

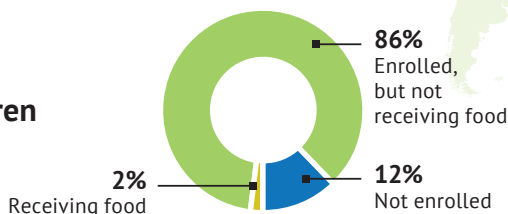


Belize

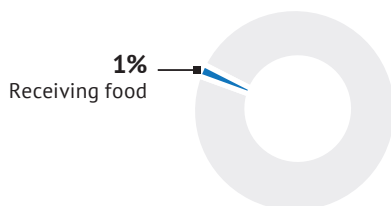


School Meal Coverage (2022-2023)

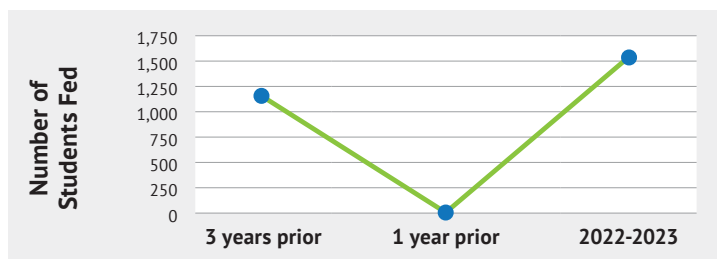
All Primary and Secondary School-age Children



Only Enrolled Primary Students



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	15,836	7,007	0
Primary School	62,082	59,505	665
Secondary School	30,593	22,014	900
TOTAL	108,511	88,526	1,565



National Laws, Policies, and Standards

- National school feeding policy
- Nutrition**
- Health**
- Food safety**
- Smallholder farms
- Agriculture (apart from smallholders)
- Climate/environment policy
- Private sector involvement

The country had ...

- Inter-sectoral coordination committee for school feeding**
- National system for monitoring school feeding**

Budget

- Total: **USD 419,363**
- Government: Unknown
- International donors: Unknown
- Private sector: 0
- NGOs (domestic): 0
- Other donors: 0

The budget of USD 419,363 was loosely estimated based on the reported budget of 3 Belizean dollars per child per day, with consideration of the number of children receiving food in each program and the estimated number of days of food provision per year. This value should be regarded only as an estimate.

- Line item in the national budget for school feeding**

School Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains**
- Refined/milled grains**
- Blended grain-based products
- Legumes**
- Nuts and seeds**
- Eggs**
- Dairy**
- Poultry and game meat**
- Red meat**
- Processed meat**
- Fish and shellfish**
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- White roots and tubers**
- Fruits**
- Dark green leafy vegetables**
- Cruciferous vegetables**
- Other vegetables**
- Deep-fried foods**
- Sweets**

- Liquid oils**
- Semi-solid and solid fats**
- Salt**
- Dairy milk
- Yogurt drink
- 100% fruit juice
- Other fruit drink
- Tea
- Other sugar-sweetened beverages

- Prohibited food items**
- Sugar-sweetened beverages
- Food Sources**
- Purchased (domestic)**
- Purchased (foreign)**
- In-kind (domestic)
- In-kind (foreign)

Special Notes: None.

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**

Limitations on food and beverage marketing...

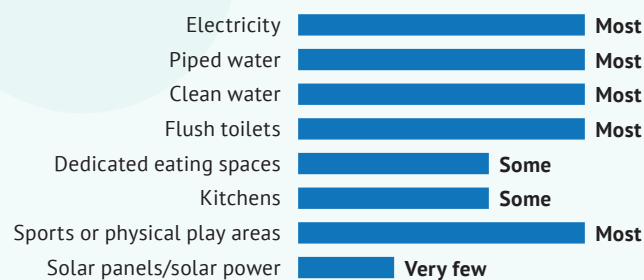
- On school grounds**
- To school age children

Additional Information

At least one nutritionist, employed by FAO, was engaged in school feeding in Belize during the 2022-2023 school year. White flour was fortified with iron and folic acid as a national policy, not exclusive for the school meals programs. Several approaches were used to address overweight/obesity such as health education, nutritional requirements for food baskets, food and nutrition education, and physical education.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **33**

- Percent paid: All
- Percent women: All

There was a focus on creating job opportunities for...

- Women**
- Youth
- Other Groups

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
- School gardens**

Complementary Education Programs

- Food and nutrition**
- Agriculture**
- Environment/climate/sustainability
- Hygiene**
- Health**
- Reproductive health
- HIV prevention
- Physical education**
- Mental health

Additional Information

All cooks from the National Healthy Start School Feeding Program received a stipend. In 2022-2023, cooks received special training in nutrition, portions/measurements, menu planning, and food safety/hygiene. An attempt was made to connect community farmers to school feeding programs with assistance from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise (MAFSE). Trainings were given, though no contracts were established between farmers and schools for direct purchase during the 2022-2023 school year.

