# Management and Implementation

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs © aims to track how programs are managed and implemented. Four-fifths of the countries covered in this report have a national school feeding policy, law, or standard (Table 6). It is also fairly common for countries to have a policy related to school feeding regarding nutrition (at 66%). However, just over half of the countries report having a policy regarding food safety, and 33% had a policy regarding agriculture linked to school feeding. Only 11% seem to have had a policy in place related to private sector involvement, although the private sector was reported as being involved in school meal programs in at least 48 countries (or 59%).

TABLE 6

**NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, OR STANDARDS RELATED TO SCHOOL FEEDING**

| | | % OF COUNTRIES WITH POLICIES RELATED TO SCHOOL FEEDING (BY TOPIC) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | National school feeding policy | Nutrition | Food safety | Agriculture | Private sector |
| **Region** | Sub-Saharan Africa | 75 | 67 | 44 | 56 | 14 |
| | South Asia, East Asia & Pacific | 79 | 79 | 63 | 16 | 11 |
| | Middle East & North Africa | 71 | 29 | 29 | 0 | 0 |
| | Latin America & Caribbean | 80 | 60 | 60 | 30 | 0 |
| | North America, Europe & Central Asia | 100 | 69 | 77 | 15 | 15 |
| **Income group** | Low income | 73 | 73 | 35 | 50 | 15 |
| | Lower middle income | 82 | 50 | 54 | 25 | 4 |
| | Upper middle income | 72 | 61 | 67 | 28 | 17 |
| | High income | 100 | 92 | 77 | 23 | 8 |
| **All** | | **80** | **66** | **54** | **33** | **11** |
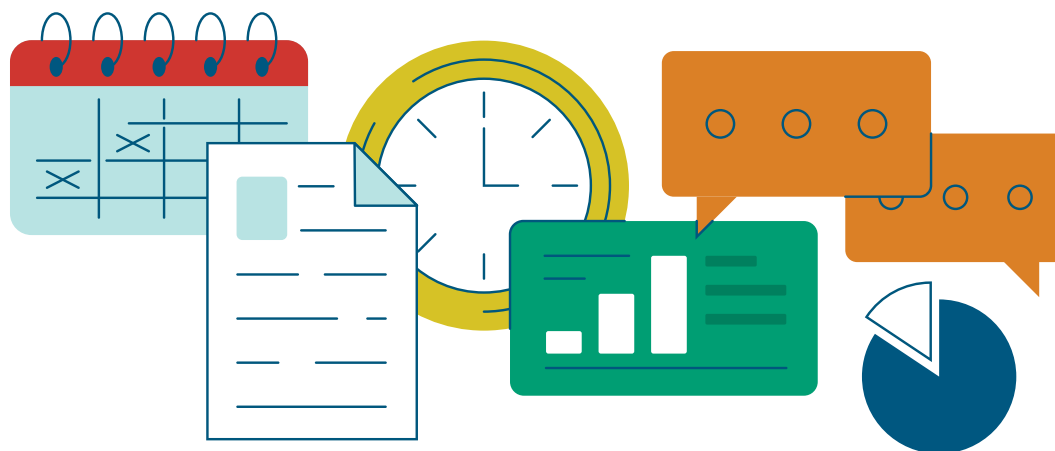


The most common management system across the school meal programs captured in this survey was one of centralized decision-making (managed by the national government) (Table 7). Regional and local governments were involved in a (decentralized) management capacity in 20% and 24% of cases, respectively. Often, multiple entities were involved, and some level of government managed the program in 62% of cases. An international donor agency or implementing partner was involved in program management in 35% of the programs; this was the case for half of those operating in low income settings.

