



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Home-Grown School Feeding

School meals programmes are globally recognized as safety nets for children, offering substantial benefits across various sectors including education, health, social welfare, agriculture and local economies. Currently, nearly every country in the world implements some form of school feeding programme, often integrated with broader health and nutrition initiatives. WFP plays multiple roles based on countries' needs and capacities, including providing international food assistance, supporting national school feeding programmes with home-grown school feeding (HGSF) pilot initiatives, and strengthening existing HGSF initiatives. Over the past decade, WFP's support for HGSF has expanded significantly, with the number of initiatives increasing from none in 2011 to 59 by 2023.

Home-Grown School Feeding is defined as “a school feeding model that is designed to provide children in schools with safe, diverse and nutritious food, sourced locally from smallholders”¹. It is at the nexus between nutrition, agriculture and social protection, and presents an opportunity to change food systems. It supports smallholder farmers and agriculture by creating a structured demand for locally produced food; and integrating complementary interventions to enable smallholder farmers to participate in school feeding markets.

Conducted by the WFP Office of Evaluation

9 KEY FINDINGS

1 HGSF interventions have expanded globally, reflecting increasing recognition and adoption by governments. Most WFP-supported interventions are small-scale pilot initiatives employing decentralized operating models. Different operational models are employed to link school feeding programmes with local agricultural production, with the choice of model usually depending on the programme's scale and the progress towards government handover.

2 HGSF programmes have demonstrated positive results in strengthening local food systems and enhancing farmer-to-school linkages, leading to increased sales for local farmers. However, the inconsistent integration of support to agricultural practices and value-chain development for smallholder farmers and the lack of a systematic food systems strategy are constraining gaps and call for areas needing further attention to fully realize the benefits of HGSF initiatives.

3 HGSF programmes have shown positive results for increased income opportunities for participating farmers and job creation within local economies. Limited evidence is available on positive immediate and intermediate outcomes, particularly the increased market participation of smallholder farmers with diversified products, increased income through access to new market channels, increased local agricultural production of healthy and nutritious food, and increased access to credit and productive inputs.

¹ FAO & WFP. 2018. *Home-Grown School Feeding. Resource Framework. Synopsis.* Rome.

4 HGSF programmes have supported the creation of cooperatives that help smallholders connect with new markets.

However, these markets mainly benefit aggregators, while individual smallholder farmers face challenges due to procurement complexities, financial constraints and their ability to benefit from economies of scale. More targeted efforts and evidence are needed to identify the scale at which smallholders can meet demand standards and benefit profitably without major risk of income loss.

5 HGSF programmes have shown to enhance women's empowerment and participation in farmers' organizations and decision-making processes, but more targeted efforts are required to achieve gender-transformative outcomes and improve women's access to broader economic opportunities and resources, like access to credit.

6 HGSF programmes increase dietary diversity, can enhance satisfaction among students by incorporating local produce, and can serve as platforms to mainstream nutrition-sensitive interventions. However, the introduction of fresh produce requires additional infrastructure for storage and food safety. It also presents challenges in maintaining nutritional standards of school meals and ensuring local food fortification capabilities. Generally, school gardens are not significant in meeting annual nutritional needs either, although they are valued for the dietary variety they provide to complement the school meals.

7 Successful implementation and sustainability of HGSF programmes are heavily reliant on robust intersectoral coordination, stable funding and strong political commitment. Despite progress and positive results recorded for WFP in creating conducive conditions for national HGSF programmes, significant challenges remain in integrating various sectors and ensuring long-term financial sustainability, particularly in contexts with low fiscal capacity.

8 The long-term sustainability of HGSF programmes often depends on community and household ownership and support, with evidence showing significant parental contributions of resources and labour. However, these contributions tend to overburden women, reinforcing gender norms and limiting their economic opportunities. Challenges remain to ensure a balance between ownership and appropriateness to local capacities and socio-economic conditions of households.

9 HGSF programmes require strengthened capacities and coordinated efforts at national and local levels, particularly in procurement, storage and food safety. Despite efforts in institutional capacity building, standard setting, and infrastructure improvement, the decentralized operating model faces challenges in maintaining timely budget disbursement, managing complex procurement processes and ensuring consistent standards and capacity building.

KEY INSIGHTS TO ENHANCE FUTURE WFP HGSF PROGRAMMES



Design and implementation

HGSF programmes often operate as small-scale pilots with decentralized models. However, their successful implementation and scaling up face several challenges. These include the need for intersectoral coordination, enhanced institutional readiness, stable funding and strengthened local capacities in procurement and food safety. Overcoming these challenges is essential for achieving operational feasibility and sustainable scaling up to a national level.



Community engagement

HGSF programmes often emphasize community engagement and local decision-making, including contributions from parents and community members. The sustainability of HGSF programmes hinges on community and household support and involvement, requiring strategies to manage contributions equitably to ensure alignment with local capacities and socio-economic conditions, and avoid overburdening specific groups.



Local food systems and value-chain development

HGSF programmes show potential in strengthening local food systems, enhancing farmer-to-school linkages, creating income opportunities, increased dietary diversity of students and becoming platforms to mainstream nutrition-sensitive interventions. Strengthening value-chain development and implementing systematic food systems strategies are critical to maximizing economic benefits for smallholder farmers and sustainable livelihoods



Gender dynamics and empowerment

HGSF programmes have the potential to empower women and enhance their participation, but attention should be paid to avoid reinforcing gender norms. Targeted gender-sensitive approaches are necessary to mitigate the disproportionate burden on women and achieve gender-transformative impacts that enhance women's economic opportunities

EVIDENCE GAPS IDENTIFIED WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS



Design and implementation

There is a significant gap in robust comparative evidence across various HGSF procurement models and types of commodities, which is crucial for optimizing these programmes and ensuring their sustainability on a broader scale.