Environmental Sustainability

Targeted climate-friendly foods

- Yes No **No response**

Steps taken to limit food waste

- Sealed food storage**
- Fumigation/pest control in storage area
 - Use of hermetic bags or larger hermetic storage system
 - Routine testing/monitoring of dry food storage
 - Use of nearly-expired food
 - Use of usable but “imperfect” commodities or produce
 - Campaign to reduce how much food students throw away

Steps taken to limit package waste

- Re-use of bags/containers
- Recycling
- Use of compostable materials
- Use of “bulk serve” containers
- Prohibiting specific types of packaging

Additional Information

The school feeding programs in Belize have increased local procurement and production in an effort to reduce the distance from production sites to the schools. Additionally, the National Healthy Start School Feeding Program used plastic bins to protect products that were purchased in bulk, such as rice and beans.

Emergencies

Experienced disruptions to school feeding due to emergencies

- Yes** No

Strategies to address the impact of emergencies

- Seek alternative food sources or suppliers
- Changes in numbers of students fed
- Negotiate better prices with existing suppliers
- Establish alternative supply routes or transportation methods
- Source different or alternative food
- Release of food reserves
- Increase funding or budget allocation for school feeding
- Collaborate with local producers or suppliers to reduce dependence on global supply chains
- Changes in delivery method
- Changes in feeding modality
- Changes in feeding frequency
- No particular strategy was used**

Additional Information

During the 2022-2023 school year, some schools were closed nationwide for a few days due to a category 1 hurricane in Belize. Regarding those schools in the National Healthy Start School Feeding Program, one school experienced minor structural damage. Schools were provided with protocols for school feeding in emergencies, including a protocol to prepare and maintain kitchens in the event of a power outage.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

1. School feeding has been revamped to follow the sustainable school feeding model.
2. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology has been prioritizing school feeding as a support system for the vulnerable and has pledged to expand it nationally.
3. School feeding coordination has shifted to become centrally managed by a dedicated school feeding coordinator.

Challenges

School feeding was suspended when schools were closed for over a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

National Healthy Start School Feeding Program

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education
- The national government managed the program (centralized decision-making)
- Individual schools procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

School Level	# of Students	% Girls	% Boys
Preschool	0	—	—
Primary School	665	—	—
Secondary School	0	—	—
TOTAL	665	—	—

Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Poultry and game meat
- Red meat
- Processed meat
- Fish and shellfish
- White roots and tubers
- Fruits
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Cruciferous vegetables
- Other vegetables
- Deep-fried foods
- Sweets
- Liquid oils
- Semi-solid and solid fats
- Salt

Elements of Home-Grown School Feeding

- Objective for small-scale farmers to benefit from access to a stable market
- Local food sourcing
- Small-scale farmers involved by selling directly (or through their farmer organization) to the program or the schools
- Additional support provided to small-scale farmers
- Country had a law/policy/standard related to small-scale farmers and school feeding programs
- Preferential treatment for small-scale farmers/small farmer organizations/small companies in tendering procedures
- Effort is made to reduce food miles

Objectives

- To meet educational goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To reduce hunger
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals
- To prevent or mitigate obesity
- To meet agricultural goals

Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals

Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week for in-school meals
- During the school year

Targeting

- Geographic

Food Sources

75% Purchased (domestic)

0% In-kind (domestic)

25% Purchased (foreign)

0% In-kind (foreign)

Additional Information

The National Healthy Start program was piloted in 2022 with six primary schools with the aim of providing meals to all enrolled children. It was gradually scaled up to include two more schools by May 2023. The pilot program started with fewer children to match the school's initial infrastructure and capacity, and as improvements were made over the year with infrastructure and cook's capacity, the number was scaled up. This program was initially managed by FAO and was handed over to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology in May 2023. Even though around 25% of the consumed products were imported, they were purchased locally and not imported exclusively for the program.

Education Upliftment Program

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology
- The national government managed the program (centralized decision-making)
- Individual schools procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

School Level	# of Students	% Girls	% Boys
Preschool	0	–	–
Primary School	0	–	–
Secondary School	900	–	–
TOTAL	900	–	–

Foods and Beverages

Food items not specified.

Elements of Home-Grown School Feeding

- Objective for small-scale farmers to benefit from access to a stable market
- Local food sourcing**
- Small-scale farmers involved by selling directly (or through their farmer organization) to the program or the schools
- Additional support provided to small-scale farmers
- Country had a law/policy/standard related to small-scale farmers and school feeding programs
- Preferential treatment for small-scale farmers/small farmer organizations/small companies in tendering procedures
- Effort is made to reduce food miles

Objectives

- To meet educational goals
- To provide a social safety net
- To reduce hunger
- To meet nutritional and/or health goals

Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals

Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week for in-school meals
- During the school year

Targeting

- Geographic: All schools were located in Belize City, Southside

Food Sources

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

Additional Information

The Education Upliftment Program, initiated in 2022, commenced with four high schools. During the 2022-2023 school year, no set menu was provided for schools to follow. Instead, each school procured its own supplies locally from markets and grocery stores, and no monitoring or data collection was done to determine the contents of the meals. Funds for meals were sent directly to the schools on a monthly basis by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology.

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs® collects data from government sources and is funded, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture. Contact info@gcnf.org for more information.

Citation: Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF). 2024. Global Survey of School Meal Programs Country Report, Belize.

<https://gcnf.org/country-reports/>