SCHOOL MEAL/FEEDING PROGRAM(S)
School year: 2020
- Complementary School Food Program (Programa de Alimentación Complementaria Escolar - P.A.C.E.)
- Study Without Hunger Program

Lead Agency: Ministry of Education

NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND STANDARDS
- National school feeding policy
- Nutrition
- Food safety
- Health
- Agriculture
- Private sector involvement

Line item in the national budget...
- Yes
- No
- No response

BUDGET
Total: USD 15,884,000
- Government: USD 15,884,000
- International donors*: USD 0
- Private sector: USD 0
- Other donors: USD 0

Includes funding from the United States Department of Agriculture: Yes
- No
- No response

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

INFRASTRUCTURE
Some schools in Panamá have electricity, clean and piped water, dedicated eating spaces/cafeterias, and kitchens, and most have toilets.

SPECIAL NOTES
In 2020, Emergency Food for COVID-19 (Alimentación en Emergencia por COVID-19) also operated in Panamá, in addition to the school feeding program.

MEALS/SNACKS/MODALITY
- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Snacks
- Take-home rations

Grains, cereals
- Roots, tubers
- Legumes, pulses, nuts
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Green, leafy vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Fruits
- Oil
- Salt
- Sugar

Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- Fruit juice
- Tea
- Water
- Other

Prohibited food items: Carbonated and/or sweetened drinks, unhealthy snacks and sweets, other foods with artificial sweeteners, foods high in sugar and sodium, and fried foods

FOOD SOURCES
- Purchased (domestic)
- In-kind (domestic)
- Purchased (foreign)
- In-kind (foreign)

COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES
- Handwashing with soap
- Height measurement
- Weight measurement
- Testing for anemia
- Deworming treatment
- Eye testing/eyeglasses
- Hearing testing/treatment
- Dental cleaning/testing
- Menstrual hygiene
- Drinking water
- Water purification

COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS
- Food and nutrition
- Agriculture
- School gardens
- Hygiene
- Health
- Reproductive health
- HIV prevention
- Physical education

The checked items were provided in most or all participating schools.

CHILDMREN RECEIVING FOOD, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th># Enrolled</th>
<th># Receiving food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>192,659</td>
<td>93,184</td>
<td>77,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>470,850</td>
<td>420,481</td>
<td>308,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>372,808</td>
<td>304,105</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,036,317</td>
<td>817,770</td>
<td>385,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COVERAGE: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN
Total number primary and secondary school-age children: 843,658
Receiving school food: 508,272
Food was also provided to some students in...
- Yes
- No
- No response

Panamá

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NUTRITION

School feeding program(s) included/involved the following:

- Fortified foods
- Bio-fortified foods
- Micronutrient supplements
- Nutritionists involved
- Objective to meet nutritional goals
- Objective to reduce obesity

Food items fortified/biofortified:
- Grains/cereals
- Micronutrients:
  - Vitamins A, B6, and B12, iron, zinc, folic acid, thiamine, riboflavin, and niacin

Additional Information

At least 16 nutritionists were involved in school feeding programs in Panamá in 2020, and there are nutritional requirements regarding the recommended calories for a snack.

STUDIES CONDUCTED

None reported

RESEARCH NEEDED

Research on the current program(s) would be appreciated in order to improve the menu and better target beneficiaries.

AGRICULTURE, EMPLOYMENT, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Jobs created by school feeding programs*

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

*If blank, no response was provided.

Farmers were involved with the school feeding program(s)...  
- Yes  No  No response

Other private sector (for profit) actors were involved...  
- Yes  No  No response

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

- Women  Other groups
- Youth  No response

There was community engagement (by parents or others) in the school feeding program(s)...  
- Yes  No  No response

Were there links between food banks and the school feeding program(s)?  
- Yes  No  There are no food banks in this country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The private sector is involved in food trading, transport, and processing for the school feeding program in Panamá. Because food is purchased in processed form or purchased and distributed in unprocessed form, no cooks are involved in the program. Though employment numbers are not known by the national government, employment is created within the companies that supply the food for the school feeding program.

CONTACTS: PANAMÁ

Agency: Ministry of Education
Website: www.meduca.gob.pa

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

School feeding in Panamá is associated with a decrease in school dropouts and improved nutritional status of students. It further contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, notably goal 2 of zero hunger in the world by 2030. However, the school feeding program suffers from a funding deficit. Specifically, the program experienced a deficit of USD 7,962,704 in 2020, and the frequency of food distribution decreased from 120 to 75 days per year.

EMERGENCIES/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, most schools in Panamá closed for three months before re-opening to operate remotely for the last six months of the 2020 school year. The pandemic did not affect the number of students reached by school feeding program, the ration size, the food items included, or the amount of funding. However, the frequency of food distribution declined, there was a change in the location and modality of food distribution (specifically, food was now provided to students or their parents to pick up at school to prepare and eat at home), and there was a change in beneficiaries (switching from targeting students to targeting their families).
COMPLEMENTARY SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM / STUDY WITHOUT HUNGER PROGRAM
PROGRAMA DE ALIMENTACIÓN COMPLEMENTARIA ESCOLAR - P.A.C.E.

Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education

OBJECTIVES:
- To meet educational goals
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals

MODALITIES OF PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH FOOD:
- In-school snacks
- Take-home rations

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:
- Twice per month during the school year

TARGETING:
Based on socioeconomic characteristics of individual students

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020 SCHOOL YEAR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School level</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>77,068</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>308,272</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>385,340</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:
- Grains, cereals*
  - * fortified

FOOD SOURCES:
- 100% Purchased (domestic)
- 0% Purchased (foreign)
- 0% In-kind (domestic)
- 0% In-kind (foreign)

If blank, no response was provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
The Complementary School Food Program began in 1995 and is managed by the national government in a centralized manner. In the 2020 school year, take-home rations comprised of grains/cereals were provided to students twice per month. The Study Without Hunger Program responds to Law 115 of December 5, 2019. However, this second program was not fully executed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.