

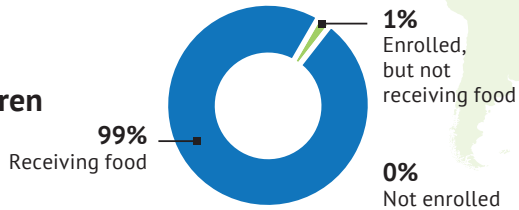


Finland

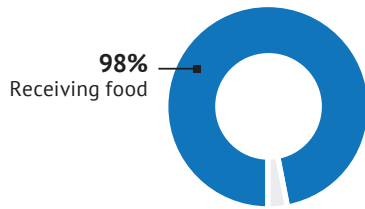


School Meal Coverage (2022-2023)

All Primary and Secondary School-age Children

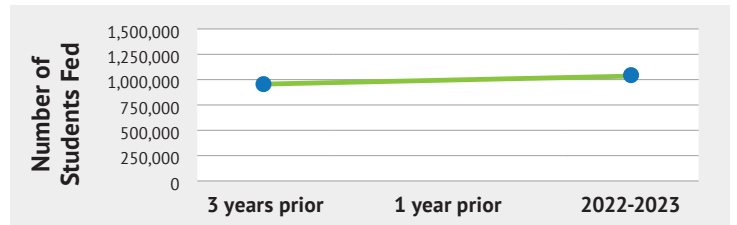


Only Enrolled Primary Students



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	212,344	202,179	60,510
Primary School	372,055	371,364	364,644
Secondary School	631,134	631,134	631,134
TOTAL	1,215,533	1,204,677	1,056,288

The numbers for secondary students include those in lower secondary, upper secondary, and vocational schools.



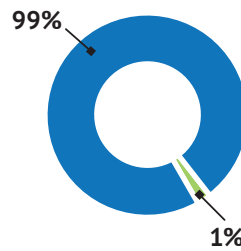
National Laws, Policies, and Standards

- 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 479,410,678**

- Government: 474,443,712
- International donors: n/a
- Private sector: n/a
- NGOs (domestic): n/a
- Other donors: 4,966,966*

* Includes funding from the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme

- 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

Soft drinks, juices, sweets and/or other products that contain a high level of added sugar, salt or saturated fat.

Food Sources

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

Special Notes: Some population and enrolment numbers from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) were used to complete this report.

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...

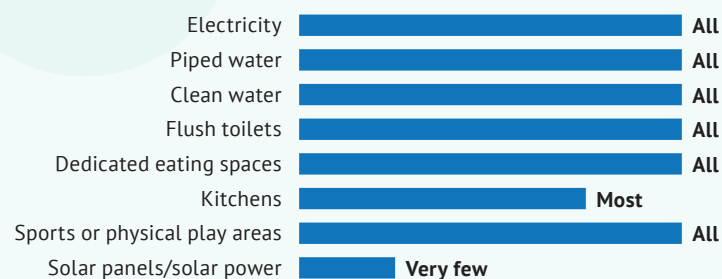
- On school grounds**
- To school age children**

Additional Information

The National Nutrition Council provided recommendations for the school food environment and nutrition content of school meals. Menu planning was based on serving soups, main dish sauces, casseroles, and stews and “unit foods”, in turn, as specified in the recommendations. In the selection of unit foods (e.g., fish fingers, meatballs, and spinach patties), attention was paid to the fat and salt content. Menus and dishes, as well as meal components, were varied to give the students an opportunity to try new raw ingredients and dishes. Finnish dishes and dishes typical of each local area, as well as seasonal dishes, were served. At the same time, changes in eating habits were also taken into consideration. Students were asked to participate regularly in the planning and implementation of school meals.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

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

- 100% paid
- Percent women: Unknown

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

In Finland, the school catering system is spread over 309 municipalities, and the municipalities decided if private companies were employed to assist with catering. School catering was mostly concentrated in large production kitchens, where the same employees prepared food for several different customer groups. The caterers were certified in nutrition, portions/measurements, menu planning, food safety/hygiene, and business/management. In practice, the responsibility for the school menu's fulfilment of the nutrition recommendations, and the diversity and balance of the menu, rested with the catering services. However, those in charge of the organising and procurement of school catering services were responsible for allocating sufficient resources for implementing high-quality meals and for recording the nutrition recommendations and criteria for nutrition quality in accordance with the minimum quality criteria in the competitive procurement of catering services and raw material purchasing. The service contract between the client and the provider must define the quality, content, and appropriateness of the menu.

Environmental Sustainability

Targeted climate-friendly foods

- Yes No

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

Most or all participating schools included environmental/ climate/sustainability education for daily life, as well as education in good manners. Students received home economics lessons on how to reuse food and avoid wastage. Some schools weighed the food waste and let the students see the results, and by local decision, some municipalities specifically included “climate-friendly” foods in the menus.

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

The School Meals (*Kouluruokailu*) program in Finland had a plan in place to mitigate the impact of emergencies, but the program was not affected by emergencies in the 2022-2023 school year.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

1. Food education research, methods and support has increased.
2. Sustainable development was an integral part of practical implementation.
3. There is awareness of the importance of school meals, and thus, its widespread appreciation has grown.

Challenges

1. Rising food prices and a generally weakened economic situation.
2. Lower student participation in school meals in the lower grades, even though the goal has been the opposite.
3. Students do not always eat the whole portion.

School Meals

(*Kouluruokailu*)

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Finnish National Agency for Education; and Municipalities
- The program was managed with both centralized and decentralized decision-making (Semi-decentralized).
- Caterers procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

School Level	# of Students	% Girls	% Boys
Preschool	60,510	–	–
Primary School	364,644	–	–
Secondary School	631,134	–	–
TOTAL	1,056,288	–	–

The numbers for secondary students include those in lower secondary, upper secondary, and vocational schools.

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

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 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

- Varies per week
- During the school year

Targeting

- Basic Education Grade levels 1-9

Food Sources

Yes - Purchased (domestic)

No - In-kind (domestic)

Yes - Purchased (foreign)

No - In-kind (foreign)

Additional Information

The goal for school food in Finland is to be appealing and healthy, served at an optimal time and enjoyed in a supervised and calm environment, which tempts one to eat and creates a joy of eating as well as learning. The provision of school meals was a shared responsibility, with structured and complementing roles: the National Authorities, ministries, and agencies cooperated with national and local organizations, associations, projects, and companies, as well as local schools and municipalities. Cooperation around the school meal system represented an “ecosystem” which promoted wellbeing and learning in sustainable way. The school community was an important actor in school catering. Teachers and other school personnel guided and supervised pupils during mealtimes; the goals and organization of school meals was discussed with parents in order to support pupils’ development; the principal and teaching staff worked in cooperation with catering staff; and some schools had a school food committee with representatives from the teaching staff, pupils, school health care, and the food service provider. The common mission of this ecosystem of actors was that every pupil eats well at school every day.

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, Finland.

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