Economic impact and value-chain benefits

More evidence is needed to quantify the economic benefits of HGSF programmes across different actors, the diversification of agricultural production and explore the entire value chain to maximize impacts on local productivity and sustainable livelihoods. Evaluative evidence on the environmental impacts of HGSF programmes remains sparse.



Nutritional and health outcomes

Gaps persist in understanding HGSF programmes' impacts and spillover effects on household eating habits, nutritious food demand, local fortification and sustained nutrition and improved health and nutrition outcomes.



Gender and inclusion

More evidence is required to develop equitable, gender-sensitive community engagement strategies that promote sustainable involvement and ownership without overburdening specific groups. This is essential to ensure that programme designs are appropriate for local capacities and socio-economic conditions in poor areas

BREADTH OF EVIDENCE

This summary brings together evidence from 49 WFP-commissioned independent evaluations, which cover the period 2018-2023 and were rated 'satisfactory' or above by WFP's external post-hoc quality assessment (PHQA). It takes stock of available evidence on WFP's good practices and challenges in implementing HGSF programmes. It offers lessons on WFP's home-grown school feeding programming to inform ongoing and future interventions.

The summary has global coverage, covering WFP interventions in 45 countries. Of these, 33 evaluations were decentralised evaluations of activities, 12 Country Strategic Plan evaluations, 3 summary of evaluative evidence and one strategic evaluation. Evidence was systematically extracted from the evaluations using an analytical framework reflecting key areas of interest identified at framing stage. Evidence was analysed and clustered around the main focus areas with key patterns and findings identified.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.



1. [Strategic evaluation of the contribution of school feeding activities to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals \(2021\)](#)
2. [Ethiopia CSPE \(2020-2025\)](#)
3. [Madagascar CSPE \(2019-2023\)](#)
4. [Nepal CSPE \(2019-2023\)](#)
5. [Haiti CSPE \(2018-2022\)](#)
6. [Benin CSPE \(2019-2023\)](#)
7. [Tajikistan CSPE \(2019-2024\)](#)
8. [Bhutan CSPE \(2019-2023\)](#)
9. [South Sudan Interim CSPE \(2018-2022\)](#)
10. [Ecuador CSPE \(2017-2021\)](#)
11. [Central African Republic CSPE \(2018-2022\)](#)
12. [Mozambique CSPE \(2017-2021\)](#)
13. [Democratic Republic of Congo Interim CSP \(2018-2020\)](#)
14. [Cambodia Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2019-2023\)](#)
15. [Republic of Congo Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2018-2022\)](#)
16. [Kenya Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2016-2022\)](#)
17. [Laos Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2017-2022\)](#)
18. [Haiti Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2020-2023\)](#)
19. [Cambodia Mid-Term Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement \(2019-2023\)](#)
20. [Cambodia Mid-term Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2019-2023\)](#)
21. [Cambodia Mid-term Evaluation of the KOICA Home Grown School Feeding programme \(2020-2024\)](#)
22. [Cambodia Baseline of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2022-2027\)](#)
23. [Benin Joint Decentralized Evaluation of the National School Feeding Programme \(2017-2021\)](#)
24. [Nepal Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2017-2022\)](#)
25. [RBN Regional thematic Evaluation of Supply Chain outcomes in the Food System in Eastern Africa \(2016-2021\)](#)
26. [Bhutan Decentralized Evaluation of WFP's support to smallholder farmers and expanded portfolio across the agriculture value chain \(2022\)](#)
27. [Côte d'Ivoire Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2015-2021\)](#)
28. [RBJ Regional Thematic Evaluation of WFP Contribution to Market Development and Food Systems in Southern Africa \(2021\)](#)
29. [Republic of Congo Mid-term Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2018-2022\)](#)
30. [Honduras Decentralized Evaluation of Decentralized model of the National School Feeding Programme \(2016-2021\)](#)
31. [Guinea-Bissau Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2016-2019\)](#)
32. [Benin Joint Mid-term Decentralized Evaluation of the Integrated National School Feeding Programme \(2017-2019\)](#)
33. [Haiti Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2016-2019\)](#)
34. [Burkina Faso Decentralized Evaluation of the Milk Project within WFP's School Feeding Programme \(2017-2019\)](#)
35. [Kenya Endline Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement \(2017-2020\)](#)
36. [Cambodia Endline Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2017-2019\)](#)
37. [Togo Decentralized Evaluation of Capacity Strengthening in School Feeding \(2019\)](#)
38. [Bolivia Decentralized Evaluation of the Country Programme \(2013 - 2017\)](#)
39. [Namibia Decentralized Evaluation of the National School Feeding Programme \(2012-2018\)](#)
40. [Rwanda Mid-term Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2016-2020\)](#)
41. [Eswatini Decentralized Evaluation of the National School Feeding Programme \(2010-2018\)](#)
42. [Tunisia Decentralized Evaluation of WFP's capacity strengthening activities to develop the School Meals Programme \(2016-2018\)](#)
43. [Burundi Decentralized Evaluation of Integrated School Feeding programmes \(2019\)](#)
44. [Nicaragua Decentralized Evaluation of the Country Programme \(2019\)](#)
45. [Kenya Mid-term Evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme \(2016-2020\)](#)
46. [Lesotho Decentralized Evaluation of the National School Feeding Programme \(2007-2017\)](#)
47. [Malawi Summary of Evaluative Evidence 2011-2018 \(2023\)](#)
48. [Zambia Summary of Evaluative Evidence 2011-2018 \(2022\)](#)
49. [RBD Summary of Evaluative Evidence on School Feeding in West and Central Africa \(2022\)](#)


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