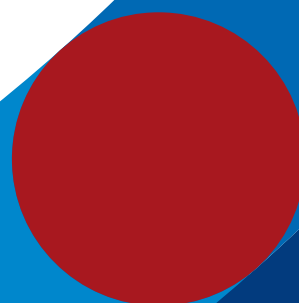


EDSC/11/3.2.a

PROPORTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN RECEIVING SCHOOL MEALS (COVERAGE)



Methodological note





Methodological note

SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Target 4.a By 2030, ensure that all children have access to a safe, healthy, nutritious meal in school.

Indicator 4.a.4 Proportion of primary school children receiving school meals (coverage)

1. Data sources

1.1. *Numerator: number of children receiving school feeding in primary schools in a given year*

- Official and publicly available reports from governments regarding their own school feeding programmes.
- The Global Child Nutrition Foundation's (GCNF) Global Survey of School Meal Programmes.

The GCNF conceived and launched the Global Survey of School Meal Programs in 2018. The Global Survey was designed with expertise contributed by technical experts from academia, UN agencies, and governments, and covers topics including nutrition standards and practices, procurement, linkages to farmers, private sector engagement, job creation, and general, demographic, and management aspects of school meal programs. The Global Survey is conducted on a regular basis and is completed by government-appointed Focal Points. This process is supported by partners in-country including WFP. The first two rounds of the Global Survey captured information from 155 countries.

Official data sources from governments will be prioritized, complemented by data from the Global Child Nutrition Foundation's (GCNF) Global Survey of School Meal Programs.

1.2. *Denominator: total number of children enrolled in primary schools in the same year*

Primary school enrollment data for a particular country and year will be sourced from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. When unavailable, the indicator cannot be calculated, as no substitute data sources will be utilized.

2. Methodology for data collection

2.1. *Numerator: number of children receiving school feeding in primary schools in a given year*

- Official Sources: Desk review of official data sources, including government reports, publications, and national databases from national statistics institutes or ministries of education. The desk review will focus on obtaining the most up-to-date and accurate information available.
- The GCNF Global Survey of School Meal Programs collects data every 2-3 years. The survey requests data from the most recent school year that has ended at the time of the survey or from a specific reference school year. For instance, the 2021 survey (conducted from July 2021 to March 2022) gathered data from the school year that began in 2020. This was the 2020/2021 school year for most countries, while others reported data for the school year that occurred entirely in the 2020 calendar year. Survey data becomes available approximately six months after collection. For example, the 2024 survey, which gathered data from the 2022/2023 school year, will be available in the first quarter of 2025.

The GCNF asks each government to designate a "Focal Point" - an individual knowledgeable about school feeding activities who can gather necessary information and obtain government clearance for results to be published.

The survey is made available in three formats—as a PDF form, a Word form, and an online survey. In PDF and Word format, the survey is available in the seven languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish). Upon submission, surveys are reviewed to ensure the clarity of responses to the greatest extent possible. There is often dialogue with the focal point to confirm or clarify responses.

The Global Survey of School Meal Programs targets the 193 United Nations member countries, plus Palestine, which holds observer status. Participation in the survey has demonstrated steady growth, with the 2021 edition receiving submissions from 140 countries, marking a significant increase from the 2019 edition, which included responses from 105 countries. With each successive edition, the survey has captured a broader range of countries, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the data.

2.2. *Denominator: total number of children enrolled in primary schools in the same year*

The total number of children enrolled in primary schools for each country will be gathered from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). As the globally recognized authority on education statistics, UIS data is accepted as inherently reliable and will be exempt from additional quality assurance processes. Consequently, the data will be used as published, without additional treatment or validation, acknowledging UIS's rigorous internal methodologies and quality control processes.

3. Quality Assurance

3.1. *Numerator: number of children receiving school feeding in primary schools in a given year*

- Official Sources from National Governments: Data sourced from official government publications, national statistics institutes, and ministries of education are considered the most reliable source for national school meals programs. However, the data could be incomplete and not include school meals provided through partners.
- Global Survey of School Meal Programs: To ensure data integrity, GCNF employs a multi-step validation process for the Global Survey of School Meal Programs that involve: Internal consistency checks; outlier detection; historical comparison; triangulation with secondary sources; government validation; country report verification by government focal point.
- WFP quality assurance: WFP will verify data starting with year 2013 when school meals coverage was first published in the State of School Feeding Worldwide. WFP will ensure that the most reliable source is used for every data entry. Technical focal

points at WFP headquarters will check data quality based on a criteria developed in collaboration with the Data and Monitoring Initiative (DMI) of the School Meals Coalition. For future reporting, WFP through the DMI will work with national governments to improve the standards and quality of reported data.

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3.2. *Denominator: total number of children enrolled in primary schools in the same year*

The total number of children enrolled in primary schools for each country will be gathered from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). As the internationally recognized authority on education statistics, UIS data is considered definitive and reliable. Consequently, the data will be used as published, without additional treatment or validation, acknowledging UIS's rigorous internal methodologies and quality control processes.


4. Limitations

4.1. *Numerator: number of children receiving school feeding in primary schools in a given year*

Data on children receiving school meals sourced from official reports and the Global Survey of School Meal Programs are self-reported from national governments. Although efforts are made to validate the information, verifying the accuracy of all submissions is not always possible. Additionally, the Global Survey faces limitations due to data incompleteness, as some countries may provide incomplete or aggregated data.

4.2. *Denominator: total number of children enrolled in primary schools in the same year*

Data obtained from UNESCO for the total number of children enrolled in primary schools are subject to limitations inherent in UNESCO's data collection and reporting processes.



Proportion of primary school children
receiving school meals (coverage)

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