

# Preview of the Global Survey of School Meal Programs<sup>©</sup>



*This is what we are learning from the 2019 Global Survey.*

*Look for the full report in Spring 2021.*



Across the 85 countries surveyed by GCNF, an estimated **297.3 million children of all ages** received food through school meal programs in the previously completed school year.

## SCHOOL MEAL COVERAGE IS LOWEST WHERE NEEDS ARE THE GREATEST.

17% OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES



57% OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES

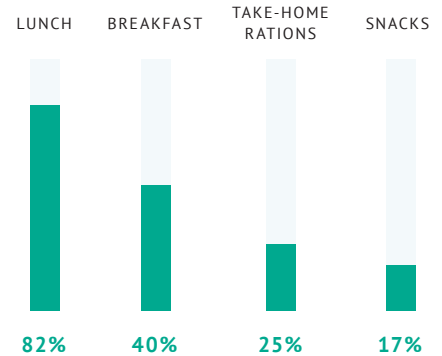
The average coverage rate increases incrementally with rising wealth levels, ranging from **17% across low-income countries to 57% across high-income countries.**

## MEALTIME BREAKDOWN



**88%**

OF PROGRAMS SERVE MEALS IN SCHOOLS

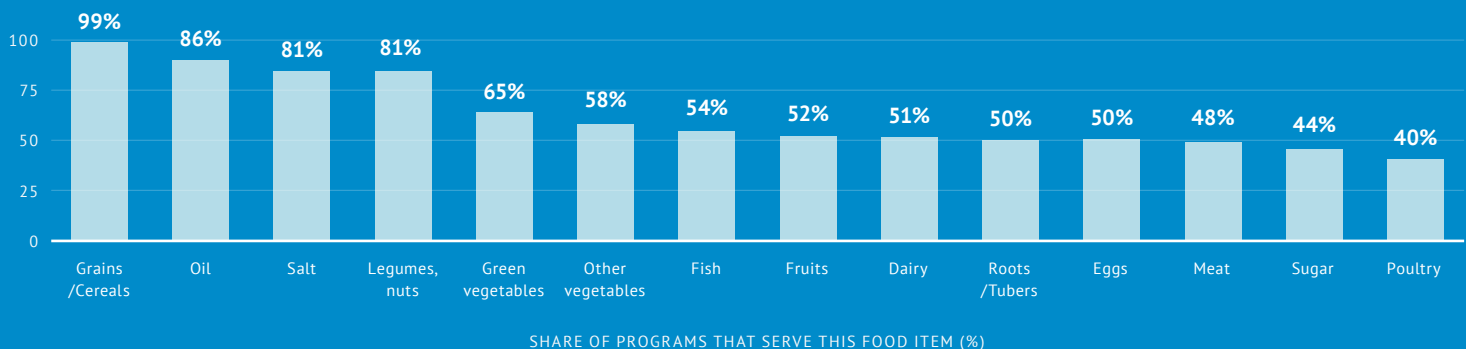


## THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL MEALS CAN BE EVEN GREATER FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS.

Regions with the lowest levels of secondary school feeding are where early marriage and pregnancy rates are the highest.



## MENU DIVERSITY MATTERS

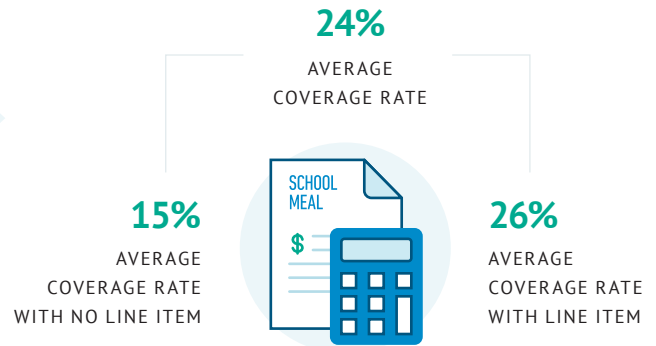


SHARE OF PROGRAMS THAT SERVE THIS FOOD ITEM (%)

Low-income countries are more reliant on foreign in-kind food aid, but a locally sourced menu improves food diversity and nutrition, while promoting economic development and government ownership.

THERE IS A STRONG CORRELATION BETWEEN SCHOOL FEEDING COVERAGE RATES AND HAVING SCHOOL FEEDING AS A NATIONAL BUDGET LINE ITEM.

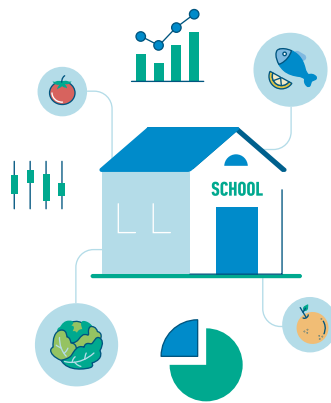
% of primary and secondary school-age children who receive food through their schools



87% of school meal programs cite the goal of improving students' nutrition among their objectives. Strategies include nutrition education, menu diversity, and use of fortified and biofortified foods.



Most cooks are women: 78% of programs report that 75 - 100% of their cooks are women. But almost one-third (31%) of programs report that very few or no cooks receive payment for their work.



## COVID-19'S IMPACT

School closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic are not only disrupting children's education but also their access to school meals. For the most vulnerable children, a meal in school has been the most reliable source of food. At the peak of school closures in April 2020, almost 1.5 billion children and youth in 172 countries were out of school (UNESCO)<sup>1</sup>, and 370 million of those children were no longer receiving the school meals they depend on (WFP)<sup>2</sup>. The 2019 and 2021 Global Surveys will help to show COVID-19's impacts, giving us a picture of school meal programs before and after the pandemic.

Data is one of most important tools in achieving a future where school meals sustainably nourish all children and help them, their families, communities, and nations to thrive.

LEARN MORE

Participate in the upcoming survey in Summer 2021.  
*The full report will be released in early Spring 2021.*  
[survey.gcnf.org](https://survey.gcnf.org)



1. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>  
2. <https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/>