

WORKING PAPER

# School Meals Case Study: Senegal

Prepared by the Research Consortium of School Health and  
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Submitted by:

Sidy Tounkara, Initiative Prospective Agricole and Rurale (IPAR)

Seyni Kebe, Groupe de recherche et de réalisations pour le  
développement rural (GRDR)

Ibrahima Hathie, Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR)

Laure Tall, Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR)

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## Abbreviations

<b>AVSF</b>	Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières
<b>CGE</b>	School Management Committees
<b>CI</b>	Counterpart International
<b>CICODEV Africa</b>	The Pan-African Institute for Citizenship, Consumers and Development
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DCaS</b>	School Canteen Division
<b>FCFA</b>	Franc of the African Financial Community
<b>GRDR</b>	Groupe de Recherche et de Réalisations pour le Développement Rural
<b>IEF</b>	Education and Training Inspections
<b>IPAR</b>	Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale
<b>MEN</b>	Ministry of National Education
<b>SABER</b>	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
<b>SASSE</b>	Senegal School Food Monitoring System
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

# Historical background

The issue of school meals has gradually gained importance in Senegal's educational programmes. Indeed, in 1963, a canteen service, gardens and school works were created to support the schooling dynamic, especially in rural areas, and to introduce pupils to agricultural and livestock work. In 2000, the Ministry of National Education (MEN) rolled out the Education and Training Development Programme, which highlighted the need to promote school meals. In 2002, the School Canteen Orientation and Management Unit was created, under the supervision of the MEN, and chaired by the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of National Education.

In April 2009, the School Canteen Division (DCaS) was created within the MEN and attached to the General Secretariat. Its role is to take political responsibility for the issue of school meals in Senegal. In June 2009, a Head was appointed to the DCaS, whose mission is to "promote the development of school canteens, and ensure the planning, coordination and monitoring-evaluation of all school canteen programmes and operations". It comprises three offices: planning and coordination of school canteen operations; training, partnership and communication; monitoring-evaluation (République du Senegal, 2011).

## Country profile

### Population and Economics

*Table 1: Demographic and economic indicators of Senegal<sup>1</sup>*

Total population (2023) <sup>1</sup>	Number of people under 19 years old <sup>1</sup>	Number of people employed in the agricultural sector <sup>2</sup>	Gross Domestic Product per capita (2022) <sup>3</sup>
18,032,474	50%	27.4% of the active population	1,598.7 USD

### Education

School education is subdivided into four levels: pre-school, elementary, middle and high school. The data presented in the following paragraphs are taken from the provisional national report of the Directorate of Education Planning and Reform of the Ministry of National Education on the state of education in 2022. Preschool education targets children aged 3 to 5. There were 4,286 pre-school establishments in 2022, of which 40.9% were public, 40.7% private and 18.4% community and association structures. The Gross Preschool Enrolment Rate (GPER) was estimated at 18.2% in 2022, including 19.8% for girls and 16.7% for boys.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ansd.sn/sites/default/files/2023-10/RAPPORT-PRELIMINAIRE-RGPH-5\\_2023-.pdf](https://www.ansd.sn/sites/default/files/2023-10/RAPPORT-PRELIMINAIRE-RGPH-5_2023-.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ansd.sn/sites/default/files/2022-04/Rapport-final-EHCVM-11092021%20vf-Senegal%20004\\_1.pdf](https://www.ansd.sn/sites/default/files/2022-04/Rapport-final-EHCVM-11092021%20vf-Senegal%20004_1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=SN>

*Table 2: Schools, pupils and school canteens in Senegal (DPRE/MEN, 2022)*

Levels	Number of students	Number of schools	Average class size	Number of children participating in school meals	Percentage of children eligible for free school meals
Pre-school	287,399	4,286	28	33,051 or 11.5% of students and 19.6% of schools	100
Elementary	2,321,323	10,990	37	19% of schools have school canteens	100
Middle	841,180	1,405	46	22.4% of schools have school canteens	100
Secondary	371,561	1,129	37	18.8% of schools have school canteens	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,821,463</b>	<b>17,810</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>On average, 19.95% of schools have school canteens</b>	<b>100</b>

Elementary education covers the 6-11 age group and comprises of six levels: Initiation Course, Preparatory Course, Elementary Course (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades) and Middle Course (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades). It culminates in the Certificate of End of Elementary Studies (CFEE). There were 10,990 elementary schools in 2022, 81.6% of them public, 18.2% private and 0.3% community and associative. The school-age population was estimated at 2,781,669 in 2022, 48.9% of whom were girls. The gross enrolment rate (GER) for elementary school was estimated at 83.5% in 2022, including 91.2% for girls and 76% for boys. The CFEE pass rate was 73.80% in 2022, with 73.26% for girls and 74.50% for boys.

