



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



FAO elearning  
ACADEMY

FAO elearning  
ACADEMY  
elearning.fao.org

WFP  
World Food  
Programme

Webinar IX  
Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF)

Wednesday 21 October 2020  
15:00 - 16:30 CEST (Rome time)

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

agreenium  
l'institut agronomique,  
vétérinaire & forestier  
de France

UNITED NATIONS  
ESCAP  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

© Flickr / Feed My Starving Children (FMSC)

## Home-Grown School Feeding

21 October 2020

Recording Link: <https://youtu.be/a2hGPiHzfwc>

## Questions and Answers

For more information about the international technical webinars series, please visit the [FAO elearning Academy website](https://www.elearning.fao.org)

### DISCLAIMER

*This document is a compilation of questions relevant to the topics covered during the International Technical Webinar, raised by the participants, and answers provided by the experts from FAO or partner institutions during the event. The answers provided in the Q&A document only reflect the personal views of the experts and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever, endorsement, nor recommendation on the part of FAO or the partner institutions involved in the webinars. FAO reserves the right to alter, limit or discontinue any part of this service at its discretion. Under no circumstances shall FAO be liable nor held responsible for any loss, damage, liability or expense suffered that is claimed to result from the use of information posted on this site, including without limitation, any fault, error, omission, interruption or delay.*

**1) COVID-19 led to closure of schools in most countries. What programs have been initiated in order to reach the targeted school children with nutritious food whilst they are at home? I am really interested in cases from Africa.**

WFP in Chad distributed food directly to pupils/families observing COVID 19 regulations. Of course, the education part could not be solved in this way.

**GCNF response:** Some examples how programs have readjusted to provide school children with food when schools are closed due to the pandemic can be found on the GCNF website: <https://gcnf.org/covid/>

In addition, there will be discussion of this topic by multiple organizations and countries during the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Global Child Nutrition Forum that begins 26 October. For registration and more information: <https://www.gcnf2020.org/>

**WFP response:** WFP has been monitoring alternative mechanisms put in place by governments and partners throughout the crisis. More than 70 countries have adapted their school feeding programmes to continue supporting children during school closures. Nearly 50 countries are providing take-home rations to children and their families in various forms, including through daily meal delivery and pre-packaged monthly rations. Twenty-two countries have opted to replace the meals with vouchers or cash that families can use to buy food or other essential items. Some 6.9 million learners in 45 low income countries have been reached since the onset of the crisis with take-home rations by governments with the support of WFP. As of last week, 43 countries where WFP implements school feeding, reopened schools, including 17 partially. WFP resumed its onsite meals in two thirds of them and is continuing the distribution of take-home rations in the rest to mitigate the risk of contamination during the lunch break. For all distributions, WFP followed national protocols for COVID-19 prevention. In 11 countries, schools remain closed and in all but one, schoolchildren receive take-home rations, contributing to their daily food and nutrition requirements. You can read more here: [impact of Covid-19 on School Feeding programmes dashboard](#)

**FAO response:** FAO has been also monitoring and providing guidance and support to countries to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 on food and agriculture. Together with WFP and UNICEF we have prepared a guidance note aimed to provide government decision makers, school administrators/staff and partners with preliminary guidance on how to support, transform or adapt school feeding (in the short term) to help safeguard schoolchildren's food security and nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific recommendations are provided according to the various target groups involved in school feeding, including the school children, their families, as well as the local farmers and the community. You can read more here: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8434en/CA8434EN.pdf> and at the FAO webpage dedicated to COVID.



## 2) Does the programme usually involve a gender-based approach? We do know that gender issues are critical when dealing with nutrition?

**GCNF Response:** According to GCNF's 2019 Global Survey of School Meal Programs©, the gender story is a complicated one in school feeding programs—including home-grown school feeding programs. Interestingly, low income and lower middle income countries—especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia—are doing better at collecting and reporting gender-disaggregated numbers of students receiving food (at 64% and 68% respectively), than upper middle income (31%) and high income countries (16%). Information on gender also is not captured uniformly across school levels. Thus, 56-57% of programs that provide food for preschool or primary children reported separate numbers for male and female students, while only 38% did so for those serving secondary school students. Among those programs that did report gender-specific numbers, girls comprise 49% of the students receiving food.

