

SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM GUIDE

| SCHOOL FEEDING GUIDE

This guide/handbook is the result of the practical experience of the Lagos Food Bank Initiative's Nutrition and School Feeding Program Officer and an extensive literature review of best practices for school feeding programs.

Lagos Food Bank Initiative (*LFBI*) is a non-profit nutrition-focused organization that uses an integrated food banking system to support meaningful community nutrition while also building long-term health and sustainability through its 6 active programs, one of which is the school feeding program named Education Enhancement Intervention for Food Insecure Students (*EDUFOOD*). Since its inception in 2015, the organization has served over 1.7 million beneficiaries in over 160 communities in Lagos (Nigeria) and its neighboring states and through its EDUFOOD program;

feeds over 4000 students in 25 low cost schools within Lagos.

With this guide, we aim: To help NGOs serving low-cost communities set up, refine, or expand their school feeding programs, to provide an insight into the need for SFPs in low cost primary schools; and to share our experience, providing a clear, practical guide for those involved in SFP implementation. I hope you will find it both useful and enlightening.

Abimbola Muyide-Olukoya

Nutrition Programs Officer (Lagos Food Bank Initiative)



Michael A. Sunbola

President & Founder (Lagos Food Bank Initiative)



**School
Feeding
Guide**

Table of Content

● INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Low-cost Primary schools	
1.2 Why the Need for School Feeding Program in Low-Cost Communities	
● PRACTICAL PROCESS OF INTRODUCING SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM IN LOW-COST COMMUNITIES	9
2.1 Needs Assessment	
2.2 Program Design	
2.3 Program planning and Implementation	
2.4 School Nomination, Confirmation and Preparation	
2.5 Menu Planning	
2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation	
2.7 Complimentary Initiative	
REFERENCES	25

Glossary

SFP *School Feeding Program*

SMART *Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Timely*

CSR *Corporate Social Responsibility*

NGO *Non-Governmental Organization*

PTA *Parent Teacher Association*

FAO *Food and Agriculture Organization*

WHO *World Health Organization*

M & E *Monitoring and Evaluation*



1. Introduction

School feeding programs are a game-changing solution

SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS (SFP) are interventions that regularly provide nutritious foods to children and adolescents attending school ¹. SFP's are targeted social safety nets that provide numerous benefits for vulnerable children, families and a nation at large. Benefits of school feeding include hunger alleviation, increased cognitive and academic performance, improvement in nutritional status, food

security, school enrollment and attendance rate, reduced absenteeism and gender equality ².

Furthermore, SFP's positive impact contributes to the improvement of a country's human capital.

School feeding programs are widely available in high-income countries but generally have poor coverage in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where the need is greatest in terms of hunger and poverty ³. In Nigeria, the Federal Government currently has a SFP that feeds 10 million children daily and Nigeria's National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme provides a meal daily for pupils in public primary schools. This

leaves a whole lot of gaps for vulnerable children in low-cost schools.

1.1. Low-Cost Primary Schools

Government schools were intended to provide a just and equitable option for all, especially students from the low-income families; however, they have not kept up with demand in terms of both capacity and quality, leaving a gap which Low-Cost private primary schools have now filled for concerned parents who cannot afford expensive private schools.

Many low-cost schools in Nigeria can best be described as makeshift structures, located either in open spaces,

uncompleted buildings, viewing centers, church halls, residential buildings (with tenants living alongside the schools) and crowded noisy environments. These low-cost schools collect as low as N50 to N100 per day on pay-as-you-go basis, or N5,000 to N15,000 per term, depending on location, reputation (or packaging), student's grade and number of teachers. They are mostly found in underserved communities where public schools are absent, far or over populated or communities with high number of non-indigenes. Many times, these schools have poor infrastructures with large numbers of pupils lumped in classrooms with poor ventilation, which causes one to doubt if learning is actually taking place in such schools, especially the unregistered ones.





1.2. Why the Need for School Feeding Program in Low-Cost Communities?

As cheap and available these schools may seem, they are still quite unaffordable for some low-income families, especially those with a large family size and those living below the minimum wage. Food insecurity is also a major problem of some pupils of these schools as some of them can be seen to be malnourished (especially stunted, reflecting chronic

malnutrition) because their family can barely afford a 3 square meal, not to talk of nutritious meals. Most of these pupils are at risk of macro and micronutrient deficiency, unhealthy dietary practices, reduced learning capacity, etc. Therefore, it is imperative to expand the coverage of SFPs to these low-cost primary schools to improve their nutrition and school attendance amongst other benefits.