*Table 3: Enrolment data for children aged 3 to 18 (DPRE/MEN, 2022)*

Levels	Number of children in school age	Ratio of school-age girls	Total number of children in school	Real ratio of girls in schools	Gross enrolment rate	Ratio of children in public school	Ratio of children in private school	Ratio of children in associative and community school
Pre-school 3 – 5 years	1,576,870	48 .6%	287,399	52.8%	18.2%	45.1%	41.9%	13%
Elementary 6 – 11 years	2,781,669	48 .9%	2,321,323	53,5%	83.5%	82.1%	17.8%	0.2%
Middle 12-15 years	1,614,623	49.3%	841,180	54.3%	52.1%	81.6%	18.3%	0.1%
Secondary 16 – 18 years	1,102,928	49.6%	371,561	54.8%	33.7%	72.8%	27%	0.2%

Middle school comprises of four levels (6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) and is aimed at the 12-15 age group. The Certificate of End of Middle Studies (BFEM) is awarded at the end of middle school. There were 1,405 middle schools, 74.6% of them public. In 2022, the GER for Middle level was 52.1%, including 57.4% for girls and 47% for boys. The BFEM pass rate was 70.38%, with 67.96% for girls and 73.52% for boys in 2022.

Secondary education, which includes general education and vocational and technical training, comprises of three levels of study (second, first and terminal). The GER in general secondary education was estimated at 33.7% in 2022, being higher for girls (37.2%) versus for boys (30.2%). The Baccalaureate pass rate was estimated at 51.99%

in 2022, with 49.67% for girls versus 54.89% for boys. Regarding vocational and technical training, there were 406 establishments in 2019, including twelve public technical high schools. The private sector is significant, accounting for 70.4% of training structures (ANSD, 2022).

## Food security, nutrition and health

In 2022, the Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ESAN) report painted a bleak picture for many Senegalese households (SECNSA, 2023a). Based on an indicator that measures perceived household access to food, the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity was estimated at 27.9%, with the prevalence being higher among households living in rural areas (32.4%) than in urban areas (23.6%). There were also disparities according to the region of residence. The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity is higher in the regions of Ziguinchor (49.7%), Kaffrine (45.9%), Kolda (41.2%) and Matam (39.4%). The ESAN survey noted that in the departments of Malem-Hodar (54.3%), Kounghoul (53.9%), Ziguinchor (53.9%), Salémata (50.3%), Oussouye (48.9%), Podor (48.0%), Médina Yoro Foulah (47.2%) and Bignona (45.9%), almost half of the households were moderately or severely food insecure. By comparing Senegal's food security data with that of West Africa, the country is doing better than the sub-region, even if the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity remains high. The risk of exposure of the population to food and nutritional insecurity in Senegal was determined by a tool called Harmonized Framework for analysis and identification of risk areas and populations experiencing food and nutritional insecurity in the Sahel and West Africa. In 2024, it showed that 2.6% of Senegal's population needed food assistance during the lean season (SECNSA, 2024).

- **Growth retardation in children aged 5 to 19:** data not available
- **Micronutrient deficiency in children aged 5 to 19:** prevalence of anemia among adolescent girls 57.2% in 2017.<sup>4</sup>
- **Underweight children aged 5 to 19:** boys 12.4% and girls 6.3% (2016).<sup>5</sup>
- **Overweight children aged 5 to 19:** boys 5.7% and girls 13.4% (2016).
- **Obesity in children aged 5 to 19:** 1% boys and 2.5% girls (2016)

The nutrition indicators for children under 5 are described in Appendix 1.

## Design and implementation of school meal programmes

### Description

In Senegal, school meal programmes have evolved over time. In 2015, the State of Senegal aimed to set up a self-sufficient and sustainable national school canteen programme in the presence of external partners such as the World Food Programme (WFP), Counterpart International (CI), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the

<sup>4</sup> Le Dain, A. S., Sagalova, V., Sodjinou, R., Tou, E. H., Ntambi, J., Vollmer, S., & Zagre, N. M. (2021). Levels and trends of adolescent girl's undernutrition and anemia in West and Central Africa from 1998 to 2017. *Journal of Global Health*, 11. doi: 10.7189/jogh.11.13006

<sup>5</sup> Global Nutrition Report. <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/western-africa/senegal/>

United Nations, as well as NGOs such as the Groupe de Recherche et de Réalisations pour le Développement Rural (GRDR), Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (AVSF), The Pan-African Institute for Citizenship, Consumers and Development (CICODEV Africa), among others, which have largely supported school meal programmes. Among these players, the WFP occupies a prominent position as the first historical operator. The WFP model has also evolved over time. In its early days, school canteens were supplied mainly with imported products, which were then combined with local produce. Today, the procurement policy is based on cash transfers to encourage local purchases.

CI has completed the SUKKAABE JANNGO programme, which, since July 2023, covers 270 elementary and preschool schools in southern Senegal, and which was implemented for 20 years in the Matam and Saint-Louis regions. Another phase of the programme, currently underway in the Kolda and Sédhiou regions, targets 79,292 pupils in 285 preschools and elementary schools. The CI model combines imported food, locally purchased food and food from community contributions, through a strategy of sustainability with communities.

New players such as GRDR, AVSF and CICODEV Africa are adopting canteen models based on local production. Since 2023, two programmes: the Support for the Implementation of the Territorial Food Plan from Rufisque, called AMOPAR, and NIAMDE (meaning "to eat" in the Apular language) run by GRDR and its partners covered 70 schools, including 10 middle and high schools, for 15,000 pupils in 9 departments of Senegal. One of the specific features of these programmes is the testing of a new model for canteens in urban and peri-urban areas in the Rufisque's department, through the central kitchen. This model aims to empower local authorities, find alternative sources of funding and promote management based on local purchasing.

