





School Meal Programs Around the World

Based on the results of the 2024 Global Survey of School Meal Programs ©

The **Global Survey of School Meal Programs ©** aims to strengthen the work of the global school meal network by developing a comprehensive description of all the core aspects of large-scale school meal programs around the world.

The **Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF)** is committed to helping governments build national programs that provide nutritious, locally-sourced meals for all children.

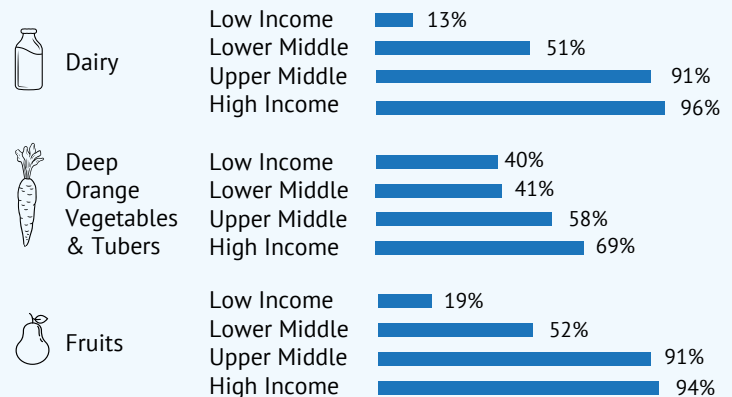
School Meals at a Glance

-  **142** country governments participated in the Global Survey of School Meal Programs ©.
-  **407.8*** million children were fed by school meals.
-  **\$67.2*** billion USD was allocated to school meal programs.
-  **76%** of countries had a national school feeding policy.

25% of all school-age children and 39% of enrolled primary school students received school food.

Food Basket Diversity

On average, school meal programs served foods from **6.8 healthy food categories**. Strong patterns emerge when provisions of food categories are analyzed across country income level.



% = Share of programs serving each food category

Home-Grown School Feeding Indicators

1. Purchase domestically
2. Shorten transport distance
3. Objective to benefit small-scale farmers
4. Small-scale farmers sell to schools/program
5. Support provided to small-scale farmers
6. Preferential contracting for small-scale farms/businesses
7. Law/policy supporting small-scale farmers linked to school feeding programs

47% of programs exhibited at least four home-grown school feeding indicators.

The number of home-grown school feeding indicators is **positively correlated** with food basket diversity.

Environment and Climate

School meal programs **increasingly prioritized sustainability**.

- 81%** of programs took steps to **limit food waste**.
- 67%** of programs took steps to **limit package waste**.
- 79%** of programs took steps to **reduce the distance traveled** by food from the site of production to consumption.

- In **Finland**, schools incorporated environmental, climate, and sustainability education into daily activities.
- In **The Bahamas**, compostable materials were used for food packaging, while certain types of packaging, such as plastics and non-recyclables, were prohibited to minimize waste.
- In **Rwanda**, uneaten food was composted on-site to reduce food waste.

*Based on data from 169 countries, with values imputed for countries that didn't participate in the 2024 survey. All other information is based on the 142 countries that participated. Data collected through the 2024 Global Survey of School Meal Programs© on the school year beginning in 2022.

For more information, visit www.gcnf.org