2. Practical Process Of Introducing School Feeding Program In Low-Cost Communities

2.1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

For low-cost schools, the need for SFP is already established. However, there is also need to determine existing programs, potential partnerships, available policy or guidelines, stakeholders, funding, culture and belief, capacity, etc. as these are also essential to the success of a SFP.

- **Research extensively:** Make your research! A critical step towards a better program is to thoroughly analyze

past and on-going experience.

A range of new experiences are now available that has the potential to alleviate some of the common obstacles to efficient and effective programming. Where a school feeding program already exists, a wealth of information is readily accessible. Even when information gotten is from a different environment, you can still learn from and localize this information.



2.2. PROGRAM DESIGN

- **Set your objectives:** Well-designed SFPs translate the findings of their needs assessment into specific objectives. Examples of some general objectives of a SFP include: Improve school enrollment and completion, improve child nutrition and health status, Increase girl child school enrollment, etc.

Ensure that you set SMART program objectives and stay within the scope. Example of a smart objective: Increase general school enrollment by 20% within the first 6months of program implementation.

- **Analyze and identify opportunities and gaps for financing and cost options for SFPs:** SFPs of any kind are expensive.

Financing may include international and local partnerships/assistance, corporate or individual partnerships. Identify opportunities in your environment, like companies interested in CSR, retail stores nearby with food items that can be discounted, local farmers nearby with extra farm produce, financial or in-kind donors, government officials, patrons or spokespersons, etc⁴. Having committed stakeholders is important to the long-term sustainability of the SFP.

- **Identify and address any potential bottlenecks in implementation;** such as the availability of supplies and other resources, the appropriateness of cooking practices, distance of warehouse/kitchen/food vendors to schools,

availability of storage facilities, availability of volunteers, logistics, food cost, local food habits, etc. It is important to note that once SFP is in place, altering them can meet strong resistance.



➤ **Select the type of SFP program you will implement:**

Decide the best suitable SFPs for your situation and objectives. It is advisable that SFP be context specific, in order to be tailored to the needs of the population.

There are different types of SFPs, some of which are listed below:

- School Breakfast program
- School Lunch program
- Take home rations
- Home Grown school feeding program
- School snack program
- Holiday/Summer school feeding program
- After school meal program, etc.

Other factors to consider when choosing a SFP:

- **Type of meal to be served:** consider if you will be doing cooked meals or ready-to-eat meals like cereals. For example, cooked meal is preferable for a school lunch program.



- **Nutrient content of meals:** consider quantity and quality of meals to be served including the percentage of the daily nutrients requirement of the beneficiaries that you will like to contribute to. For example, a SFP with an objective of ‘providing 30% of children’s energy, protein and calcium requirements three days a week for one year’

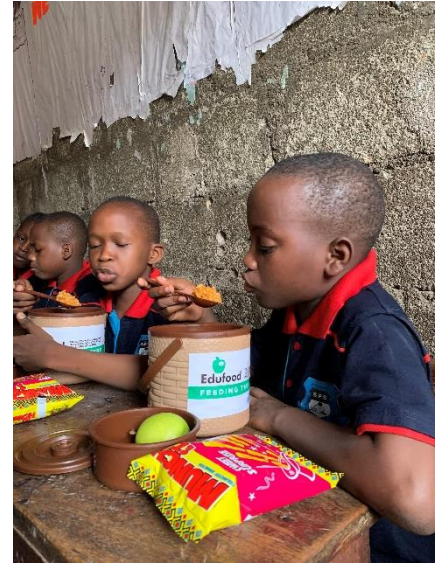
should be particular about these nutrients in the school meal and this can influence your choice of SFP.

- **Timing of ration delivery:** depending on the type of SFP, determine the best time suitable, especially for the children and school. For example, it is best to work with the official school break/lunch time for a school breakfast/lunch program. It is important for the success of the SFP for the children to expect their meals at specific days and time.