## Objectives

Generally speaking, all programmes aim to facilitate access to healthy food and improve the nutritional situation of school children in the most disadvantaged environments. In addition to these objectives, school canteens promote local consumption and provide economic leverage for farmers. School canteens can also play a role in social cohesion and solidarity between pupils. Indeed, eating together can contribute to living together and developing a spirit of sharing among children.

Ultimately, school canteen programmes seek to contribute to several development sectors such as social protection (income transfer, household food security), education (learning, enrolment and girls' education), agriculture (rural economy and food systems), nutrition and health (dietary diversity, growth and development) (Adelman et al, 2008; Drake et al, 2017).

## Coverage

Since 2014, the focus has been on the more decentralized school canteen management model, which enables the direct transfer of resources from the central government to the schools. A teacher is appointed in each public school to assist the School Canteens Commission with school canteen management, including feedback to the Education and Training Inspections (IEF). School feeding initiatives are entrusted to the School

Management Committees (CGE) created by Decree n°2014-957 of August 4<sup>6</sup>, 2016. These are made up of local community representatives, school principals, teachers, parents and municipal councillors. CGEs are responsible for "administering resources and coordinating all school canteen activities, including the purchase, storage and preparation of school meals. Once the schools have received the funds, the CGE will draw up the menu, the purchasing plan and make the purchases" (Swensson, 2020, p. 21).

By 2021, the Senegalese government's response to Covid-19 have enabled 637 elementary schools attended by 107,000 pupils to be equipped with school canteens in seven regions, targeting disadvantaged rural and peri-urban areas, with financial support from the Global Partnership for Education of 552 million FCFA<sup>7</sup> (Gonese and Saroumi, 2023, p. 15). Between 2012 and 2021, the rate of public-school canteen coverage fell from 53% to 15.3% in 2018, then to 12% in 2019 before reaching 13% in 2021 (Diagne, 2024). This decline can be explained by the decrease in resources from external donors, notably the WFP, the weakness of the resumption of canteen funding by the State of Senegal and, perhaps, also by the effects of Covid-19. In this respect, it should be noted that the Presidential School Canteen Programme, called PPCS, which should raise the coverage rate to 70% of public schoolchildren over 5 years in the country's 14 regions, is not yet effective (Diagne and Ndiaye, 2023). In 2022, 19.6% of preschool schools, 19% of elementary schools, 22.4% of middle schools and 18.8% of secondary schools had school canteens (DPRE/MEN, 2022). However, figures from the State of School Feeding show that 17% of primary school pupils in Senegal are reached by school canteens (WFP, 2022, p. 54).

## Targeting

The Guide to School Canteens, revised in 2016, sets out some principles governing the implementation of school meal programmes in Senegal. These include principles of respect for the right to healthy, balanced and sufficient food, equity for efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, accountability and sustainability promoting consumption of local products (Republic of Senegal, 2016, p. 15).

For the selection of beneficiaries, it is guided by criteria to reduce geographical disparities, targeting children from vulnerable households to improve the level of food and nutrition security that positively impacts school performance while encouraging poor families to send their children to school. Finally, the regions and social groups targeted by school meal programmes are those most affected by food insecurity, malnutrition and poor school performance (WFP, 2023b). Moreover, the map of the food and nutrition situation in Senegal produced by the Executive Secretariat of the National Council for Food Security (SECNSA) shows that the areas of intervention of the WFP overlap with departments under food pressure (SECNSA, 2023b, p. 5).

For the IC targeting, these are schools that have a minimum of 100 students, a full cycle but do not have school canteens, schools whose geographical access by "small truck" to deliver food is easy, schools that centralize remote villages and, finally, schools located in rural areas.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.juriafrica.com/lex/decret-2014-957-4-aout-2014-50204.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Franc of the African Financial Community: 655.957 CFA francs equivalent to 1 euro.



## Meal type

For the WFP model, a monetary transfer of 70 FCFA per day and per student on 2 days per week is made to have at least two hot meals per week. The standard daily ration for lunch is 150 g of cereals, 40 g of legumes, 15 g of vegetable oil enriched with vitamin A and 4 g of iodized salt. For breakfast, this ration is composed of: 30 g of local flour, 40 g of legumes, 15 g of vegetable oil enriched with Vitamin A and 4 g of iodized salt. The target cereals are rice, millet, corn and fonio, while the legumes served are cowpea, groundnut and pea. In addition to these foods, condiments and other products not provided by WFP but added through contributions from parents and communities should be considered (WFP, 2023a).\*

The types of meals served in the GRDR, AVSF, CICODEV Africa programmes are breakfast and lunch. Breakfast consists of local cereals (millet and/or corn porridge, bread with cowpea sauce) and is served 3 times a week while lunch is served 2 times a week. In the Rufisque department, meat or fish and vegetables are provided in each meal.

CI's SUKAABE JANGO programme provided five breakfasts and two lunches per week for elementary students and only five breakfasts for preschool students. The new programme is based on three breakfasts and two lunches for elementary students and five breakfasts for preschool students in addition to take-home rations for students who have an attendance rate above 90% each term. A canteen in a school operates five days a week. However, it only provides breakfasts consisting of 60 g of cereals (millet, enriched flour, enriched rice or cornmeal), 25 g of legumes (lentils, peas, mung bean, cowpea and bulgur) and 10 g of oil, from Monday to Friday. Breakfast and lunch in each elementary school consists of 100 g of cereals and 45 g of legumes with 10 g of oil.

