

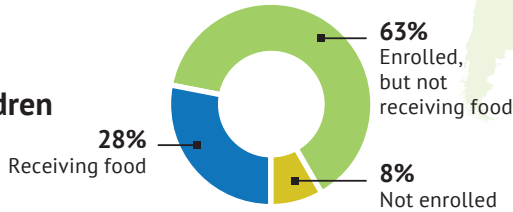
REPUBLIC OF

Trinidad and Tobago

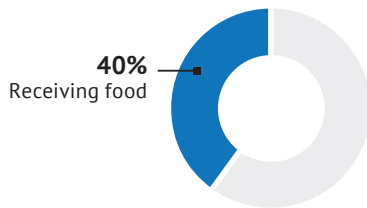


School Meal Coverage (2022-2023)

All Primary and Secondary School-age Children

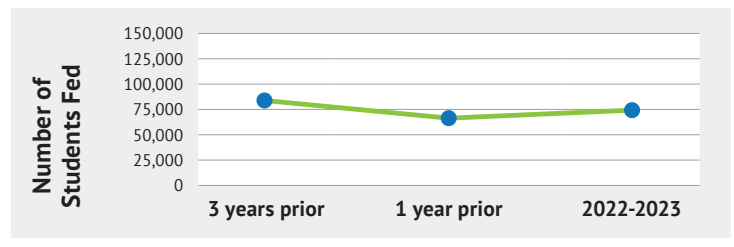


Only Enrolled Primary Students



School Level	Total	# Enrolled	# Receiving Food
Preschool	37,536	25,483	6,315
Primary School	142,310	129,688	52,249
Secondary School	96,545	89,236	15,723
TOTAL	276,391	244,407	74,287*

* The number of children fed is inclusive of some students in vocational/technical schools, as well as special education schools.



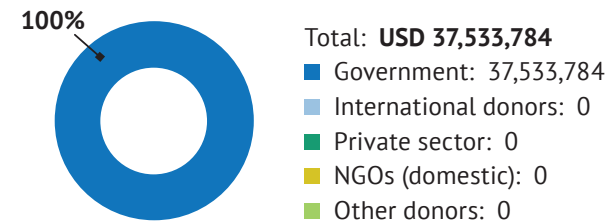
National Laws, Policies, and Standards

- 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



- 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

Beverages with added sugars

Food Sources

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

Special Notes: Population and school enrollment numbers from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) were used to complete this report. The information in this report reflects only the School Nutrition Programme in Trinidad, and does not capture school feeding activities in Tobago.

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...

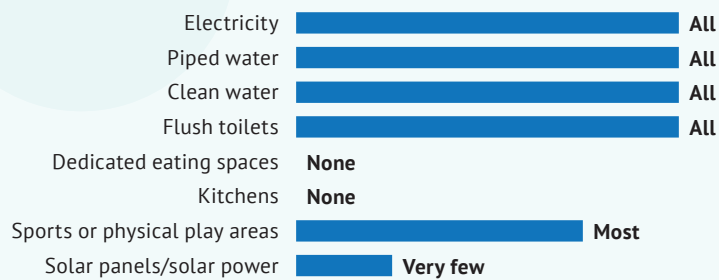
- On school grounds**
- To school age children

Additional Information

During the 2022-2023 school year, at least six nutritionists, funded by the national government, were actively involved in Trinidad's School Nutrition Program. The program provided the students with grains/cereals, dairy products, and salt fortified with iron, iodine, folic acid, thiamin, niacin, and/or vitamins A and D. To prevent overweight and obesity, the program implemented nutritional standards for food baskets and provided food and nutrition education.

Infrastructure, Employment, and Complementary Features

Share of Schools with ...



Employment

Total number of cooks/caterers: **214**

- 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

The program engaged farms of all sizes (both small-scale and medium/large-scale) who benefited from agricultural subsidies; post-harvest loss prevention tools and advice; support for the production of specific crops through seeds, tools, and guidance; school feeding-specific training; and other extension efforts. In turn, farmers provided local produce to caterers within their communities. The private sector was involved in food trading, food processing, transport, catering, selling/renting supplies to the program, and providing technical expertise. Field staff regularly visited schools to gather feedback on meal services, conduct sensory evaluations of new or modified menus, and continuously test and develop recipes 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

School meals were prepared off-site by private caterers in facilities that typically featured closed cooking areas, secure storage, electricity, refrigeration, and both gas and electric stoves. Additional efforts to minimize food waste included targeted meal distribution based on students’ socio-economic status, continuous monitoring of meal services, and nutrition education. To reduce the distance between food production and the school, caterers were assigned to schools located no more than 45 minutes from their facilities. Additionally, produce from school gardens was consumed by students and sold.

Emergencies

Experienced disruptions to school feeding due to emergencies

- Yes No **No response**

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 program faced challenges due to extreme food price inflation, though no schools were forced to close. Slight adjustments were made to manage the changes in food availability and costs, such as substituting vegetables in certain menus. In February 2022, the National Schools Dietary Services Limited (NSDSL) requested meal price increases from the Ministries of Education and Finance, leading to the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago approving a TT\$1.00 interim increase per meal as of September 2022.

Successes and Challenges

Successes

1. An efficient meal distribution system that reaches even remote areas of Trinidad;
2. Strict food safety practices are followed by partnering with organizations for independent random microbial testing of suppliers and kitchens, and by conducting daily inspections to ensure production standards are met;
3. The NSDSL employs skilled professionals, including chefs, agronomists, health and safety experts, dietitians, and nutritionists, to deliver high-quality school meal services.

Challenges

1. The COVID-19 pandemic led to most students learning away from schools, affecting NSDSL daily operations;
2. The pandemic also resulted in higher food costs.

School Nutrition Programme (Trinidad)

Management

- Lead implementer(s): The National Schools Dietary Services Limited (NSDSL)
- The national government managed the program (Centralized decision-making).
- Caterers procured the food

How Many Students Received Food

School Level	# of Students	% Girls	% Boys
Preschool	6,315	51%	49%
Primary School	51,594	51%	49%
Secondary School	15,723	51%	49%
TOTAL	74,287*	51%	49%

* The number of children fed is inclusive of some students in vocational/technical schools, as well as special education schools.

Foods and Beverages

- Whole grains
- Refined/milled grains
- Legumes
- 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
- 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

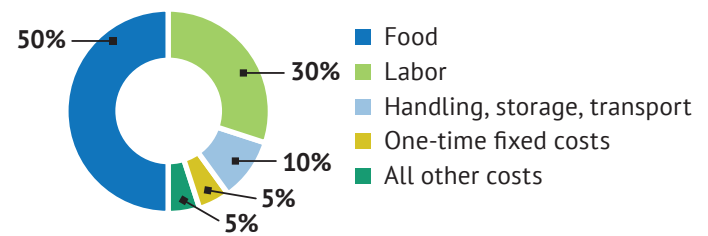
Frequency and Duration

- 5 times per week
- During the school year

Targeting

- Targeted toward students who attended public schools and came from low-income households, or whose parents or guardians received public grant assistance.

Expenses



Food Sources

50% Purchased (domestic)
50% Purchased (foreign)

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

Additional Information

The program started in 1950, and the National Schools Dietary Services Evaluation Committee (NSDSEC) served as its inter-sectoral coordination body.

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, Trinidad and Tobago. <https://gcnf.org/country-reports/>