In 31% of programs, management had shifted from one level or entity to another; this seems to have been more common (at 54%) in the South Asia, East Asia & Pacific region. In some cases, this took the form of transitioning from management by an implementing

partner toward government management, a pattern also documented by Bundy et al. (2009).  For example, in Kenya, the largest school meal program had been operating since 1980, but it became a home-grown school meal program in 2009 when the World Food Program began transferring responsibilities to the government. In Bhutan, school feeding began in 1974 under the World Food Program's management; however, caseloads have gradually been handed over to the government's National School Feeding Program, such that the Government of Bhutan had complete ownership, funding, and management of the program by 2019. Similarly, in eSwatini, school feeding began in 1962 with the support of Save the Children, the World Food Program, and other partners; however, the Government of eSwatini has been primarily responsible for the program since 2010. In the National School Lunch Program of Laos, management responsibilities were expected to shift from the development partner (World Food Program) to the national government in June 2019, and in Guinea-Bissau, while the school feeding program was managed by the World Food Program, the intention is for this responsibility to someday be assumed by the government.

In Mali, in the context of decentralization, Territorial Communities are responsible for managing the schools and the school canteens. Burkina Faso is also undertaking a gradual decentralization of school canteen management, with the transfer of resources to local communities for the establishment of canteens and the procurement of food. In Nepal, however, a prolonged transition to a federal form of government and related decentralization efforts were among the reported recent challenges associated with school feeding.

Among the government ministries, departments, or agencies that might be involved in school meal programs, and across the programs covered in this report, the Ministry of Education (or department/agency) was most commonly responsible for every function, ranging from the request for funding to the provision of clean water to monitoring responsibilities (Table 8). Local and regional government, and the Ministry of Health, were also commonly cited as responsible for inspections and menu design (among other responsibilities) in about one-third of the programs. Interestingly, it was rare for an agency of social protection to be listed as involved, even for the selection of schools.

The various agencies listed by survey respondents worked "mostly together" in 33% of the cases, "sometimes together and sometimes independently" in 49.5% of the cases, and "independently" in 16% of cases. In 79% of the countries covered in this report, there was an inter-sectoral coordination body or committee for school feeding at the national level. In Cambodia, the Home-Grown School Feeding Program reported that numerous entities had a hand in program management. The program was managed at the school level by local authorities; NGO partners offer complementary activities (nutrition, school gardens, etc.); the World Food Program provided technical assistance; and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport was responsible for high-level management and coordination, as well as strategy development.

## TABLE 7 — CHARACTERIZATION OF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

| | | SHARE OF PROGRAMS (%) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | National government managed the program (Centralized decision-making) | Regional governments managed the program (Decentralized decision-making) | Local governments managed the program (Decentralized decision-making) | In transition between centralized and decentralized decision-making (Semi-decentralized) | An international donor agency or other implementing partner managed the program |
| **Region** | Sub-Saharan Africa | 37 | 19 | 25 | 24 | 46 |
| | South Asia, East Asia & Pacific | 68 | 24 | 24 | 20 | 20 |
| | Middle East & North Africa | 50 | 17 | 0 | 33 | 33 |
| | Latin America & Caribbean | 50 | 25 | 38 | 25 | 13 |
| | North America, Europe & Central Asia | 71 | 14 | 21 | 21 | 29 |
| **Income group** | Low income | 33 | 18 | 24 | 14 | 50 |
| | Lower middle income | 63 | 29 | 26 | 34 | 32 |
| | Upper middle income | 56 | 13 | 31 | 31 | 13 |
| | High income | 67 | 8 | 8 | 17 | 17 |
| **All** | | **50** | **20** | **24** | **23** | **35** |

## TABLE 8 — KEY GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKERS RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

| | % OF PROGRAMS IN WHICH THIS FUNCTION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF… | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Education | Agriculture | Health | Finance | Social protection | Regional government | Local government | Other |
| Provide clean water | 55 | 4 | 32 | 1 | 4 | 22 | 46 | 21 |
| Conduct inspections | 52 | 15 | 40 | 4 | 4 | 17 | 25 | 24 |
| Decide schools | 75 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 30 | 32 | 17 |
| Design menu | 54 | 10 | 33 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 24 | 22 |
| Manage bathrooms | 61 | 3 | 26 | 1 | 4 | 16 | 44 | 17 |
| Manage food sourcing | 44 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 21 | 29 | 27 |
| Manage private sector | 27 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 20 | 11 |
| Monitor program | 83 | 15 | 25 | 10 | 9 | 34 | 47 | 28 |
| Request funding | 65 | 7 | 6 | 37 | 12 | 14 | 19 | 15 |