bio-fortified foods are nutritionally improved through agronomic practices, plant breeding, or modern biotechnology.

### Caterers

*Groups of people—most often businesses—that prepare and distribute food.*

- Caterers generally prepare and distribute food just prior to its consumption. Caterers may employ cooks and other workers to assist in the food preparation and distribution.
- School feeding program caterers usually do not prepare the food on school grounds. Instead, they prepare the food in a privately-run facility and deliver and distribute the food to multiple schools.
- The caterers' management personnel report to a higher level of school feeding program management on behalf of the entire caterer workforce; the workers do not report individually to the higher level of school feeding program management except through the caterers' management.

## Centralized management/decision-making

*Decisions for structuring and running the program are made at the national government level.*

- In school feeding programs with centralized management/decision-making, decisions are generally “top down” and uniform throughout the country.

## Civil society

*Non-governmental and non-profit entities (including families) representing the interests of citizens.*

- In the specific context of school feeding, civil society is a community of citizens linked by common interest and/or collective activity related to one or more school feeding programs.
- For example, parents may join together to ask the government to introduce a school feeding program, or to support or make changes to an existing program.

## Closed cooking area

*A space for food preparation with walls and a roof (not in the open air).*

## Cooks

*Individuals who prepare school food, usually on-site at the school and just prior to consumption.*

- School feeding program cooks may be paid or may work on a volunteer basis, but they generally work directly for the school feeding program in their individual capacity or—if working in a team of cooks—report individually to a higher level of program management.

## Competitive tendering procedure

*A process in which suppliers are invited to submit proposals (tenders or bids) to the buyer, who decides which bid best meets the buyer’s terms and conditions (including price).*

- In the context of school feeding programs, the entity acquiring food and services for schools is often a government, the United Nations, or another program implementer. For example, the government may request bids from companies or farmer organizations to provide a specific amount of a commodity of a specific quality standard over a specific period of time for use in the program; the winning bidder would be awarded a large (and perhaps lengthy) contract.
- Because the competitive tendering procedure for school feeding programs is generally used for large-scale food purchases, it can be a very complex process with significant legal and financial implications. It therefore involves a lot of paperwork, sophisticated standards and measurements, and demanding delivery schedules, making it challenging for small-scale suppliers to compete. To make it possible for small-scale suppliers to compete (and to meet one of the goals of Home-Grown School Feeding), the government or other purchaser might choose to simplify or otherwise modify the purchasing process.

## Complementary activity or program; complementary education or lessons

*An activity or program implemented in the school context that can complement the objectives of a school feeding program, or vice versa.*

- While one or more complementary programs may be part of the school feeding program, they may also be entirely separate, but still offered to students in the program (among other students).
- A complementary program or education component may or may not be mandatory.
- Common examples of activities/programs that might complement school feeding programs are: food and nutrition education; deworming treatment; handwashing with soap (just before and/or after the students eat); various types of health and wellness exams; prevention programs such as malaria and HIV/AIDS; and school gardens.

## Corruption/mismanagement

*Waste, fraud, abuse, or extremely poor management, in conflict with the welfare of the program.*

- Corruption is a covert activity undertaken for personal gain, in conflict with the procedures and welfare of an entity or program, such as a school feeding program. In the context of school feeding programs, examples include diversion of food items, theft/embezzlement of funds, and intentionally misreporting student enrollment to obtain additional benefits.
- Mismanagement is the practice of managing a program in such a way that the success of the program is undermined. In the context of school feeding programs, examples include delayed disbursement of food or funding, poor record-keeping, and inadequate planning for contingencies.

## Decentralized management/decision-making

*The decisions and core actions regarding the program are made at levels below the national government (e.g., at a province/state or local/district level).*

- These decisions are not uniform throughout the country, even if they fit within national guidelines, because they are independently determined at the decentralized level.

## Faraway countries

*Countries that are not readily accessible and/or do not share a border with this country, and/or are not considered to be in the same economic community or “neighborhood”.*

## Feeding modality

*In-school meals including breakfast, lunch, or dinner (evening meal); in-school snacks; take-home rations; and/or conditional cash transfers.*

- The unique set of foods or a unique feeding schedule for a targeted student population within a school feeding program. More than one modality may apply in the same program.
- Examples of school feeding program feeding modalities are school-based meals, school-based snacks, take-home rations, and conditional cash transfers. A school feeding program that provides a daily hot meal for students in school and also provides monthly take-home rations for some or all students has two feeding modalities.

## Focal Point

*Representative appointed by the national government of a country to gather information and provide responses for this survey.*

- The Focal Point is also expected to gain any official approvals and “sign off” necessary, indicating that the survey is complete and may be entered in the public survey database.
- The Focal Point should be the first point of contact in this survey. In cases where the Focal Point is not/cannot be responsive, a Survey Associate must gain GCNF approval before approaching another contact.

