

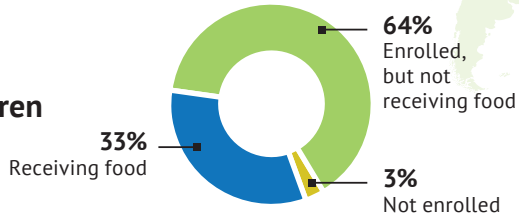


REPUBLIC OF THE  
**Gambia**

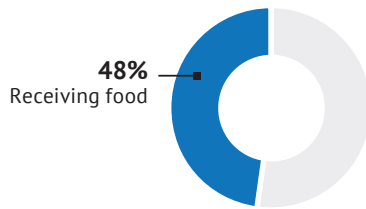


School Meal Coverage (2022–23)

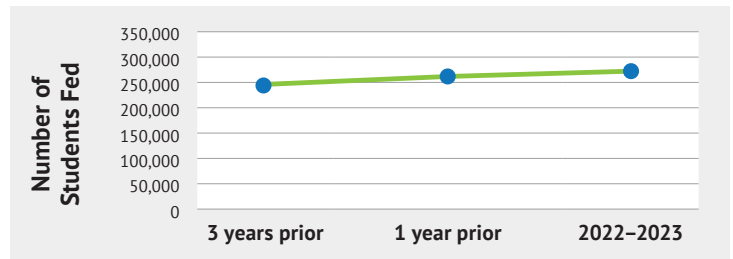
All Primary and Secondary School-age Children



Only Enrolled Primary Students



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	140,400	130,952	56,529
Primary School	424,477	414,477	200,132
Secondary School	210,000	201,787	11,853
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>774,877</b>	<b>747,216</b>	<b>268,514</b>



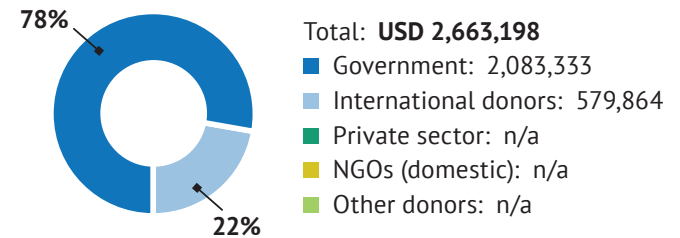
National Laws, Policies, and Standards

- 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



- Line item in the national budget for school feeding

School Foods and Beverages

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole grains</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refined/milled grains</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Blended grain-based products</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legumes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nuts and seeds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eggs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dairy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poultry and game meat</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red meat</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Processed meat</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fish and shellfish</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deep orange vegetables and tubers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> White roots and tubers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fruits</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dark green leafy vegetables</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cruciferous vegetables</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other vegetables</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deep-fried foods</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sweets</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liquid oils</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Semi-solid and solid fats</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Salt</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dairy milk</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt drink</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 100% fruit juice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other fruit drink</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tea</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other sugar-sweetened beverages</li> </ul> | <p><b>Prohibited food items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pork</li> </ul> <p><b>Food Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purchased (domestic)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purchased (foreign)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In-kind (domestic)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In-kind (foreign)</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|--|

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...

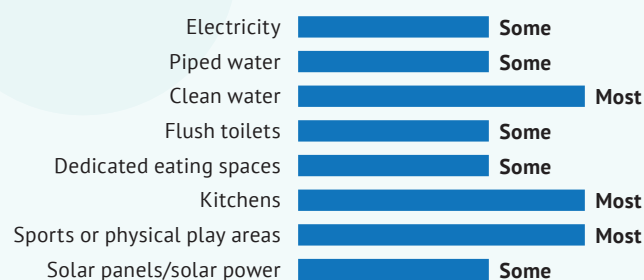
- On school grounds**
- To school age children**

### Additional Information

At least seven nutritionists, paid by the school feeding program implementing partner, are engaged in school feeding. Nutritional supplements or micronutrient powders containing iron, vitamin, A, iodine, and zinc were provided in the food and to the students (e.g., in the form of a pill or drops). Overweight/obesity is not considered a problem in The Gambia.

## Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

### Share of Schools with ...



### Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **3,100**

- At least 75–99% paid
- 75–99% women

### 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

During the 2022/23 school year, both small and medium/large-scale farmers were engaged in the program and received many types of support (including school feeding-specific training, agriculture subsidies, forward contracts, mobile or electronic payments, advice or tools to prevent post-harvest losses, and advice, seeds, or tools to promote production of specific crops or foods). Smallholder farmers, including youths, were supported with quality seeds before the rainy season. The private sector was involved in food trading, food processing, transport, and catering. Approximately 3,100 cooks—paid in cash and in-kind by the national government and an implementing partner—were employed in the program. Cooks received special training in nutrition, portions/measurements, menu planning, and food safety/hygiene.

## 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

The school kitchens are generally equipped with secured storage facilities, open and closed cooking areas, piped and on-site water, and charcoal or wood stoves. To reduce the use of firewood/charcoal as fuel, fuel efficient (energy efficient) stoves were used. Uneaten/unusable food was composted on school grounds, and produce from school gardens was consumed by students.

## 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

While The Gambia was affected by an economic/financial crisis during the school year 2022/23, no schools were closed and there were no interruptions to school feeding operations, though there was a slight increase in the cost of purchasing food. Alternative domestically produced foods were introduced in the program to replace imported staple foods.

## Successes and Challenges

### Successes

1. Improved attendance and retention in both lower basic and upper basic schools;
2. The attainment of gender parity in basic schools;
3. The safety net offered to beneficiaries;
4. A code of conduct for all partaking in school feeding helped ensure that the program was not affected by corruption/mismanagement.

### Challenges

1. Climate change affected farm production due to variable and unpredictable rainfall;
2. Reduced community- and local-level participation in school feeding;
3. Inter-sectoral commitment and participation in school feeding.

# Home Grown School Feeding Programme

## Management

- Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education - School Agriculture & Food Management Unit (SAFMU), with support from the World Food Program
- 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	56,529	53%	47%
Primary School	200,132	53%	47%
Secondary School	11,853	52%	48%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268,514</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>

## Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Legumes
- Red meat
- Fish and shellfish
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Liquid oils
- 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 meet agricultural goals

## Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals

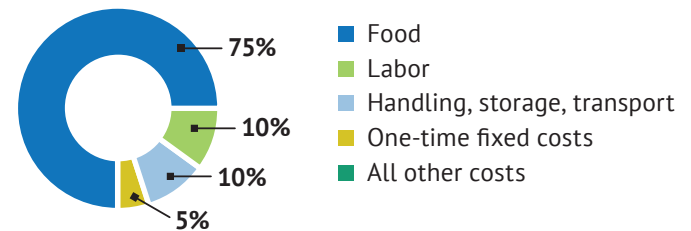
## Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week
- During the school year

## Targeting

- Early childhood development and public school grades 1-6 in the most vulnerable regions

## Expenses



## Food Sources

80% Purchased (domestic)      0% In-kind (domestic)  
20% Purchased (foreign)      0% In-kind (foreign)

## Additional Information

The National Steering Committee on Home Grown School Feeding Programme is the lead inter-sectoral coordination body responsible for school feeding activities in the country. Student families made voluntary in-kind contributions to the program; communities were engaged in sensitization and training on food management before the commencement of food provision in schools; and students' preferences were taken into account by the program through preparing foods that were common in particular regions.

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](mailto:info@gcnf.org) for more information.

**Citation:** Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF). 2024. Global Survey of School Meal Programs Country Report, The Gambia. <https://gcnf.org/country-reports/>