



What Will It Take to Sustain A National School Feeding Program in Nigeria?

Lessons from two decades of implementation

Chibuzo Nwagboso, Ebuka Orjiakor, Oliver K. Kirui, and Bedru Balana

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria's experience with school feeding over the past two decades has been characterized by repeated starts, interruptions, and attempts to rebuild the program. The Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme was launched in 2005, but implementation was discontinued several years later after federal funding ceased. The program was revived in 2016 as the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) and expanded to a reported 9.9 million beneficiaries by 2022. However, NHGSFP implementation then stalled, and the program was formally suspended in January 2024. NHGSFP has since been restructured as the Renewed Hope National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (RH-NHGSFP). However, implementation has so far been limited to pilot activities in Lagos and Kano states.

Experiences at the state level show that school feeding programs can succeed when state governments are willing and able to finance and manage the program. Osun continued its program after federal funding was withdrawn. The state later operated O-Meals with state government support, although the program is no longer running. Zamfara and Kebbi provide a more recent example. Zamfara state introduced a school feeding pilot in 2025 and has since begun expanding it, with early evidence of increased school attendance, while Kebbi is currently feeding some junior and senior secondary schools through state funding. These experiences point to the importance of state government commitment, financing, and capacity to manage program delivery.

Several weaknesses are evident across the federal and state experiences. School feeding programs still lack a dedicated national statutory framework. Coordination between institutions and across levels of government remains weak. Financing has not kept pace with rising food prices, and the role of aggregators and wholesalers in the food supply chain is not adequately monitored. Finally, school feeding program monitoring systems focus more on the number of children fed than on whether the program is achieving its intended education, nutrition, and livelihood outcomes.

The main issue, therefore, is not whether school feeding can work in Nigeria. It can. Rather, it is whether the country has the institutional arrangements to keep school feeding programs running when political leadership, funding conditions, and administrative structures change. The experience of the past two decades suggests that another relaunch of a national school feeding program, without addressing these institutional weaknesses, risks repeating the same cycle of expansion and interruption. The focus should therefore be on putting in place the legal, financing, coordination, supply-chain, and accountability arrangements needed to support a program that can be sustained over time.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Historical Overview	2
3. Institutional Mapping.....	3
4. Program Suspension: What Happened and Why.....	5
5. Current Status	6
6. Case Studies: Sustaining School Feeding in Nigerian States	7
7. Lessons Learned	9
8. Conceptualizing Institutional Readiness	10
8.1 Legal and policy framework	11
8.2 Institutional arrangements and coordination	11
8.3 Financing	12
8.4 Market system	13
8.5 Governance, accountability, and political economy	13
9. Conclusion	15
References.....	16

TABLES

Table 2-1 Estimated National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) coverage over time.....	2
Table 8-1 Summary of key constraints hampering the effectiveness of national home-grown school feeding programs in Nigeria and possible policy responses	14

FIGURES

Figure 3-1 Institutional stakeholder mapping of school feeding in Nigeria.....	5
Figure 8-1 Conceptual framework for an enabling environment for sustainable programs of school feeding in Nigeria	11

1. INTRODUCTION

School feeding is one of the most widely used social protection interventions in low- and middle-income countries, reaching an estimated 466 million children across 176 countries (WFP 2025). Africa has recorded the fastest expansion in school feeding coverage in recent years. Evidence from evaluations consistently links school feeding to higher enrolment, improved attendance, better cognitive outcomes, and, in some settings, improved nutrition and local livelihoods (Aurino et al. 2023; Gelli et al. 2021; Wineman et al. 2022). The livelihood effects are particularly strong under home-grown school feeding models, where food is procured locally from smallholder farmers (Wineman et al. 2022). These benefits depend on an enabling institutional environment with effective governance, clear roles for stakeholders, adequate financing, and coordination among implementing actors (Acosta and Bedasso 2024).

The stakes of a functioning school feeding program are especially high in Nigeria. The country has an estimated 18.3 million out-of-school children in 2024, of whom about 10.2 million are of primary-school age (UNICEF 2024). Only about 63 percent of primary-school-age children attend school regularly, and an estimated 74 percent of children aged 7–14 lack foundational reading and numeracy skills (UNICEF 2024). The nutrition burden is comparably severe: recent estimates place under-five stunting at roughly one-third of children (around 32–40 percent), some 2 million children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and about 11 million experience severe food poverty (UNICEF 2024). School feeding sits precisely at the intersection of these education, nutrition, and poverty deficits, which is why its repeated interruption in Nigeria carries disproportionate human-capital costs.

The case for getting this right is well established. Multi-sectoral benefit–cost analyses covering Nigeria and 13 other countries find that school feeding generates returns across health and nutrition, education, social protection, and the local agricultural economy that substantially exceed program costs (Verguet et al. 2020), and global estimates place returns at roughly US\$7–35 for every US\$1 invested (WFP 2025). Reflecting this evidence, worldwide financing for school meals more than doubled from about US\$43 billion in 2020 to US\$84 billion in 2024, with approximately 99 percent now drawn from national budgets (WFP 2025). Africa has been central to this shift: school meal programs now reach more than 86 million children across the continent, and member-state investment has nearly doubled over the past decade (African Union 2026). Since 2016 the African Union has designated 1 March as the Africa Day of School Feeding and adopted home-grown school feeding as a continental strategy (African Union 2016), and Nigeria has joined the global School Meals Coalition (School Meals Coalition 2025). Against this backdrop, Nigeria’s cycle of expansion and interruption places it increasingly out of step with a continental trajectory of scale-up and consolidation.