## Food bank

*A place where stocks of food, typically basic provisions and nonperishable items, are supplied free of charge to people in need.*

- For the purposes of this survey, food banks are community-led, nongovernmental organizations that address local food insecurity needs. The food bank model is based primarily on the recovery and redistribution of food and grocery product provided by supply chain actors from farm to retail.
- On occasion, governments may contribute to food banks, though most food is donated by non-government sources.

## Food basket

*Food items or commodities included in the school feeding program.*

- A very simple food basket, for example, might include a flour made with corn meal and soy blend, along with some sugar and oil (for serving as a hot breakfast porridge). A more complex food basket would be comprised of a mixture of protein(s), cereal(s), fruit(s) or vegetable(s), condiments, one or more drinks, etc.

## Food reserves

*Government stockpiles of food—usually grain—that are maintained to stabilize food prices and respond to future food shortages, among other purposes.*

- Government food reserves are known by a variety of names, including “strategic food reserves” or “strategic grain reserves”. These are government stockpiles of food—usually grain—purchased and stored for the purpose of meeting future domestic or international needs. The food is owned and most often managed by the government, though the government may contract with third parties to manage some or all of the reserves.
- Government food reserves may be established to facilitate responses to food shortages and emergencies, to offset supply shocks or spikes in demand, to stabilize food prices, and/or to compensate for shortfalls in foreign currency which make imports difficult.

## Food restrictions

*Food whose production, sale, marketing and/or consumption is limited (but not prohibited) by the national government for some reason (such as not fitting with national health or nutrition guidelines).*

- Restricted food items in the case of school feeding programs are primarily those foods that are not allowed (by decision of the national government) to be marketed or made available on or near school grounds. An example is the banning of soft drinks or candy on school grounds.
- Foods which (by government mandate) may only be used in very limited, stringently-monitored, quantity are also restricted food items. An example is strict regulation regarding the amount of salt, fats, or sugar that can be used in a school feeding program within specific time periods (per day, per week).
- Restricted food items are NOT totally banned, therefore are not considered to be prohibited items.

## Food trading

*Buying and subsequently selling or trading aggregated amounts of food.*

- Food aggregation and trading is most often conducted within a large-scale market requiring an intermediary between multiple farmers and a large buyer.
- Food traders include food aggregators and storage operations of various types, farmers' organizations, and other types of entrepreneurs involved in buying and selling food.

## Fortified

*The addition of one or more essential nutrients to a food.*

- A nutrient can be added whether or not it is normally contained in the food, for the purpose of preventing or correcting a demonstrated deficiency of the nutrient(s) in the population.

## Gender-private space

*Indicates gender-segregated bathrooms or latrines, or unisex bathrooms used in private by one person at a time.*

- A place where an individual has private space for personal matters such as toilet use or other personal hygiene activities. The space, if not totally private, is at least designated by gender, and/or used by one person at a time, thus affording privacy.

## Geographic targeting

*Targeting of specific geographic regions/districts/catchment areas to receive school feeding.*

- These areas may be selected based on perceptions of need, school attendance rates, nutritional deficiencies, or other reasons, but generally include all students within the targeted age range in that geographic area.
- Specifying rural or urban populations to receive program benefits is also a form of geographic targeting.

## Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF)

*School feeding program designed to involve small-scale farmers and stimulate local production.*

- By purchasing the food required for the program from local small-scale farmers and processors, Home-Grown School Feeding can stimulate local production, create a stable demand for quality and safe food, and support the development of local skills. By providing initial assistance to local farmers to develop their capacity to provide a reliable food supply, Home-Grown School Feeding can also expand opportunities for small-scale farmers to gain access to other markets.
- Even if only a small percentage of food is purchased locally from small-scale farmers, a program can be considered Home-Grown School Feeding if it is designed to support local food markets, and this is included in program implementation and in related policies and regulations.

## “Imperfect” commodities or produce

*Food items that are not visually or otherwise “perfect” but are still edible/usable.*

- These foods are often sold at a discounted rate, below the market price for “perfect” food items. When prepared and served in a meal, the “imperfection” becomes irrelevant and invisible.
- Judicious use of “imperfect” and/or surplus commodities can both reduce costs for school meals and reduce post-harvest food losses.

