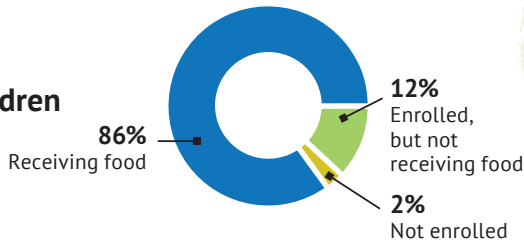


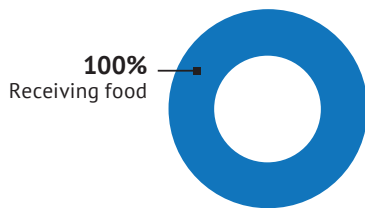


School Meal Coverage (2022)

All Primary and Secondary School-age Children

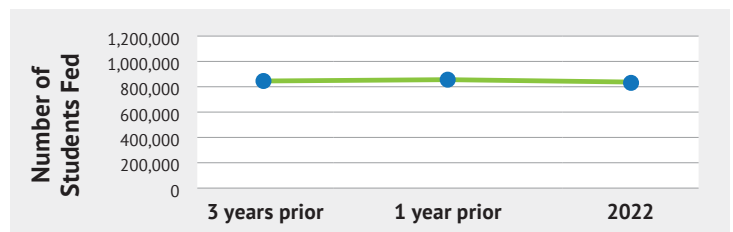


Only Enrolled Primary Students



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	170,135	135,552	17,994
Primary School	515,191	514,634	514,090
Secondary School	432,668	415,014	298,604*
TOTAL	1,117,994	1,065,200	830,688

* The number of secondary school-age children receiving food is inclusive of vocational/trade school students.



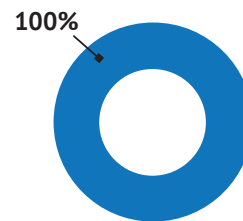
National Laws, Policies, and Standards

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

The country had ...

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

Budget



Total: **USD 176,574,128**

- Government: 176,574,128
- International donors: 0
- Private sector: 0
- NGOs (domestic): 0
- Other donors: 0

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

School Foods and Beverages

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grains | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fish and shellfish | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liquid oils |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refined/milled grains | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deep orange vegetables and tubers | <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-solid and solid fats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blended grain-based products | <input type="checkbox"/> White roots and tubers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Salt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legumes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fruits | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dairy milk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts and seeds | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dark green leafy vegetables | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yogurt drink |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eggs | <input type="checkbox"/> Cruciferous vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% fruit juice |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dairy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Other fruit drink |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poultry and game meat | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep-fried foods | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red meat | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweets | <input type="checkbox"/> Other sugar-sweetened beverages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Processed meat | | |

Prohibited food items

Highly processed foods, sausages, carbonated drinks, sugary drinks

Food Sources

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

Special Notes: Some 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...

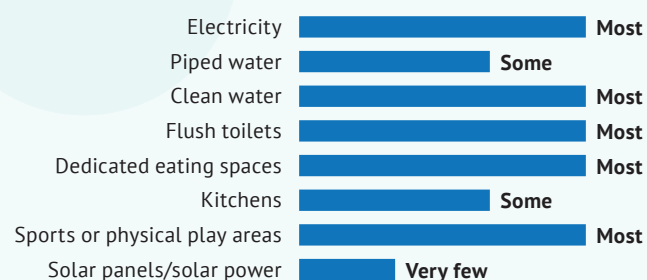
- On school grounds**
- To school age children

Additional Information

Four nutritionists, paid by the national government, were involved with the program during the 2022 school year. Some packaged or processed foods were available, though no beverages with non-nutritive or artificial sweeteners were served. Produce from school gardens was consumed by students.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **6,500**

- At least 100% 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

In Costa Rica, legislation on the provision of food for most educational centers was guided by the government's National Production Council. Educational centers not served by this entity carried out a public contracting process as established by regulations. The private sector was engaged in food catering and the provision of supplies (e.g., utensils, equipment), and parents and other community members were involved in the education and administrative boards overseeing financial resources for the program.

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

Additional efforts to limit food waste included the specification of detailed portions in the Menu Manuals and planning for food preparation in accordance with students’ attendance records and careful predictions of the food needed.

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 Food and Nutrition Program for Schoolchildren and Adolescents did not have a formalized emergency plan; however, the administration implemented mitigation measures to respond to the impact of emergencies during the 2022 school year. A natural disaster, economic/financial crisis, health epidemic/pandemic, and extreme food price inflation affected the program in this year, causing some schools to close and the temporary cessation of school feeding operations in some schools/regions (the duration of which depended on the type of event(s)). These emergencies led to the search for new modalities of care for the beneficiary population.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

1. Implementation of a menu based on nutritional requirements that vary according to age groups.
2. Meal times adjusted to the school’s opening hours.
3. Increase in the coverage of the program.

Challenges

1. The main challenge was to find the necessary resources to strengthen the program’s management in financial and technical terms, both at the central and local levels.
2. As the administration of economic resources was delegated to the local level, the extent of compliance with existing regulations is not known.

Food and Nutrition Program for Schoolchildren and Adolescents

(Programa de Alimentación y Nutrición del Escolar y el Adolescente)

Management

- Lead implementer(s): Ministry of Public Education, Directorate of Equity Programs, Department of Food and Nutrition
- 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	17,994	—	—
Primary School	514,090	—	—
Secondary School	298,604	—	—
TOTAL	830,688	—	—

* The number of secondary school-age children receiving food is inclusive of vocational/trade school students.

Foods and Beverages

- Refined/milled grains
- Legumes
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Poultry and game meat
- Red meat
- Fish and shellfish
- Deep orange vegetables and tubers
- Fruits
- Dark green leafy vegetables
- Liquid oils
- Salt
- Dairy milk
- Yogurt 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

Modalities of Providing Students With Food

- In-school meals
- In-school snacks

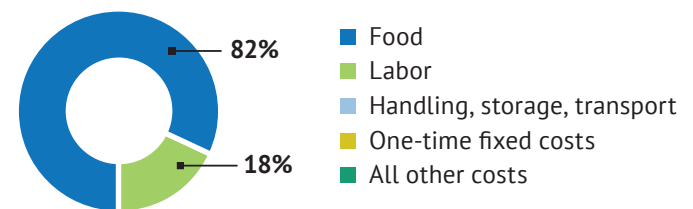
Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week
- Throughout the year

Targeting

- Targeted towards preschool and primary schools and public secondary educational centers, with eligibility criteria based on levels of income and vulnerability.

Expenses



Food Sources

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

Additional Information

Large-scale school feeding began in Costa Rica in 1974. During the 2022 school year, the Food and Nutrition Program for Schoolchildren and Adolescents operated in 4,569 public schools. The program worked through financial subsidies transferred to education or administrative boards of educational centers, which then implemented the food service according to the parameters established by the central government (Ministry of Public Education). Some educational centers offered food service during vacation periods.

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, Costa Rica.

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