The Global Survey of School Meal Programs is the property of GCNF and is protected by copyright. It may not be reproduced or distributed without prior written consent. Contact: info@gcnf.org ©2019. The Global Child Nutrition Foundation. All rights reserved.

GCNF is a non-political, non-profit entity. Funding for the 2019 and 2021 surveys is provided, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture; agreement number FX18TA-10960G002.

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

**INFRASTRUCTURE**
All schools in the United Arab Emirates have electricity, piped and clean water, flush toilets, dedicated eating spaces/cafeterias, and kitchens. Food for the school canteens is prepared off-site.

**SPECIAL NOTES**
Population numbers from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) were used to complete this report.

**BUDGET**
Students pay full price for the food sold at school canteens, and the Emirates Foundation ensures that the food is sold at-cost (with no markup). There is no government or private sector funding for the school canteens. However, the government does provide nutritional guidelines and other non-monetary types of support.

- Government: USD 0
- International donors*: USD 0
- Private sector: USD 0
- Other donors: USD 0

Includes funding from the United States Department of Agriculture

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

**SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS**
**School year:** 2020–2021
- School Canteens

**LEAD AGENCY:** Emirates Foundation for School Education, Ministry of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEALS/SNACKS/MODALITY</th>
<th>Breakast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Snacks</th>
<th>Take-home rations</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains, cereals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots, tubers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legumes, pulses, nuts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt drink</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit juice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prohibited food items: Soft drinks, sweets, chocolates

**FOOD SOURCES**
No information

**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.

**CHILDREN RECEIVING FOOD, 2020–2021**

<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>207,918</td>
<td>195,870</td>
<td>39,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>496,261</td>
<td>462,333</td>
<td>81,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>558,365</td>
<td>675,864</td>
<td>167,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,262,544</td>
<td>1,334,067</td>
<td>288,795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NUMBER STUDENTS RECEIVING FOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 years prior</th>
<th>1 year prior</th>
<th>2020–2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COVERages: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN**

- Total number primary and secondary school-age children: 1,034,626
- Receiving school food: 249,370
- Food was also provided to some students in...
  - Pre-schools
  - Vocational/trade schools
  - Other

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

---

The United Arab Emirates

*Emirates Foundation for School Education, Ministry of Education*

**Population:** 9.7 million

**Languages:** Arabic, English

**Government:** United Arab Emirates

**GDP per capita:** USD 80,185

**GDP growth:** 4.0%

**Unemployment:** 2.8%

**Inflation:** 1.5%

**Primary and secondary education:** Free and compulsory for children aged 6–16

**Literacy rate:** 97.8%

**Life expectancy at birth:** 78.7 years

**HDI:** 0.817

**Human Development Index Rank:** 12

---

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

---

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs is the property of GCNF and is protected by copyright. It may not be reproduced or distributed without prior written consent. Contact: info@gcnf.org ©2019. The Global Child Nutrition Foundation. All rights reserved.

GCNF is a non-political, non-profit entity. Funding for the 2019 and 2021 surveys is provided, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture; agreement number FX18TA-10960G002.
NUTRITION

School feeding program(s) included/involved 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

Food items fortified/biofortified:
Not applicable

Micronutrients:
Not applicable

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  ☑  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

At least five nutritionists are engaged in school feeding in the United Arab Emirates. Various education programs (food and nutrition education, health education, and physical education) are designed to prevent or mitigate overweight/obesity. However, most of the food in the school canteens is packaged and processed.

STUDIES CONDUCTED

None

RESEARCH NEEDED

None specified

CONTACTS: THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Agency: Ministry of Education  
Website: https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/Pages/Home.aspx

SUCCESES AND CHALLENGES

Among the successes of school feeding in the United Arab Emirates, standards and nutritional and safety requirements for foods sold in schools have been harmonized, with health and food control authorities working in coordination with educational institutions. Challenges related to school feeding include certain weakness of the food supply chain and the lack of a central production facility or system for school meals.

EMERGENCIES/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic caused some schools in the United Arab Emirates to operate remotely. Because so many students were not in attendance, there was limited school canteen activity in 2020, and the number of students who accessed food through the canteens declined. During this period, students were served balanced meals that contained carbohydrates, vegetables/fruits, dairy, and water.
SCHOOL CANTEENS
المقاصف المدرسية

Lead implementer(s): Emirates Foundation for School Fees, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Community Protection, Educational councils

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

FREQUENCY AND DURATION:
• 5 days per week during the school year

TARGETING:
Universal

HOW MANY STUDENTS RECEIVED SCHOOL FOOD IN 2020–2021 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>39,425</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>81,731</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>167,639</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>288,795</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS:
Grains, cereals, Poultry, Dairy milk
Legumes, pulses, nuts, Other vegetables, Yogurt drink
Dairy products, Fruits, Fruit juice
Meat, Salt, Tea
Water

FOOD SOURCES:
No information on food sources

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
The School Canteens program began in 2013, and as of 2020–2021, it operated in 300 schools. Other programs that support healthy school food include Healthy Cooking (Yalla Bazaar), Arla Food Moover Support, and the Health and Fitness Fun Festival. Together, these projects raise awareness of the importance of healthy food and physical activity.