The survey also showed that most cooks are women, and that most receive training through the program. However, that about one third of programs said that no cooks, or only very few cooks are paid).

Two-thirds of countries responding to the survey questions said that they have a focus on creating jobs or leadership opportunities for women, and many good examples were given. The survey captured some data regarding home-grown aspects of the school feeding programs, but did not capture the number or gender of farmers involved.

Note: The initial analysis of the survey data has just been completed; a full report of responses from the 85 countries with large-scale school feeding programs that provided data will be available early next year. A second survey round will be conducted beginning in mid-2021, and should demonstrate the impact of the pandemic after one full school year.

**WFP response:** In its targeting, WFP assesses four key factors: Vulnerability of the geographic location; Food insecurity indicators; Gender parity and Education indicators.

In many cases, we find that girls' access to education lags far behind that of boys, mainly due to cultural and traditional barriers, and so promotion of girls' education is a core element of the school feeding programmes. Factors affecting access to education include early marriage, which accounts for higher drop-out rates in many lower income countries, and early pregnancy, which further reduces years in school and is exacerbated in armed conflict and displacement settings. In some contexts, as girls grow older they might not drop out completely but their relationship to school and their attendance becomes more fluid and seasonal. However, there are circumstances where boys may be lagging behind.

Most cooks are women and so promotional activities that target sensitization on gender equality, women's role in decision making are integrated. Indicators on women's participation in decision making are at the core of the programmes.



### 3) How to overcome heavy procurement processes that are not really designed for SHF?

**GCNF response:** Tailoring procurement and payment processes to allow smallholder farmer participation is possible, and there is a growing body of experience and evidence that can help stakeholders in a given context to determine what processes might work for them. The World Food Program has well documented experience through its Purchase for Progress Program, with “forward contracts” for example, as well as other options. That might be a good place to start.

In addition to procurement processes, one thing that is often overlooked when trying to involve smallholders is that they have little or no cash reserves, so assistance with inputs and very fast payment upon delivery are two options that can help them to participate. Once they have experience, they can be expected to set up enough in reserve that they no longer need as much assistance with inputs, but we still urge very fast payment by the buyer.

**WFP response:** The purpose of using local procurement for Home Grown School Feeding (HGFS) programmes is to create a deliberate and predictable market for smallholder farmers. For this to work, flexible mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that smallholder farmers (SHFs) can access the School Feeding market. As mentioned above, this includes simplifying procurement processes, building the capacities of SHFs so they can take advantage of the market opportunities, creating linkages for them with finance institutions, etc. This is why coordination and collaboration are absolutely critical in HGFS programmes.

**FAO response:** The public purchase of food for home-grown school feeding programmes, just like any type of public purchase, are subjected to the existing public procurement legislation. These procurement rules and related practices may not always be appropriated to support the purchase of food from smallholder farmers and their organizations, and sometimes, can even represent a barrier for the implementation of HGFS programmes. Challenges imposed by public procurement rules for the proper implementation of HGFS generally include: i. overly complex and burdensome tender procedures; ii. over-emphasis on price as the awarding criterion (to the detriment of quality and other socio-economic values); iii. disproportionate and onerous participation requirements; iv. incompatibility between contract size and the supply capacity of small-scale operators; v. lack of information (regarding tender opportunities and notices of contract awards); and long payment periods. Nevertheless, various mechanisms and tools can be used to overcome these challenges and to align public procurement rules and practices for implementing HGFS. These may include specific legal interventions (e.g. creating a legal preference for smallholder producers and/or adopting alternative procurement procedures), interventions at administrative level (e.g. reducing payment periods, adapting the size of contracts) or supply-side measures. FAO has collected examples and best practices of these mechanisms at this [FAO publication](#) and it has been supporting countries to align their public procurement rules and practices for the

proper implementation of national HGSF programmes. You can find more information at these reports on [Ethiopia](#) and [Senegal](#) and on question n. 17.