## Nutritional norms

As a reminder, Senegal's vision in terms of nutrition is as follows: “a country where each individual enjoys an optimal nutritional state by adopting appropriate behaviors”<sup>8</sup>. The National Nutrition Development Council is responsible for “ensuring the coordination of the implementation of the National Nutrition Development Policy 2015-2025” which establishes the multi-sectoral and intersectoral approach in operating methods including the school sector.

The Multisectoral Strategic Plan for Nutrition of Senegal 2018-2022, called PSMN,<sup>9</sup> provided for the implementation of standards for healthy and nutritious school meals based on the valorization of local products, training of cooks and other staff in school canteens on good hygiene and nutrition practices, updating the school canteen cookbook, as well as the school canteen policy document and the guide for setting up and managing school canteens” (Diagne and Ndiaye, 2023).

The 2016 School Canteen Guide provides some nutritional guidelines. For a balanced meal, the principle of multiple mixtures in terms of nutrients and food products to broaden the range of foods and effectively prevent the risks of nutritional deficiency prevails. A balanced menu requires a basic energy food from cereals (millet, rice, corn), an additional food rich in energy (vegetable oil, fat, sugar), a food rich in animal protein

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<sup>8</sup> <https://cndn.sn/la-vision-du-senegal-en-matiere-de-nutrition/>

<sup>9</sup>The Multisectoral Strategic Plan for Nutrition of Senegal 2024-2028, prepared by the National Nutrition Development Council, is awaiting validation.

(milk, egg, fish, meat) or vegetable protein (peanut, cowpea, bean, lentil, pea) and a food rich in micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) (fruits and vegetables). Beyond these nutritional standards, the School Canteen Guide provides, in areas with micronutrient deficiencies, to use foods enriched with micronutrients (vitamin A, iron, folic acid, zinc) and to join forces with medical structures to increase micronutrient intake in medicinal form. In addition, if Goiter prevalence is known among students, iodized salt is used in the meal preparation in a range from 3 to 6g per child per day (Republic of Senegal, 2016, pp. 48-49). In 2022, 6.9% of the 287,399 preschool students benefited from iron supplementation while 16.9% received vitamin A supplementation (DPRE/MEN, 2022, p. 38-39).

*Table 4: Reference basket and its nutritional value in Senegal (CRES, 2017)*

Products	Preschool	Elementary
Cereals	80/100 g	150 g
Legumes (replaceable with fish or meat)	20 g	40 g
Vegetable oil enriched with vitamin A	10/20 g	15/20 g
Iodized salt	3 g	4 g

However, the nutritional standards of the School Canteen Guide are often disregarded in practice. The meals served have fewer foods rich in micronutrients, i.e. fruits and vegetables. Moreover, one in five establishments does not provide students with daily nutritional requirements. While the dishes seem to be diversified in the majority of establishments, this is not necessarily the case for the meals which are less balanced (Diagne, 2023).

## Food procurement

With the WFP, the school supply system has evolved in favor of local purchases and optimization of logistics costs. The system has become digital. The beneficiary schools thus exchange their monetary transfer, from retailers identified by the CGEs approved by the WFP, for food. First, a distribution plan is developed and validated. Then the monetary transfer is made. A purchasing planning meeting is held in each school with principals, CGEs and retailers. Subsequently, the purchase and collection of foodstuffs is done at the retailer by the canteen manager. Finally, the food is stored and managed by canteen managers and CGEs before being cooked with the help of the communities and consumed by the students (PAM, 2023b).

For CI, the request for food needs from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is made on an annual basis. This is followed by the purchase by the USDA and shipment to the port of Dakar. These foodstuffs are fully exempt from tax by the State of Senegal. The foodstuffs are stored in a main warehouse and then distributed to schools. Over the duration of the SUKAABE JANNGO I 2018-2023 project, six basic products (flour, bulgur, rice, lentils, green peas and sunflower oil) were imported for a total of 2,920 tons (CI, 2023, p. 21). Local purchases (millet, cowpea, enriched flour and cornmeal) are the second source of supply with a purchasing process managed by the IEFs and the schools which form a purchasing group. Producers and processors who win the tenders also deliver food to the central store. The third source of supply for school canteens in the CI model is the community fields and school gardens (106 created in the regions of Saint-Louis, Sédhiou and Kolda) supported by the programme

with technical monitoring and the distribution of inputs to increase their production capacity. This allows producers to donate part of their production to the school. This production, consisting of fruits and vegetables, sweet potatoes with orange flesh, enriches school preparations.