- **Model of distribution:** After deciding on the type of SFP, choose the method(s) through which meals will be distributed. It is advisable to start with one method and gradually adopt other methods as SFP grows and more schools are enrolled into the program. Available methods include: direct distribution, school vendors, drop-offs, school kitchen, partner NGOs, take-home rations, etc.



- **Frequency of distribution:** It is also important to determine how many days a week you will be serving meals through your SFP. It is recommended that meals be distributed every school day (5days a week, Monday-Friday) but you can start with the number of days your organization can afford and gradually increase the distribution frequency as funding and partnership increases. Also, with increased distribution, you can consider multiple model of distribution.





2.3 PROGRAM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

After completing the program design, plan your program and decide on how it will be implemented. Below are some key factors to consider for a successful SFP implementation ⁵.

- **Coordination and Capacity:** SFP programs require different levels of coordination with different stakeholders such as local authorities, schools, communities, vendors, volunteers, donors, partners, etc. They all play important roles in procurement, food distribution, funding, quality and food safety control, education, management of beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

It is crucial to determine the stakeholders involved in SFP. It

is good practice to create a designated entity or unit which is mandated and can be held accountable for the implementation and coordination of SF programs. For good governance and coordination, establish clear, documented roles and responsibilities. Roles can include menu design and recipe development, food sourcing, partnership management, funding and advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, inspections, school liaison, food preparation, transport, stakeholder engagement, etc.

Before commencing the program, ensure all stakeholders are aligned and have the information and resources they need. This will likely require informational sessions and training.



- **Food procurement:** Food procurement for SFP may come from passive/regular donations to your organization, from strategic/specific donations from food industry partners, or through purchasing. Ensuring consistent program delivery

requires reliable sources of food.

This can be ensured by soliciting for support from companies (food or cash), cash donations, campaigning for the donation of specific foods from individuals, supermarkets, local farmers, etc.

- **Budget and financial arrangements:** Determine one-off startup costs and ongoing program costs. Items including staff, transportation/ fuel, infrastructure, training, food, cleaning supplies, service utensils, printing, and electricity should be considered. The source of funding, incoming and outgoing payment schedules, and the management of financial arrangements should be documented.





2.4. SCHOOL NOMINATION, CONFIRMATION AND PREPARATION

Best practice includes taking a meticulous approach to school selection, preparation and communication with school authorities and possible local community stakeholders during implementation ⁶.

- **Nominate Schools:** Bear in mind that the preferred schools here are low-cost schools therefore the criteria for schools joining the program may include: willingness to participate, vulnerability, location, socio-economic status and/or age of targeted students, school population, potential for expanding the SFP over time, etc.



- **Notify Nominated Schools and Communities:** Once schools have been nominated, it is vital to meet the school authority to introduce the program. This meeting is essential for providing school authority with an overview of your organization, the SFP, the specific requirements associated with implementation and their role in program sustainability.

- **Examples of these requirements are: store room, kitchen, washing of utensils, drinking water, etc.**

If SFP is accepted, ask the school authority to notify the parents and get endorsement from the parents and relevant stakeholders before program is commenced, and if required, have a representative present during a PTA meeting where the program can be introduced to the parents.

Once all parties are in agreement and the SFP accepted; prepare a Letter of Approval and Agreement and also a Media consent letter for the school, the letter must be signed by the school head on behalf of the school and parents. The Letter must be in two copies, the school head signs both, keeps one and one is documented by your organization. Also request for

a school focal person and their contact, this will be your liaison person for the school.

- **Prepare Confirmed Schools:** After school confirmation, depending on the type of school feeding program and model of distribution, conduct training/orientation sessions for school personnel and school food vendors. If possible, the school's focal person should introduce you to the students.



2.5. MENU PLANNING

Types of meals served are very vital as SFPs can have nutritional benefits for children, with positive impacts on their growth and cognitive development. Your organization must plan and create nutritionally balanced and fully costed school meals using locally available food. Quality, quantity and dietary diversity (bearing in mind the prevalent nutritional deficiency in your environment) are important focal points to be considered. To achieve these nutritional benefits, ensure

your menu is similar to your national government's school feeding program or designed to take into account your national dietary guideline; in the absence of either, consider using the standard FAO/WHO recommended daily nutrient intake guideline (for school-aged children) to design your menu. Other key considerations for menu planning include local availability of products, cost, children's likes and dislikes, variety culturally appropriate foods/practices, food seasonality, etc.