Ethiopia report: <http://www.fao.org/3/CA3614EN/ca3614en.pdf>

Senegal report: <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1204en/cb1204en.pdf>

#### 4) How to adjust HGSF with CBT?

CBT is just a payment modality which should align with the procurement mechanisms put in place. Of course the value transfer, the ration/menu will inform what is to be bought from the SHFs.

#### 5) Are the HGSF projects combined with the integration of food/nutrition literacy elements in education curricula? Any partnerships with Education Ministries?

**GCNF response:** According to GCNF's 2019 Global Survey of School Meal Programs©, 91% of programs report that they offer nutrition education, and 78% pair the school meal program with school gardens; most programs—whether labeled HGSF or not—are managed by Ministries of Education. That is, most of the functions related to the programs are listed as the responsibility of the Education Ministries. Very few countries mention key roles for their Ministries of Agriculture.

**WFP response:** HGSF programmes are community-based and government managed so the involvement of local leadership is paramount. National governments are increasingly making food and nutrition education core elements of HGSF programmes, for example through the establishment of school gardens. In many countries, nutrition is already embedded in the curricula and the support that governments require includes technical assistance to develop educational nutrition materials for use by teachers.

**FAO response:** As mentioned by GCNF and WFP, there are many countries that report integrating food and nutrition education activities in their HGSF programmes, as well as linkages to the formal curriculum. However, several regional and global assessments conducted by FAO have shown key challenges and gaps that impair the effectiveness of such activities. Most commonly, the activities are often stand-alone, the methods used are information-based, the educational linkages with school meals and the food environment are not fully exploited, the coherence with other health and food education interventions is limited, and there is lack of capacities at individual and organizational levels, among others. More information can be found here: <http://www.fao.org/school-food/areas-work/based-food-nutrition-education>

#### 6) Does this programme focus in empowering school communities to use local underutilised resources to produce food in schools ground?

**FAO response:** Yes. HGSF could be used to promote the purchase of local/underutilized species from local farmers. This is the case for example in Brazil where PNAE is promoting the purchase of these local resources. These species could also be promoted in school gardens but mainly for education purpose and awareness raising. Not to



produce food for supplying schools. This is to avoid child labour. For instance, FAO has supported under the framework of the joint [Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition Project \(BFN\)](#) the implementation of a pilot initiative designed to include under-utilized African indigenous vegetables at the Busia county school feeding programme in Kenya. The initiative was designed with the aim to increase the capacity of local smallholder farmers to produce and supply locally available, underutilized and micronutrient-rich crops and, at the same time, create desirability and informed demand for these foods among the school children and the local community.

**WFP response:** HGSF programmes are community based and their involvement in the production of food, preparation of the meals, in establishment of school gardens all strengthen the local ownership. In many countries, national governments are making school gardens as mandatory lessons for children to learn about agriculture and good diets. However, there is sometimes confusion on school gardens and school farms. School farms are large enterprises where schools sub-contract community members to produce food for the children. School gardens on the other hand are learning platforms.

#### 7) What is the inside when we're talking of purchase locally, is it from school vicinity, district or provincial level or within the country?

**GCNF response:** As Carmen Burbano indicated in her presentation, the definition of “local” can differ from situation to situation. The definition used for the GCNF Global Survey (we provided a glossary with the survey) is: “At an administrative level more narrowly focused and localized than regional (state/province), hence at the district, county, municipality/town, or community level. (Note that local government can also refer to school districts. Local food sourcing refers to food originating from the district, county, municipality/town, or community level. This may be purchased or received.)”

**FAO response:** Considering that the definition of “local” can differ from situation to situation, the HGSF Resource Framework does not provide a definition to “local”. In some cases, it can be identified with the district/ county, municipality/town level in line with the definition used by GCNF, but, in other cases, it may comprise also the regional (state/province) or even the national level. In the case of the Brazilian National School Feeding Programme (PNAE), for instance, the law establishes that preference shall be given to the nearest locality of production based on the administrative division of the country, but with the flexibility to arrive up to the national level, following this order: municipality, neighbouring municipalities, other municipalities within the same state, neighbouring states and other states within the national territory. A different approach, for instance, is adopted by the USA Child Nutrition Programmes in which those in charge of procuring food for schools (i.e. school food authorities) have the discretion (with some limiting criteria) to create their own definition of ‘local’ that serves its particular needs and objectives to be achieved through the school feeding programme.



