

SCHOOL MEAL/FEEDING PROGRAM(S)

Most recently completed school year:
September 2018 – July 2019 (182 days)

- School Canteens

Lead Agency: Ministry of Education - Ministry of Health and Community Protection - Educational Councils

NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS

- ☒ National school feeding policy
- ☒ Nutrition
- ☐ Food safety
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Private sector involvement

Line item in the national budget... ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

BUDGET

Total: NR

- ☐ National government: NR
- ☐ International donors*: NR
- ☐ Private sector: NR
- ☐ Other donors: NR

**Contributions by United Nations agencies or non-governmental organizations often represent funding from multiple donors.*

INFRASTRUCTURE

School meals/snacks are prepared off-site in private facilities (caterers). All latrines/toilets are gender-private because public schools in UAE are gender segregated.

SPECIAL NOTES

This report covers school food activities in public schools only. School nutrition data is not available for private schools. It is estimated that one half or more of all Emirati children attend private schools; in the 2017–18 school year 74% of students enrolled in UAE schools were in private schools.

The public school program reported here involves school canteens where students purchase food at school. Government support for the school canteens includes only nutrition awareness activities, and 50% of the salaries of canteen workers.

The UAE survey response for the 2018–19 school year did not include information on student numbers. All student data for this report are from 2017–18 school year, as reported by the government website: <https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/OpenData/Pages/ReportsAndStatistics.aspx>; data for out-of-school primary and secondary school-age children data are from 2016 UNESCO data.

NR = No Response

MEALS/SNACKS/MODALITY

- ☒ Breakfast
- ☒ Lunch
- ☐ Dinner
- ☒ Snacks
- ☐ Take-home rations
- ☐ Conditional cash transfer
- ☒ Grains/cereals
- ☐ Roots, tubers
- ☒ Legumes and nuts
- ☒ Dairy products
- ☐ Eggs
- ☒ Meat
- ☒ Poultry
- ☐ Fish
- ☒ Green, leafy vegetables
- ☒ Other vegetables
- ☒ Fruits
- ☐ Oil
- ☐ Salt
- ☐ Sugar

Prohibited food items: Prohibited food items: Soda, candy, chocolate

FOOD SOURCES

- ☒ Purchased (domestic)
- ☐ Purchased (foreign)
- ☐ In-kind (domestic)
- ☐ In-kind (foreign)

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Handwashing with soap
- ☐ Height measurement
- ☐ Weight measurement
- ☐ Deworming treatment
- ☐ Eye testing/eyeglasses
- ☐ Hearing testing/treatment
- ☐ Dental cleaning/testing
- ☐ Menstrual hygiene
- ☐ Drinking water
- ☐ Water purification

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

EDUCATION

- ☒ Nutrition
- ☒ Health
- ☒ Food and agriculture
- ☒ Reproductive health
- ☒ Hygiene
- ☐ HIV prevention

☒ = mandatory

OTHER

- ☒ School gardens
- ☒ Physical education

The checked and highlighted items are reported as required, though they may not be uniformly implemented.

United Arab Emirates



SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

CHILDREN RECEIVING FOOD, 2017–18

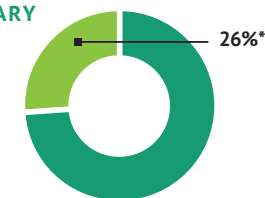
School level	Total #	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Primary school	740,553	728,553	191,126
Secondary school	1,114,220	1,081,020	287,725
Total	1,854,773	1,809,573	478,851

* All public schools students have access to school canteens

COVERAGE: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Total number primary and secondary school-age children: 1,854,773

Receiving school food:
■ 478,851



Food was also provided to some students in

- ☒ Pre-schools
- ☒ Primary schools
- ☒ Secondary schools
- ☒ Vocational/trade schools
- ☐ University/higher education
- ☐ Other

*This represents the public school population only; no data is available regarding the more than 50% of Emirati children enrolled in private schools.