The GRDR supports the CGEs and local authorities in taking charge of school canteen supplies. Following the model of central kitchens, the money is transferred to the monitoring and management committee set up by municipal decree. The committee identifies local producers and organizes a price negotiation workshop, signing supply contracts with them (IPAR and Inter-Réseaux, 2024). For AVSF, tripartite contracts are signed between the school, producers and management committees to support stakeholders in contracting before transferring full responsibility for purchases to the CGEs. The relationships between small producers, farmers' organizations or agricultural cooperatives, traders, CGEs, cooks, communities and students are governed by food flows, financial flows and workflows at the various links in the school food chain (PAM, 2023b). For the 2022-2023 financial year, the WFP Model Canteens project, implemented in 6 regions and 12 departments, promoted local products by building chicken coops in 15 schools, setting up school gardens in 14 schools, planting 300 fruit trees in seven schools, not to mention the training component for cooks and CGE members (WFP, 2023a). Currently, the school canteen supply model in Senegal seems more oriented towards decentralized multi-stakeholder management operated in a changing political, institutional and legal environment.

## **Legal framework and public policy evolution**

In 2014, the Emerging Senegal Plan, called PSE, considered school feeding as an element of the general social protection policy that can rely on the promotion of local production. Indeed, this plan "identifies school feeding as a social safety net and an opportunity to promote local production" (Republic of Senegal, 2014). In addition, the programme for the Improvement of Quality, Equity and Transparency in Education and Training, called PAQUET-EF, makes school canteens a lever for performance to enable more students to benefit from quality education (Diagne, 2023). The National Social Protection Strategy, called SNPS, 2015-2025 considers that school canteens can contribute to "the universalization of food security for children through their scaling up, particularly in primary schools and daaras" (World Bank, 2023).

There are specific procedures for local authorities whose initial annual budget is less than 300 million FCFA. These legal provisions make it possible to simplify advertising procedures and the conditions for supplier participation, as well as the use of simplified tender documents. For any contract less than 25 million FCFA, advertising requirements are simplified and certain certificates are no longer required.<sup>10</sup>

The Request for Information and Price (RFI) approach is applicable in the case of low-cost markets. The simple RFI is used for a market cost less than or equal to 3 million FCFA (supplies/services) or 5 million FCFA (works/intellectual services) while the RFI with restricted competition is provided for cases where the market cost is less than 15 million FCFA (supplies/services) or 25 million FCFA (works/intellectual services). The RFI with open competition is recommended for the market cost between 15 and 50 million

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<sup>10</sup>Order No. 7119 of March 23, 2023 in application of Art. 80 of the Public Procurement Code: [clickable link](#)

FCFA<sup>11</sup>. To supply school canteens, schools have the possibility of using private tenders to promote access to public markets for family farms (if purchases are less than 3 million FCFA), even if the results remain very mixed because of imported products in some school canteens. Furthermore, small producers or producer organizations are not always able to satisfy an order for a large volume of food products. However, the solution recommended by the Public Procurement Code (Art. 8) is allotment, which consists of dividing the large order into subsets called "lots" to adapt to the limited capacity of small producers/suppliers in order to allow them access to public markets (Swensson, 2020).

The Senegalese Public Procurement Code<sup>12</sup> exempts candidates from providing a bid guarantee for contracts estimated at less than 80 million FCFA (supplies and other services other than intellectual services) or less than 100 million FCFA (works).<sup>13</sup> A performance guarantee for goods whose value is less than 70 million FCFA for supplies and other current services but also less than 100 million FCFA for intellectual works and services is also not necessary.<sup>14</sup> Producer cooperatives are not bound by the presentation of a bid guarantee for contracts worth less than 50 million FCFA (Swensson, 2020, p. 40).

In addition to this, the Public Procurement Code (Art. 47) gives the possibility to Small and Medium Enterprises to come together in a consortium to propose an offer that commits them collectively or individually on the basis of supply quotas previously defined and allocated. This provision constitutes an opportunity for small agricultural producers to facilitate their access to public food markets, particularly that of school meals, but also to lay the foundations of a local organization capable of responding to calls for tender despite some limitations related to formalization and tax obligations that are often necessary.

## Costs of implementation

There is a high variability in the unit cost of meals due to a plurality of school canteen programmes to which the future National School Feeding programme, called PNAS, should provide a harmonization solution. The cost of implementing this programme, for preschool, elementary and middle schools in rural and peri-urban areas, is estimated per year and on average at 87.5 billion FCFA (CRES, 2018, cited by Diagne 2023). Among the elements that make up the cost structure, food and supplies are more important than logistics and storage, management and administration, personnel and equipment (CRES, 2017, p. 68).

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<sup>11</sup>Order No. 7118 of 23 March 2023 pursuant to Art. 79 of the Public Procurement Code: [Clickable link](#)

<sup>12</sup>[http://www.armp.sn/images/Decrets/decret\\_n\\_2022-2295\\_du\\_28\\_decembre\\_2022\\_portant\\_Code\\_des\\_marches\\_publics\\_230201\\_180122.pdf](http://www.armp.sn/images/Decrets/decret_n_2022-2295_du_28_decembre_2022_portant_Code_des_marches_publics_230201_180122.pdf)

<sup>13</sup>Order No. 7120 of March 23, 2023 in application of Art. 114 of the Public Procurement Code: [clickable link](#)

<sup>14</sup>Order No. 7121 of March 23, 2023 in application of Art. 115 of the Public Procurement Code: [clickable link](#)