8) **What type of approaches farmers use for better linkage with farmer on the perspective of supply and demand? Is there a good experience of multi sectorial collaboration?**

**GCNF response:** There are examples of good multi-sectorial collaboration, but it is clear that this is a challenging aspect of HGSF implementation. The most success examples we have observed involve multi-sector committees at the national level that meet regularly and have clearly defined roles and benefits for each member. It also seems to help if there is oversight from a higher level, such as the Vice President’s or the President’s Office. The approaches we asked about in the GCNF Global Survey in terms of support for farmers were:

H1.1 Were any of the following types of support provided to farmers? <i>Check if “yes”.</i>	H1.2 If yes, who provided the support? <i>Check all that apply.</i>			
	Small-scale farmers	Medium- or large-scale farmers	National government	Other: <input type="text"/>
Agriculture subsidies (including inputs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture extension efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile or electronic payments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School feeding-specific training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchase agreements set prior to harvest (forward contracts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9) **Any experience of Government ownership of the HGSF program? most at the moment are supported by external funds but no idea when this support end.**

**GCNF response:** Absolutely! There is evidence of significant government involvement and ownership of HGSF programs, in many countries, particularly in South and Central America and Africa. Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, and Nigeria are just some of the examples.

**WFP response:** Cost-benefit analyses carried out across 18 countries by WFP and partners, assessing both WFP and national school feeding programmes. These studies found that every US\$1 invested in school meals programmes yields up to US\$10 economic return from improved health, education and productivity. Please find the following resources: a general factsheet on the Cost-Benefit Analysis, and a number of country examples (Benin, Ghana, Indonesia, Laos).

More work is required to gather information on the particular benefits for smallholder farmers, for example.



**10) We have implemented successful school gardening program to support school-based feeding program. Do we see this as a better strategy or a complementary strategy?**

**FAO response:** School gardens are a good tool for complementing schools activity but in FAO we see them mainly as an education tool for children to learn about food, nutrition, agriculture. They can be used to complement some ingredients for school meals, but only if they have clear work roles and resources, and do not depend on or promote child or teacher labour. School gardens are great learning platforms for children to know more about local food, agroecology or other sustainable techniques of food production, etc. They complement very well HGSF programmes (see FAO's response in Q22).

**11) To Carmen: Where we can find the evidence of the cost-benefit mentioned? 2) In the experiences of WFP what has been the most efficient mechanism, through local governments or by centralized purchases leading by the SF programmes? 3) what countries could be a great examples that has scale HGSF?**

- **WFP response:** Cost-benefit analyses carried out across 18 countries by WFP and partners, assessing both WFP and national school feeding programmes have found that every US\$1 invested in school meals programmes yields up to US\$10 economic return from improved health, education and productivity. Please find the following resources: a general factsheet on the Cost-Benefit Analysis, and a number of country examples (Benin, Ghana, Indonesia, Laos). More work is required to gather information on the particular benefit for smallholder farmers. Please find an example here.

[See Ghana Evaluation pdf](#)

**FAO response:** The HGSF resource framework provide a good discussion about the strengths and weakness of centralized and decentralized HGSF operating models. In general, decentralized models (e.g. through local governments) may be easier to adapt to local conditions and opportunities. The higher the degree of decentralization, the greater the opportunities for local-to-local linkages that benefit the smallholder producers supplying food to schools. A decentralized system can also facilitate the supply of fresh food, and generally increases the variety of foods supplied and their compatibility with local habits and tastes. It must be acknowledged, however, that decentralisation may also mean a decrease in the potential advantages of bulk buying and economies of scale. More centralized models require also a higher number of qualified personnel and institutional capacities. Furthermore, more centralised processes can also ensure greater standardisation of procedures, facilitating monitoring and control. The most appropriate model may vary from country to country according to their specific contexts (e.g. country's size—including the level of economic and market structure—the government structure, the volume and type of food required, the beneficiaries' needs, and institutional procurement capacities) and also mixed models may be adopted.