2.6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

Establishing a formal system for efficient monitoring and data collection ensures accountability of the SFP. Collecting information, both quantitative and qualitative, is vital to track whether the program is meeting its objectives. Regular M&E helps identify challenges, needs, and opportunities early to improve the program. And in some model of distribution, it is helpful to check compliance. Furthermore, the information gained can be used to create a powerful advocacy tool for promoting your SFP. Your M&E indicators should be developed during the program design stage, and the results of

your needs assessment can help inform your baseline data.

Examples of some M&E indicators include: General enrollment rate, Girl child enrollment rate, Attendance and absenteeism rate, Academic performance rate, etc.

Ensure you have systems in place to gather data for these indicators. For example, a school register book can be used to track attendance rate. Also ensure that you fill your monitoring sheet regularly to avoid cumbersome data and for proper recording. At the end of each school term, evaluate the progress and impact of the program, document then make necessary adjustments.



2.7 COMPLIMENTARY INITIATIVE

- **Health Intervention:** Ideally, SFPs are also complemented by basic health intervention such as clean water, hygiene measures and deworming. These complementary interventions address issues that very directly impact nutrition and school environment, while also offering an opportunity to raise awareness and improve conditions amongst families and community members.



- **Teacher's Aid:** As an incentive, teachers in your organization's selected SFP schools can also be assisted with food aids occasionally (e.g. at the end of each school term). Most of these teachers are low-income earners and



- **Nutrition Education:** SFPs can also include a component on food and nutrition education to promote healthy eating habits. In many of these low-cost communities, schools are the only place where children can learn about food and healthy eating habits. In these cases; adequate eating habits, food safety and a positive attitude towards food diversity can be promoted through the school menus, classroom learnings, practical activities in school gardens or food preparation, and the active participation of families and the community ⁷.

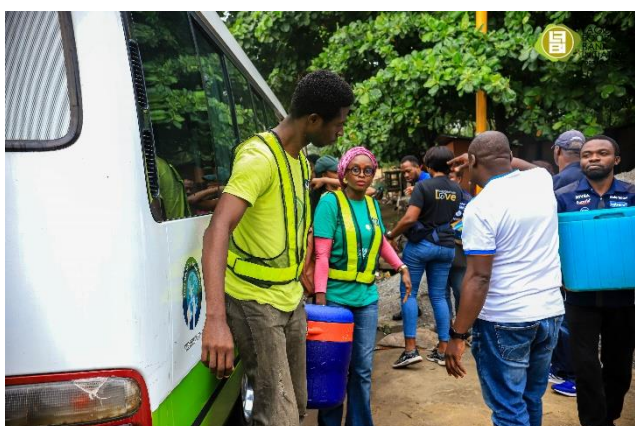


they live within the low-cost communities where these schools are found; also, LFBFI has found the teacher's aid distribution very effective in motivating and encouraging these teachers.









References

1. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals: a report from 33 low and middle-income countries. Rome: FAO; 2019.
2. World Bank and World Food Programme. Scaling up School Feeding: Keeping Children in School While Improving Their Learning and Health. April 2012. Accessed 27 April 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2012/04/25/scaling-up-school-feeding-keeping-children-in-school-while-improving-their-learning-and-health>
3. Bundy D, Burbano C, Grosh ME, Gelli A, Juke M, Drake L. Rethinking school feeding: social safety nets, child development, and the education sector: The World Bank; 2009.
4. UNESCO. FRESH Tools for Effective School Health. Guidelines to Develop and Implement School Feeding Programs that Improve Education. 2004 Edition. Accessed 27 April 2022, https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/FRESH_Guidelines_to_Develop_and_Implement_Feeding_2004_en.pdf
5. Global FoodBanking Network (GFN). Developing a School Feeding Program. GFN; November 2021.
6. Tetra Laval. School Feeding Handbook. Tetra Laval Food for Development. Accessed 27 April 2022, <https://www.tetrapak.com/content/dam/tetrapak/publicweb/gb/en/insights/documents/school-feeding-handbook.pdf>
7. WFP, FAO, IFAD, GCNF, PCD and NEPAD. Home Grown School Feeding Resource Framework: Synopsis – March 2017