GCNF is a non-political, non-profit entity incorporated in 2006. Funding for this survey and a follow-up survey in 2021 is being provided, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture under agreement number FX18TA-10960G002.

NUTRITION

School feeding program(s) include/involve the following:

- ☐ Fortified foods
- ☐ Bio-fortified foods
- ☐ Micronutrient supplements
- ☐ Nutritionists involved
- ☐ Special training for cooks/caterers in nutrition
- ☒ Objective to meet nutritional goals
- ☒ Objective to reduce obesity
- ☒ To meet educational goals

Food items fortified:

NR

Micronutrients added to fortified foods:

NR

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To prevent or mitigate overweight/obesity the program provides nutrition education, food education, health education, physical education, and restricts food on or near school grounds. The program also has municipalities and supervisory bodies manage certification requirements for cooks/caterers.

AGRICULTURE, EMPLOYMENT, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Jobs created by school feeding programs

- NR Cooks and food preparers
- NR Transporters
- NR Off-site processors
- NR Food packagers and handlers
- NR Monitoring
- NR Food service management
- NR Safety and quality inspectors
- NR Other

Farmers were involved with the school feeding program(s)...

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NR

Other private sector (for profit) actors were involved...

- ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NR

There was a focus on creating jobs or leadership or income-generating opportunities for...

- ☒ Women
- ☒ Youth
- ☐ Other groups

There was community engagement (by parents or others) in the school feeding program(s)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NR

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Program focuses on employment of women and youth from needy families, in supervising and selling food in canteens.

CONTACTS: UAE

Agency: Ministry of Education

Website: <https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/Pages/Home.aspx>

Email: ccc.moe@moe.gov.ae

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Recent successes cited for the UAE public School Canteens program are: The issuance of a manual for food circulation in government school canteens, allocation of approved finance companies, and the fact that the program helped people in low-income families to find a job and have a steady income.

A strength of the program reported by the UAE was the establishment of the Office of Food Security, which supported the eating of vegetables, fruits, and dairy products in schools, and making sure that these items were available on a daily basis.

Challenges reported were the parents' lack of interest in food and nutrition; poor performance of food supply companies; students resisting change in their nutritional behavior; and multiple players in the student nutrition sector not always being united in their approaches.

STUDIES CONDUCTED

- Increasing Obesity Level Among Students
- GSSH Global Health Survey by the Ministry of Health and Community Protection

RESEARCH NEEDED

NR

SCHOOL CANTEEN

Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education

OBJECTIVES:

- To meet educational goals
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To prevent or mitigate obesity

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:

- In-school meals, In-school snacks

TARGETING:

All Public School Students

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2017–18 SCHOOL YEAR?

School level	# Students	% Girls	% Boys
Pre-school	38,903	51%	49%
Primary school	467,723	53%	47%
Secondary school	287,725	52%	48%
Other students	26,885	—	—
Total	821,236	—	—

FOOD ITEMS:

Grains/cereals	Meat	Fruits
Legumes and nuts	Green, leafy vegetables	
Dairy products	Other vegetables	

* fortified

FOOD SOURCES:

100% Purchased (domestic)	0% In-kind (domestic)
0% Purchased (foreign)	0% In-kind (foreign)

NOTES:

The numbers of students reported here are taken from the UAE Ministry of Education website, and include children attending pre-schools/ kindergartens, Cycles 1 & 2 (primary) schools, secondary, technical, and “continuous” schools, all of which are assumed to be public schools. No numbers of pre-, primary, or secondary private schools have been used in this report. The UAE government supports the School Canteen program in public schools by paying 50% of school canteen workers’ salaries and sponsoring nutrition awareness activities like healthy cooking events (Yalla Bazaar), and fun festivals for physical health. Private caterers/ catering companies pay the remaining 50% of canteen workers’ salaries.

