School Meal Coverage (2022–23)

All Primary and Secondary School-age Children

64% Enrolled, but not receiving food
33% Receiving food
3% Not enrolled

Only Enrolled Primary Students

48% Receiving food

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 2,663,198

- Government: 2,083,333
- International donors: 579,864
- Private sector: n/a
- NGOs (domestic): n/a
- Other donors: n/a

- 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
- Pork

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

Special Notes: None
**Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features**

**Share of Schools with ...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piped water</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean water</td>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush toilets</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated eating spaces</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchens</td>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports or physical play areas</td>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar panels/solar power</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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

**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

**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.

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.
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.

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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>56,529</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>200,132</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>11,853</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>268,514</strong></td>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
<td><strong>47%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foods and Beverages
- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Legumes
- Red meat
- Fish and shellish
- 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: 75%
- Labor: 10%
- Handling, storage, transport: 10%
- One-time fixed costs: 5%
- All other costs: 0%

Food Sources
- 80% Purchased (domestic)
- 20% Purchased (foreign)
- 0% In-kind (domestic)
- 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 for more information.