## Implementation

*The activities related to putting a planned (school feeding) program into practice.*

## Implementing partner

*A partner (such as a catering company or a non-profit organization) that implements some or all of the program in cooperation with the entity in charge of the program.*

- In cases where the entity in charge of program management is not implementing all aspects of the school feeding program, an implementing partner implements some or all of the program.
- In most cases, the implementing partners for large-scale/national programs will be United Nations agencies such as the World Food Program, or non-governmental (charitable or for-profit) organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Counterpart International, Mary’s Meals, Nascent Solutions, Save the Children, or large-scale catering firms/companies that provide some or all food and services for the programs.

## In-kind contribution/donation

*Contribution of food, goods, or services (rather than, or in addition to, a financial/cash contribution).*

- In the case of school feeding programs, local, national, or international entities ranging from parents and community members, to local farmers, to large-scale donors – particularly the United States’ McGovern-Dole Food for Education program – may contribute in-kind to the program.

## In-kind payment

*Non-financial payment made to individuals or groups in exchange for services or goods.*

- The most common example in school feeding programs appears in low-income countries, where local women serve as unsalaried cooks. They may serve as volunteers with no payment of any kind, or may receive in-kind payments in the form of food and/or services. There are many instances of in-kind payment with food; there are also examples of community members providing child care, or farm or household work as offsetting compensation for the time and efforts of their schools’ cooks.

### Individual targeting (based on individual student characteristics)

*Determining eligibility of a students to receive a school feeding program's benefits depending on distinguishing characteristics (e.g., household income level, ethnicity, or gender) of the individuals or their circumstances.*

- Examples include take-home rations targeted specifically to encourage girls' attendance, or providing free meals to children of a particularly poor or marginalized group.

### Inter-sectoral coordination body

*A group that incorporates the voices and perspectives of multiple sectors that are involved in, or affected by, the school feeding program(s) in a country.*

- Group members may all serve in government positions, or the group may be comprised of a mixture of public and private sector players and/or representatives of non-profit and civil society groups. Members of the group are expected to contribute to and/or implement actions recommended by the group.
- For school feeding programs, the inter-sectoral coordination group may include members with backgrounds in health, nutrition, education, agriculture, women's affairs, youth development, and/or economic development.

### Leadership position

*A position of some authority and responsibility within an organization, a program, a geographical area, or another defined arena.*

- In the context of school feeding programs, a leadership position at the national level might be the head of a school feeding unit in the government bureaucracy; a leadership position at the school level, might be the person (e.g., a cook or school staff member or a parent) who manages the school cafeteria or is in charge of the school's daily food preparation activities.

### Legumes, pulses, nuts

*Edible peas, beans, and tree seeds such as soybeans, peanuts (groundnuts), edible (dry) beans, lentils, chickpeas, and cashew nuts.*

- Legumes, pulses, and nuts cover a variety of edible peas, beans, and tree seeds commonly consumed by humans. Well-known legumes are fresh peas, soybeans, and peanuts (groundnuts), and can include their stems, leaves and pods. Legumes are high in protein and contain vitamins, complex carbohydrates, and fiber.
- Pulses are of the legume family but are generally the dried seeds of the plants and are harvested for the dry grain. Common pulses are edible (dry) beans, lentils, and chickpeas. Pulses are very high in protein and fiber and are low in fat.
- Edible or culinary nuts are dry fruit or seeds. Nuts are generally seeds found inside a hard, inedible outer shell. Most nuts are high in fat content. Common culinary nuts include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.

## Local

*At an administrative level more narrowly focused and localized than regional (state/province), hence at the district, county, municipality/town, or community level.*

- Note that local government can also refer to school districts.
- Local food sourcing refers to food originating from the district, county, municipality/town, or community level. This may be purchased or received.

## Management of the school feeding program

*Making key decisions related to the school feeding program (e.g., who is targeted and how) and overseeing how it is implemented.*

- Management and implementation may be done by the same entity or by separate entities; they may also be shared responsibilities, ideally with negotiated agreements clarifying which entity is responsible for which aspects of the school feeding program.

## Micronutrient powders (or “sprinkles”)

*A powder (usually pre-packaged and) containing vitamins and minerals that can be sprinkled onto any food in a dosage specific to the quantity and type of food being treated.*

- The powder often contains multiple micronutrients mixed together.
- Micronutrient powders are used in school feeding programs to increase the micronutrient content of students’ diets without changing their normal dietary habits.

## Ministry, department, or agency

*For this survey, the government entity (such as a ministry, department, agency, secretariat, or council) meant to manage, oversee, and ensure adherence to policy for one or more aspects of the school feeding program.*

- School feeding programs may be managed by any type of government entity or group of entities, as decided by each country.

## Monitoring

*Ongoing review of the school feeding program or programs to guide management decisions during program implementation.*

- This is not the same as “evaluation” of a program.