## 12) What is/are the best way/s to measure HGSF's impact on children's nutritional status?

It is a tricky question regarding nutritional impact. A major point is the question if children benefiting from HGSF are food/meal deprived at home. Another point is the question how much is the share of a meal at school relative to the overall daily requirement. Nevertheless, HGSF - besides assisting small holder farmers - has the potential to increase enrolment and enable children to concentrate better during the lessons.

**GCNF response:** The traditional ways of measuring are growth/size-based, simple measures of weight, height, and upper arm circumference. These do not provide information regarding micronutrient impact, however. There is an increasing body of evidence of the impact on specific micronutrients (ref. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/impact-school-feeding-programmes> ). Accurate testing for some micronutrients, however may require invasive methods (drawing blood), which are not ideal, and the field would benefit from better (less-invasive, accurate and inexpensive) methods.

[See Ghana Evaluation pdf](#)

## 13) Does impact measurement of HGSF programmes focus on its potential as a double duty action to address both undernutrition and overweight and obesity?

I assume that there are HGSF programmes addressing the double action but this depends very much on how strong a government policy is addressing overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence.

**GCNF response:** The Global Survey indicates that most programs have a goal to address nutrition; some have a goal for addressing obesity. Very few low-income and lower-middle income countries have the goal of addressing obesity, even if they say that obesity is seen as a problem in their country.

**WFP response:** the most important thing is to have very clear objectives. As shared in the presentation, HGSF programmes can be used to address different objectives. The objectives will determine the menus, complimentary activities to be used/implemented.

## 14) To Carmen: has WFP followed impact evaluation on changes in children nutritional status and producers' income level? if so could you shortly describe what has been the results so far? what is the time frame to reach substantial changes in this two indicators?

Kindly see responses on this issue in Questions 11, 12 and 13.

## 15) Are the panellists aware of any HGSFPs that have been handed completely to local communities, thereby empowering parents to feed their own children at school?



**GCNF response:** Almost countries reported via the GCNF survey that parents and communities are involved, and in most cases that their involvement was a requirement of the program. How they are involved varies quite a bit from program to program, with a few common themes such as some form of Parent-Teacher type of organization, some form of contribution (e.g., paying cooks, providing fuelwood, condiments or fresh foods, or labor or supplies for building kitchens, classrooms, etc.)

In addition, there seems to be a trend toward de-centralizing responsibility (and at least some funding) for managing school meal programs to the provincial/state, or even the district or school level. In Kenya, for example, we understand that responsibility is devolving to the county level; Cambodia requires significant community involvement as another example.

Finally, some countries have stated that feeding children is uniquely a parental responsibility and that government should not be involved. Canada has had a policy to that effect, though we understand that it is changing or has changed. Uganda is another instance. We also know that in some cases where international assistance is no longer available, or is only periodically available, communities/parents have managed to keep some form school feeding going through local effort. We are not aware of any of these cases involving the national government providing funds in support of the parents for that purpose, however.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted school food service in many countries, there seem to be new instances where governments and/or international donors have provided cash or vouchers to help parents/local community organizations to feed children.

#### **16) What are some of the main contractual issues in other countries, between schools, farmers supplying to these schools?**

**GCNF response:** There are numerous issues that can be encountered in the process of contracting with farmers for school food. These comments will be particularly true for smallholder farmers with little or no experience with contracting. One is that normal competitive bidding processes are too big and too complicated for individual small-scale farmers.

The processes are often too big and too complicated even for farmer organizations that can aggregate and manage commodities on behalf of small-scale farmers. Similarly, the contracting process may be too onerous for schools, who also are unlikely to have prior experience with buying food. Another issue may be that the farmers lack the “business credentials” required for selling and being paid. These issues range from whether farmers have identity cards or the equivalent proof of identity, whether they have bank accounts and/or the capacity and credibility to establish accounts.



If farmers/the farmer organizations don't have experience with contracting, there can be side-selling or defaults on the contracts, and there may be little or no legal recourse. Do contract laws exist in the country, and are they enforceable and enforced? If a smallholder defaults, she or he will have few/no assets to pay a judgment against them, even if there are laws in place. Another issue is timeliness of payment. Many contractual arrangements assume payments are timely if made within 90 to 120 days. Smallholders are unlikely to be able to wait for payment, increasing the likelihood that they will need to side sell and/or default in order to get cash immediately after harvest.