*Table 5: Cost of meals according to the programmes (CRES, 2017)*

Programmes	Cost of a meal (FCFA)	Cost for one student per year (FCFA)
SADMAD	485	32,980
WFP-Living	208	15,392
WFP-Voucher	156	15,288
WFP-Community field	114	15,960
“Milk at School” programme	111	
Purchase African for Africa	111	

It is important to specify that these elements vary according to the programmes which do not necessarily have the same definition of the cost of a meal. According to the cost-benefit analysis carried out by the Consortium for Economic and Social Research (CRES), the WFP-Community Fields model is more advantageous with an average annual gain per student estimated at 169,000 FCFA while the PAA is at 117,000 FCFA, the “Milk at School” programme at 107,000 FCFA, the WFP-Purchase Voucher at 107,000 FCFA, the WFP-Living at 82,500 FCFA and the Sustainable Food System and Fight against Malnutrition in the Dakar Region (SADMAD) programme at 77,000 FCFA (CRES, 2017, pp. 68-69). In terms of economic benefits, an impact study conducted by the GRDR showed that school canteens can help to revitalize the local economy and improve the quality of the offer thanks to an approach of promoting local producers and products (GRDR, 2022).

*Table 6: Financing of school meal programmes*

Indicators	Values
Number of children receiving school meals	500,000 to 1,000,000
Average cost of a meal (FCFA)	113 to 207
Average annual cost of raw materials (FCFA)	54,843,653,866
Average annual salary costs (FCFA)	466,240,000
Family participation (FCFA/ student/month)	200 to 300 per 15 kg of millet/5 kg of peanuts per student
City budget per child (FCFA)	No budget dedicated to school canteens at the level of the Communities
Government budget per child (FCFA/year)	3,500
Number of school days per academic year	150
Average number of school meal days per academic year	74

## Financing

According to the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) Survey in 2021, the budget for the School Feeding Support programme in Senegal in 2020/2021 was USD 3,104,463, of which 38% was covered by the Government, 59% by international funds

and 3% by the private sector. State funding was estimated in 2016 at 9% of the budgetary resources allocated to school canteen programmes.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the Senegalese Government's subsidy is said to have fallen from 1.2 billion FCFA in 2014 to less than 100 million FCFA in 2018-2019 (School Feeding Policy Document under review, n. d. pp. 5-6). With 1.4 billion FCFA proposed for school canteens in 2023 and not yet released in 2024, the MEN only allocates 0.2% of its budget to it (Diagne, 2023). In terms of financing, elementary school canteens would currently benefit from 2.1% of public spending (Gohin, 2023, p. 10). As for local authorities, their contribution would be less than 5% of school funding (Diagne, 2023). Even if educational responsibility is transferred to municipalities<sup>16</sup>, school meals are not yet transferred to allow them to dedicate a budget line to it. However, some communities are initiating school meal programmes based on short supply chains in a territorial food policy strategy, such as the Departmental Council of Rufisque and Dakar (Gonese and Saroumi, 2023). The sources of income of local authorities are, to a large extent, supplied by the contribution of the State. Act III of Decentralization provides for a "decentralization endowment fund, created by the finance law, [which] receives an endowment equivalent to 3.5% of the Value Added Tax collected for the benefit of the State budget of the last known management".

In addition, it also provided for "the Local Government Equipment Fund [which] receives an allocation equivalent to 2% of the Value Added Tax for the benefit of the State budget of the last known management".<sup>17</sup> For the private sector, very few companies are involved in the financing of school canteens. However, NGOs and (local) foundations are often approached by school food stakeholders to involve them in the financing. The central kitchen model implemented in the department of Rufisque with the Departmental Council of Rufisque could be one of the solutions to involve companies in the financing of school canteens through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). On the other hand, CI collaborates with the private sector within the framework of CSR and some organizations have supported the financing of school canteens. Parents of students contribute between 200 and 800 FCFA per month and per student depending on the programmes and areas. Students, in some rural areas, contribute in kind up to 15 kg of millet or 5 kg of peanuts per person. We can also see the combination of financing methods by communities. Other community members can provide donations of vegetables, spices or other foods. In addition to this, there is the provision of cooks in the form of volunteers even if sometimes there are allowances below the expected salary level (Diagne, 2023). The contribution of companies through CSR is not always there. In addition, this contribution is only possible in areas where these companies are present, therefore, often to the detriment of rural areas.

Since schools benefit from resources from the State, the MEN, through the DCaS, recommends the use of 16.4% of the allocated budget. The amount of the budget is estimated at 3,500 FCFA per student per year. However, this measure is not monitored to ensure its effectiveness. It is also not mandatory. However, it made it possible to allocate 372,196 FCFA to 1,050 schools during the 2016-2017 school year (Gonese and Saroumi, 2023, p. 16). Households and communities contribute 10.4% to the operating

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<sup>15</sup> [https://gcnf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Senegal\\_FRENCH\\_10\\_22\\_r2.pdf](https://gcnf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Senegal_FRENCH_10_22_r2.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Article 313 of Act III on Decentralization: [clickable link](#)

