

# School Meal Programs & the Environment

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.

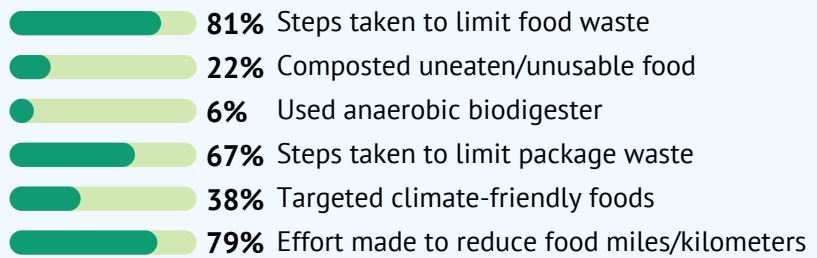
The **Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF)** is committed to helping governments build national programs that provide nutritious, locally-sourced meals for all children.

Sustainability is **increasingly prioritized** in school meal programs, with countries implementing a variety of initiatives to both limit their environmental vulnerability and reduce their environmental impact.

## Indicators of Environmental Sustainability in School Meal Programs

School meals are a **key lever of food systems transformation**.

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs © captured various **indicators of environmental sustainability** in school meal programs:



*%= Share of programs*

## Practices to Limit Food or Package Waste

Common Strategies

- 73%** Sealed food storage
- 72%** Routine testing/monitoring of dry food storage
- 57%** Re-use of bags/containers
- 52%** Recycling

*%= Share of programs that took steps to limit food or package waste*

Examples

- **South Africa** repackaged unused dry foods for take-home rations.
- In **The Bahamas**, compostable materials were used for food packaging, while certain types of packaging were prohibited.

## Reducing Firewood & Charcoal Use

**58%** of programs **relied on** firewood/charcoal stoves for food preparation.

**78.5%** of these programs **took some steps to reduce** the use of firewood/charcoal stoves.

## Environmental Practices

**48%** of programs provided complementary environmental/climate **education**.

**18%** of countries had a **national law/policy** related to school feeding and the environment.

## School Meal Programs as Sustainability Educators

School meal programs can serve as platforms to pass along **environmental values** and **teach children about sustainability**.

- In **Morocco**, produce from school gardens was used to anchor an environmental education program.
- In **Bulgaria** and the **Slovak Republic**, educational visits to farms and processors introduced children to the agricultural processes that bring food to their plates.