## National or large-scale school feeding program

- This may take the form of:
  - A school feeding program that is managed and/or administered by the national government, using national resources
  - A large school feeding program that is managed and/or administered by regional or local governments, using government resources
  - A large school feeding program that is managed by a non-governmental entity, but in coordination with the national government
  - Any large school feeding program that does not involve the government but reaches a substantial proportion of students in the country, or covers a substantial geography
- Please refer to the beginning of section C for further guidance on what distinguishes one program from another.
- The table below provides guidance regarding what program size could meet the criteria for being a “large” school feeding program, based on the size of the primary and secondary student population in a given country. These thresholds are intended to provide a loose estimate for which programs should be captured in this survey.

Primary + secondary student population	School feeding program size threshold
20,000	100 students
50,000	250
100,000	500
500,000	2,500
1 million	5,000
5 million	25,000
10 million	50,000
25 million	125,000
50 million	250,000
300 million	1.5 million

## Nearby countries

*Neighboring countries, or those considered to be easily accessible, in the same “neighborhood” or economic community.*

## Nutritional supplements

*Manufactured pills, powders, or liquid intended to provide vitamins and/or minerals that may otherwise not be consumed in sufficient quantities.*

- Nutritional supplements are used in school feeding programs to increase the micronutrient content of students' diets without changing their normal dietary habits.

## Processed food

*For this survey, processed food refers to food prepared for consumption on a large scale, usually done in a large facility with the intention of easing on-site preparation or making ready-to-eat products.*

- Processed food, in a strict sense, is anything that has been done to food prior to its consumption, such as chopping, cooking, drying, salting, smoking, and pickling.
- In the context of school feeding programs, examples include factory-made biscuits and breads or processed and packaged ready-to-eat foods/meals, and the processing usually occurs in a factory, bakery, or large-scale catering company.

## Regional

At the level of the state, province, or region (between the national and local levels).

## Semi-decentralized management/decision-making

*Situations where the management and decision-making are shared between the main manager (generally at a higher administrative or authority level, such as the national government) and another entity at a more limited administrative or authority level (such as a district government).*

- In school feeding programs, the national government may manage some or all of the funding and/or some commodities provided for the program (from food reserves, surpluses, or other sources) and certain monitoring activities, while the remaining management and decision-making resides with a regional or local entity.
- Semi-decentralized management may be long-lasting, or short term, and may happen during transitions in either direction. For example, a program may be in the process of being centralized (if it had been managed exclusively at the regional or local level) or decentralized (if program management had been exclusively at the national level). In transitions, most or all functions related to program management and decision-making may be staged for gradual hand-over.

## Setback

*A discrete occurrence that causes a problem, pause, or reversal in progress.*

- In the case of school feeding programs, a setback is a specific and significant challenge that occurred to the program, which resulted, for example, in fewer children receiving food, less food for the program, fewer feeding days, or the short-term or permanent cessation of the program for some or all targeted students.
- Examples of setbacks include: loss of (a significant amount of) funding for the program, a disease outbreak, a natural disaster, a food safety issue involving the school feeding program, a political change or crisis, or a conflict that affects a significant number of schools and students.

## Slow-onset emergency

*An emergency that arrives slowly, most often from a confluence of different events.*

- An example of a slow-onset emergency is desertification or deforestation combined with drought and pest infestation, or with an epidemic or civil strife.
- A slow-onset emergency generally allows some time for planning to prevent disaster or at least address the worst effects of the emergency.

## Small-scale farmer

*A farmer with limited resources that operates at a small scale (as determined with reference to the local setting).*

- Other terms may be used to describe small-scale farmers, such as “smallholder farmer”, “family farmer”, and “subsistence farmer”.
- Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) is intended to particularly engage and benefit small-scale farmers who are low-income and/or subsistence-oriented.

## Survey Associate

*An individual working with the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) on this survey.*

- The main role for Associates is to communicate with survey respondents (Focal Points) to ensure their understanding of the survey and specific survey questions and to gain the most complete and accurate responses possible.
- Survey Associates are available to communicate by email, phone, or Skype (and possibly through other modes of communicating over distances). They are ready to provide clarification or to work closely with respondents for as long as the survey process takes. They can also assist with technical issues.
- The Survey Associate will review each survey for completeness and gain Focal Points' final approval for entering the survey into the global database.

## Take-home rations

*Food items provided to students to take back to their families/homes.*

- Take-home rations may be conditional, serving as an economic incentive for families to send their children to school and achieve a particular attendance level in a given time frame (e.g., a month or a quarter).
- Take-home rations may also be intended for children's consumption, in order to give schoolchildren food during weekends or school vacations if the children are deemed vulnerable (based on their individual characteristics, such as gender, the family's economic status, and/or being a member of a specific minority group) during those periods when food is not available at school and/or children are not expected to be in school.