<sup>17</sup> Articles 324 and 328 of Act III on Decentralization: [clickable link](#)

costs of school canteens (Diagne, 2023). However, it is noted that few programmes include in their cost structures the voluntary work of women cooks, which represents a significant share. For example, in the GRDR canteen models in the Rufisque department, the remuneration of women cooks represents between 25 and 30% of the cost of a meal estimated at 300 FCFA.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Each partner has its own internal monitoring system. WFP has tested the Senegal School Food Database, called BALISE, with DCaS. This system was mainly based on canteen managers at the IEF level who had to enter the quarterly summary sheets through the platform. CI and GRDR have each set up a data collection system using the “Kobo Collect” tool. CI has combined a few tools such as a central database, intervention mapping with geocode, etc. These experiments have enabled DCaS to update the BALISE system. Thus, a new scalable platform called the Senegal School Food Monitoring System (SASSE) was developed by the MEN. This platform is integrated into the MEN information system. Each connected school enters the monthly summaries. Ultimately, the Ministry aims for all partners to use it. The design was done with the involvement of stakeholders such as WFP, CI, GRDR, CICODEV Africa, Academy Inspections and IEF. The SASSE is entering its testing phase in all schools for the 2023-2024 academic year. In the future, a national database on school feeding is being built with the MEN/DCaS. In the absence of a single school canteen programme, each partner makes its own evaluations based on the programmes.

Following an evaluation in 2014 of Senegal's school feeding programme that placed the country at level 2/4 (latent, emerging, established and advanced), the State carried out a new evaluation in 2023. This last evaluation was carried out using the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) approach which consists of evaluating the pillars of a school food, nutrition and health programme: the political and regulatory environment, financial, institutional and coordination capacities, design and implementation, the role of communities and the private sector. Apart from the role of communities and the private sector which was at latent level, the rest of the elements were at level 2, i.e. "emerging" in 2014 during the first evaluation (World Bank, 2023).

Despite political will and international recognition on the issue of school feeding, Senegal is struggling to materialize school canteens in its political and regulatory environment. However, the State of Senegal has made efforts by increasing the budget line in the Finance Law from 500 million to 1.2 billion FCFA in 2008. It has also opted for the decentralization of financing since 2014 with the measure of "direct allocation to schools". However, this financing is still marked by dependence on external partners. Overall, the role of communities and the private sector has progressed from "latent" in 2014 to "emerging" in 2023 while the rest of the pillars assessed have stagnated at level 2, i.e. "emerging" in 2023 (World Bank, 2023).

## Lessons learned and best practices

The indicator of the school canteen coverage rate is evolving erratically: 53% in 2012; 12% in 2019; 13% in 2021; 25% in 2023 (Diagne, 2023). In 2011, 63% of public schools



in rural areas had a school canteen compared to 12.6% in 2016 (Gonese, 2021, p. 10). This suggests a dynamic of regression in the efforts made and calls on the State to provide the necessary and stable funding for the sustainability of school canteens. According to the global survey on school feeding programmes carried out by the GCNF in 2021, 234,533 primary school students benefited from the School Feeding Support programme in Senegal during the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, school feeding programmes have helped create 8,130 jobs for cooks and food preparers, not to mention processors, managers, quality controllers, handlers, etc. (GCNF, 2021). WFP's experience has shown that school canteens have helped improve the retention rate of boys and girls in school in 2021 and 2022 with more than 99% in the schools it covered (WFP, 2023b). In addition, the approach of promoting local products has made it possible to have school meals, to have shaded areas in schools with fruit trees, to have educational support with school gardens and chicken coops, in addition to generating additional income for the CGEs (WFP, 2023a).

The evaluation of the impact of school canteen programmes on academic performance in rural primary schools in Senegal carried out by the CRES showed that school canteens significantly impact students' overall grades, their memory and reasoning skills, their understanding and knowledge skills. This impact is better with the involvement of parents in the school canteen system (Diagne et al, 2012, p. 3). Moreover, the financial contribution of communities in money, in kind and in labor is an important practice for the smooth running of school canteens in Senegal.

In addition, the structuring and active involvement of civil society around the issue of school canteens constitute a major asset for advancing school feeding through intense advocacy with decision-makers. Indeed, civil society actors such as the Group of Friends of School Food in Senegal launched in 2019, the Multi-Sectoral Group of Food and Nutrition Actors in Schools, called GMSANE, created in December 2021 and the Network of Parliamentarians for School Food and the Modernization of Daaras in Senegal set up in 2021 are, among others, advocating for a specific law on school food and the modernization of daaras in Senegal (Diagne and Ndiaye, 2023).

Since 2014, Senegal has integrated the culture of evaluation through the SABER approach into its school canteen policy. This allows it to contribute to filling the limitations of the monitoring system for better implementation. The use of this evaluation tool also allows it to rise to the rank of international standards on the issue of school meals.

## Challenges

This work resulted in the synthesis of some of the challenges facing school canteens in Senegal. These challenges are structured around the following points:

- *Institutional weakness*: Management of school meals entrusted to a structure such as the DCaS is considered to be lacking the means to match its ambition.<sup>18</sup>
- *Supply of local products*: Clearer food purchasing rules and closer links between school meals and local agricultural production are necessary to guarantee fresh, varied, regular and healthy meals.

