

School Meals for Lifelong Health

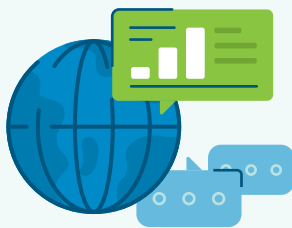


What we're learning from the Global Survey of School Meal Programs ©



School meal programs designed to meet children's dietary needs can address the growing burden of undernutrition and rising obesity among children and adolescents that puts them at high risk of serious and chronic illness now and into adulthood.

GCNF conducted the 2019 Global Survey of School Meal Programs © to establish a comprehensive database of school meal programs:



103

COUNTRIES RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY.



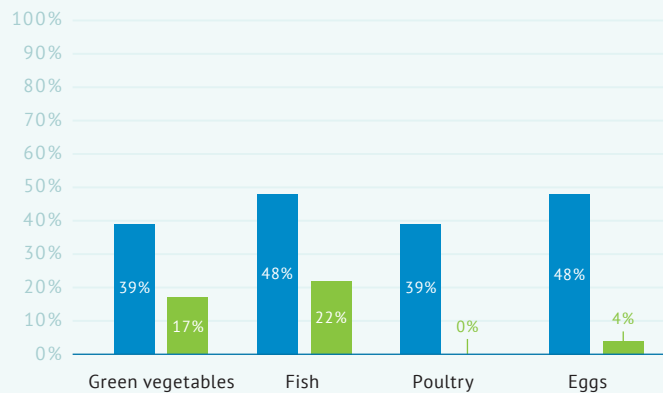
85

RESPONDENTS HAD LARGE-SCALE SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS.

IMPROVING NUTRITION WITH SCHOOL MENU DIVERSITY

A school meal is oftentimes the only meal a child receives that day, making it a vital opportunity to provide a diverse menu with essential micro- and macronutrients. Locally sourced menus improve food diversity and nutrition while promoting local agricultural development and government ownership.

Programs that rely on domestic purchase more commonly report the following food items and more:



● DOMESTIC PURCHASE
● FOREIGN IN-KIND DONATIONS



ADDRESSING OBESITY WITH SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

School meal programs provide a clear opportunity to tackle the global obesity epidemic.



25%

LESS THAN 25% OF SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS LISTED OBESITY REDUCTION AMONG THEIR GOALS.



47%

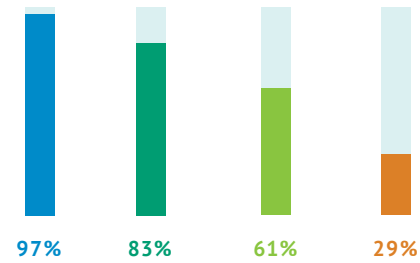
OF PROGRAMS HAD NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS INTENDED TO ADDRESS OBESITY.

THE SCHOOL HEALTH AND NUTRITION PACKAGE

Comprehensive school health policies often include school feeding and complementary health and hygiene services or programs that together increase each other's efficacy.



HANDWASHING, DRINKING WATER, DEWORMING, AND MENSTRUAL HYGIENE COMPLEMENTED SCHOOL FEEDING ACTIVITIES IN 97%, 83%, 61% AND 29% OF PROGRAMS, RESPECTIVELY.



School feeding programs support adolescent girls' health and nutrition while helping them stay in school, which can prevent early marriage and pregnancy.

What's Next?

- Advocate with GCNF for comprehensive school health and nutrition packages to leverage health and education investments in children and adolescents.
- Advocate with GCNF for strengthening school feeding programs to address the triple burden of child undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and obesity.
- Work with GCNF to identify effective and scalable obesity mitigation and prevention interventions for school feeding programs.
- Work with GCNF to better quantify and explain the costs and benefits of nutrition interventions for school-age children.
- Work with GCNF to build cross-sectoral collaboration to support school feeding.



Reach out to us at info@gcnf.org to discuss how we can advocate together!

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on school systems and deprived vulnerable children of a daily school meal. At the peak of school closures in April 2020, 1.5 billion children were out of school,¹ and 370 million were not receiving the school meals they depend on.² The upcoming 2021 Global Survey of School Meal Programs © aims to capture the impact of the pandemic for at least one full school year.

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