**WFP response:** in addition, smallholder farmers may not be able to aggregate adequate food as required by schools leading to pipeline breaks and ultimately affecting the education outcomes. There could also be issues of inadequate financial capacities by schools to manage funds provided for procurement of food purposes, which leads to delayed payments to the farmers, consequently impacting on the farmers' ability to produce as planned. As such, it is crucial that prior to implementation, through assessments of production, financial and implementation capacities are carried out. Further, that governments review their procurement mechanisms to develop safe valves for smallholder farmers, aggregators and traders. Schools on the other hand must assisted to have optional plans in case of supply defaults.

**FAO response:** To complement, we invite you to see also these two reports in which FAO has assessed the key contractual issues faced both by the procuring entities as well as by the farmers and their organizations in [Ethiopia](#) and [Senegal, mentioned also in question n. 17](#). One example that we can mention in addition to the challenges already mentioned regards price setting. This has been assessed as an important issue especially on long-term contracts. While longer contracts provide stability and facilitate producer organisation with a predictable market, setting the price can be a problem, especially if the price of the products varies significantly during the year. Having a fixed price for long term contract can create situations in which in certain periods the contract price is much lower than the market price, leading to farmers preferring to sell to the market and, as such, not to comply with the contracts. In these situations, the adoption of a more dynamic price-setting mechanism where the prices paid are tied to the current rather than the past market shall be taken into consideration. The size of contracts is also an important issue. While farmers may be supported to better aggregate their production, schools and, in particular, municipalities or regional government purchasing food for schools must also adequate the size and type of their contracts if they want to purchase from smallholder farmers. Large contracts requiring a great quantity and/or variety of products may be incompatible with smallholder farmers supply or may lead more easily to default.

**17) In the experience in Perú the most challenging factor to scale HGSF has been the high safety standards of SF regulations. Considering that, the role of Agricultural Ministries and Bureaus in national and subnational level to strength the local**



**producers capacity is a must. What experiences could you share that has a deep work in this field?**

**WFP response:** Food safety remains one of the biggest challenges and WFP is looking at developing guidelines for HGSP implementers. Some of the recommendations include:

- i. Ensuring that all people involved in the HGSP value chain are adequately trained in food harvest and storage to reduce risks of aflatoxins, weevils; food and personal hygiene for both the cooks and children;
- ii. proper storage of food
- iii. good maintenance of the store-room (ensure good ventilation, no moisture in the room and proper stacking)
- iv. at the point of aggregation, ensure good food handling practices including checking for moisture

**FAO response:** It is important to assess and control the food safety risks of the concerned commodities used in the school food and nutrition operation along the entire supply chain. The risks will vary according to the foods and type of supply chain concerned, so control measures need to be based on an assessment of the actual risks in each particular chain. Generally speaking, the promotion of targeted, good practices during production, harvest / post-harvest, storage, transport and handling help maintain food safety and quality. It may also be important to involve partners outside of agriculture that have the mandate for food safety.

**18) To Carmen: you mentioned that the African countries are in the process of privatizing the national school feeding programme, is my understanding correct? if so, can explain bit detail?**

**WFP response:** No, not privatising but nationalising. National governments are taking over school feeding programmes. And this is our goal, to move these programmes to national ownership for sustainability.

**19) How far this programme is successful in which part of world more and why? Can this project be applicable to both developing and developed countries?**

**GCNF response:** GCNF's survey asked countries to state what positive developments have occurred for their programs, and what their program strengths are. In addition, we tried to find correlations between some key questions in the survey. Many countries stated that buying food locally for their programs has been a positive development, particularly in terms of investing in the local economy and stimulating the involvement of local farmers and community members. One of the most powerful correlations we found in the survey was that the school food baskets were much more diversified when 70% or more of the school food was bought locally as compared to being received as foreign in-kind donations. Menu diversity is extremely important for nutrition.

The GCNF presentation in the webinar listed a number of countries with "sustained" programs. The countries listed crossed the income spectrum, and all buy at least some



portion of their school food from their own farmers. Examples: The United States School Lunch Program has had agriculture as a major component since it was launched in 1946. Brazil's program requires that at least 30% of the food for its school meal program must be purchased from local family farms. Ghana and Mali began implementing home-grown school feeding programs in about 2006/7.