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<sup>18</sup>For instance, in Burundi, a dedicated Unit was transformed into a National Directorate of School Feeding (DNAS)



- *Involvement of local authorities:* Their commitment is essential to ensure effective ownership of school canteen programmes by local populations.
- *Stable funding:* With only 1.25% of the national budget allocated to school canteens, stable and sufficient funding remains a major challenge.
- *Specific legal framework:* The absence of a law on school meals and implementing decrees hinders the effective implementation of the national school meals policy with its multiple objectives.
- *Capacity building:* Stakeholders involved in school canteen management need additional training on procurement procedures.
- *Digitalized cash transfer:* Despite its potential benefits in terms of transparency, obstacles remain, such as limited telephone network coverage and lack of expertise in purchasing procedures.
- *Meal preparation conditions:* They require significant improvements, particularly in terms of adequate infrastructure, qualified personnel and appropriate cooking utensils.

According to these challenges, we formulate recommendations to improve the design and implementation environment for school meal programmes in Senegal.

- *Establish a law on school meals*<sup>19</sup> by defining at least the framework for intervention of the actors, the modalities as well as the monitoring and evaluation.
- *Identify and set up mechanisms for securing the financial resources* of school canteens by implementing, for example, reforms in the budget nomenclature of local authorities, a specific line dedicated to school meals, and by involving private companies more through CSR.
- *Promote conditions for negotiation and price setting that are flexible* enough not to harm contractors by adopting a more flexible system for setting prices and managing product irregularities according to the realities of the moment and the territories.
- *Support professionalization of actors in the supply of school canteens* by strengthening their capacities which will facilitate their assimilation of procedures and instruments for accountability.
- *Support farmers' organization at the local level* and strengthen their capacities in terms of administration and financial management to increase their level of access to public food procurement markets.
- *Experiment with the group purchasing model* for schools in the same area or sector to take advantage of the benefits of centralized and decentralized school canteen management models.
- *Review legal and administrative instruments* by working to simplify and adapt procurement procedures, adapt the conditions for producer participation and the volume of agricultural production provided for in contracts to the capacities of suppliers, but also to facilitate access to information for small producers.

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<sup>19</sup>In this respect, Senegal could learn from the experience of Togo, which is ahead in this legal and regulatory aspect and has set up a system of quotas for local products in school meals and an approval procedure for NGOs working in the country on school meals.

- *Encourage, support and improve the implementation of the SASSE for the reporting of more reliable and regular data to remedy the lack of regularly updated databases that can be used to inform the monitoring and evaluation indicators for school canteens. This will make it possible to have disaggregated data and to feed into policies for scaling up good practices by shortening the data feedback circuit.*

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## Contacts

Names	Adress	E-Mails
Sidy TOUNKARA	Sociologist, Researcher, IPAR, Dakar (Senegal)	<a href="mailto:sidy.touunkara@ipar.sn">sidy.touunkara@ipar.sn</a>
Seyni KÉBÉ	Accountant, Project Manager, Monitoring and assessment GRDR, Dakar (Senegal)	<a href="mailto:seyeni.kebe@grdr.org">seyeni.kebe@grdr.org</a>
Ibrahima HATHIE	Economist, Researcher, IPAR, Dakar (Senegal)	<a href="mailto:ibrahima.hathie@ipar.sn">ibrahima.hathie@ipar.sn</a>
Laure TALL	Agroecologist, Research Director, IPAR, Dakar (Senegal)	<a href="mailto:laure.tall@ipar.sn">laure.tall@ipar.sn</a>

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# Annex

Annex 1 - Key Food Security and Nutrition Indicators (FAO et al., 2023)

Indicators	Year	Senegal	West Africa
Prevalence of undernourishment in the total population	2020-2022 <sup>20</sup>	5.7	14.3
Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the total population	2020-2022	11.1	21.2
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population	2020-2022	49.8	64.1
Prevalence of wasting in children (under 5 years)	2022	8.1	6.7
Prevalence of stunting in children (under 5 years)	2022	17.0	30.0
Prevalence of overweight in children (under 5 years)	2022	3.4	2.4
Prevalence of anemia in women (15–49 years)	2019	52.7	51.8
Prevalence of low birth weight	2020	17.2	14.3

According to the 2023 Continuous Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) report regarding children aged 0–5 years<sup>21</sup>, wasting affects 10%, underweight affects 16%, overweight reaches 1%, while 18% of this group suffer from stunting. These indicators vary depending on the type of area. In rural areas, stunting, wasting, and overweight rates are 21%, 12%, and 1% respectively among children aged 0–5 years. In urban areas, stunting, wasting, and overweight rates are 12%, 7%, and 2% respectively for children aged 0–5 years (ANSD and ICF, 2023).

Senegal has not made progress toward achieving the target related to wasting, as 8.1% of children under the age of 5 are affected, which is higher than the West African regional average of 6.7%. The prevalence of overweight among children under the age of 5 is also high at 3.4%. Additionally, the prevalence of anemia among women aged 15–49 years remains a major public health issue (FAO et al., 2023).

<sup>20</sup> Average of the 3 years

<sup>21</sup> Unlike the age group targeted in this study (5–19 years), in Senegal, the ANSD and institutions dedicated to food, nutrition, and health issues have their own statistical classification. In these fields, the targeted age groups are 0–5 years and 15–49 years. Therefore, data specifically covering the 5–19 age group, as required for this study on school feeding, are not available in Senegal. This raises the issue of harmonizing data at the scale of the School Meals Coalition.