**FAO response:** To complement, it is interesting to notice that these programmes are applicable to both low- and high-income countries. While the term “Home-Grown School Feeding” is often linked to low-income economies, this approach is adopted by various countries. Additional examples include many European countries (or specific regions or municipalities) such as Italy, United Kingdom and France who has a specific government guide on “Promoting local and quality supply in public catering” [Favoriser l’approvisionnement local et de qualité en restauration collective]”.

**20) Are the farming systems adopted by smallholders important when talking about HGSF? Agroecological farming systems can represent an alternative approach to boost the diversification of production with a special emphasis on local crops?**

**GCNF response:** We would very much like to see HGSF helping to boost the use of a more diverse set of food items, with an emphasis on those which do well in local conditions. It seems that many indigenous crops—which may be very nutritious and/or more climate change-resistant—are being crowded out by big “multinational crops” (e.g., maize, wheat, rice) which may not be suited to local growing conditions.

Local production for local use should also build local resiliency to buffer food supply chain disruptions, and reduce transport costs. It will take significant energy and will to change the current paradigm, however, given the levels of subsidies, research, etc. as well as the popularity and success of the multinational crops with processors, food marketers, and consumers.

**FAO response:** We believe that HGSF programmes can be used as a powerful instrument to promote more sustainable modes of food production. On targeting food that is produced in a specific way (such as through agroecological farming systems) HGSF can support and promote forms of agriculture production that ensures environmental sustainability, biodiversity and also boost production diversification. This is, for instance, what happened in Brazil. By giving priority and a price premium for organic and agro-ecological products, the national school feeding programme (PNAE) was proven to play a direct role in farmer’s decision to shift their focus from low agrobiodiversity, input-intensive farming systems to more diversified, low, external input system one. The programme was also proved to trigger the transition of farmers to organic production practices.

Although not all HGSF programmes may choose to target products from a specific farming system, this is an important aspect to be taken into consideration by government according to their priorities. Targeting food that is produced and/or



processed in a specific way may allow governments to increase the multiple benefits and beneficiaries that HGSF has the potential to reach.

## 21) Can Home-grown School feeding links to School gardens programs?

**GCNF response:** Yes, HGSF can have links to school garden programs, but as noted by Ambassador Haladou Salha of NEPAD, care needs to be taken to ensure that school gardens are designed for primarily for learning purposes and that they do not involve child labour, detract from required curricula, or take too much of the teachers' time outside the classroom. It can become problematic if the school's feeding program is dependent on the school gardens (given growing cycles, classroom requirements, etc., it is very unlikely that the gardens can produce significant amounts of food consistently across the school year), or on child labour.

**FAO response:** As mentioned by GCNF, linkages should focus on the educational opportunities and also on expanding learning to the household. For instance skills acquired in school gardens together with modelling of healthy school meals can be explicitly extended to home gardens and home meal preparation. A key point is to enhance coherence and complementarity of both interventions in terms of objectives and methodological approaches, particularly in regards to aspects related to food and nutrition education.

## 22) To Carmen: are the impact evaluations done in Kenya, Mali and Ghana available on internet? please can you share those documents?

**WFP response:** You can access some of the evaluations here:

[See Ghana Evaluation pdf](#)

[See Ghana, Nutrition School Feeding HGSF pdf](#)

## 23) What criteria are used when selecting a community for a Home-Grown school feeding programme? What does the assessment for the area selected consist of and what process is used to engage with that community?

**GCNF response:** There is a great deal of information about this in the Home-Grown School Feeding Resource Framework. We cheerfully refer you to that, which is available through the FAO eLearning Academy.

Please visit the **FAO eLearning Academy** [elearning.fao.org](http://elearning.fao.org), which offers free multilingual courses on the thematic areas covered in the Technical Webinar.

Also explore the Digital Catalogue at [www.fao.org/elearning/catalogue](http://www.fao.org/elearning/catalogue)



FAO eLearning Academy  
**Course Catalogue**

Click to browse