This review follows a two-part structure. Sections 2 to 7 trace the history of school feeding in Nigeria, mapping key institutions, examining why the program has repeatedly stalled, describing its current status, and presenting case studies from states that have sustained feeding despite federal-level disruption. The last two sections of the review build on this evidence base to develop an approach to assess institutional readiness for school feeding in Nigeria, using a conceptual framework, comparative practice, and administrative data to identify gaps and inform recommendations.

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The legislative foundation for school feeding in Nigeria was laid by the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004. On this basis, the Home-Grown School Feeding and Health Programme was launched in 2005 under President Olusegun Obasanjo, aiming to provide locally sourced midday meals to public primary-school children in twelve pilot states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), targeting roughly 2.5 million to 3.5 million children (FME 2006, FMHADMSD 2023). The pilot did not survive federal disengagement. When the national government stopped disbursing funds in 2007, ten of the twelve participating states abandoned the program within a short period, leaving only Kano and Osun continuing on their own (FMHADMSD 2023, Dorlach et al. 2025). Kano subsequently lapsed as well, while Osun persisted, but formally rebranded the program in their state ‘O-Meals’ when it was reinstated in 2012 after a brief suspension in 2011.

The school feeding program was rebuilt at national scale in 2016 under President Buhari as the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), an arm of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). Coverage expanded steadily over the following years: from roughly 7.5 million pupils in 46,000 schools across 22 states shortly after the 2016 relaunch, to about 9.4 million pupils in 46,000 schools across 31 states by 2019, to a reported peak of 9,990,862 children in over 54,000 schools across all 36 states and the FCT by 2022 (FMHADMSD 2023, 2024). Table 2-1 summarizes this trajectory.

Table 2-1 Estimated National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) coverage over time

Period	Estimated beneficiaries	Reported coverage	Source
2005–2007/08 pilot	Target ~2.5–3.5 million	12 or 13 states and FCT; collapsed when federal funding stopped in 2007/08	FMHADMSD 2023; Dorlach et al. 2025
2016 relaunch	~7.5 million	22 states, ~46,000 schools	Action Health Incorporated
2019	~9.4 million	31 states, ~46,000 schools	Federal Government figures, cited in Borgen Project 2024
2022 (pre-halt peak)	~9.9 million	36 states and FCT, ~54,000 schools	FMHADMSD 2023, 2024
2024–2026 (RH-NHGSFP)	Target: reach 10 million primary school pupils, 20 percent increase in school enrolment and attendance, and 15 percent improvement in students’ academic performance.	Pilot activities of breakfast initiative launched in FCT, Lagos and Kano, and reported expansion interest in other states	RH-NHGSFP; press reporting, 2025–2026

Source: Figures combine federal government and secondary-source reporting; pre-2023 figures are government-reported estimates and are not independently verified counts.

After the 2016 relaunch, the program was administratively moved from the Office of the Vice President to FMHADMSD in 2019 (Dorlach et al. 2025). It was disrupted again by COVID-19 school closures in 2020, before rebounding through 2022. It then stopped functioning in practice in late 2022, was formally suspended in January 2024, and was relaunched in 2025 under the new administration’s Renewed Hope Agenda as the Renewed Hope National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (RH-NHGSFP).

At its peak the NHGSFP was not only an education and nutrition intervention but also one of Nigeria’s largest social programs by employment footprint. The federal government and

implementing partners reported that the program engaged well over 100,000 cooks—by some accounts more than 120,000—the large majority of them women, and linked to an estimated 100,000 or more smallholder farmers along the food supply chain (Vanguard 2022; MacArthur Foundation 2025). An interruption does not only remove meals from children but also withdraws income from tens of thousands of women cooks, farmers, and small vendors, magnifying the cost of each stoppage and helping explain the strength of the pushback that has followed suspensions.

The COVID-19 period also produced one of the program's most contested episodes. With schools closed, the federal government launched a "modified" home-grown feeding scheme in May 2020 that distributed take-home rations to the households of enrolled pupils, reportedly spending around ₦523 million; the initiative drew sustained criticism over how children could be fed while schools were shut and over the transparency of the disbursements (Guardian 2020). At the same time, rigorous evidence documented the real cost of losing school meals: a panel study combining pre- and post-pandemic survey data found that disruption of school feeding services raised the probability of a household skipping a meal by about 9 percentage points and of going a whole day without eating by about 3 percentage points, with single mothers and poorer households hit hardest (Abay et al. 2021). The episode illustrates both the food-security value of the meals and the accountability weaknesses that recur whenever delivery is disrupted.

3. INSTITUTIONAL MAPPING

The National Home-Grown School Feeding Policy (FMHADMSD 2023) defines school feeding as a multi-sectoral, multi-level intervention and assigns responsibilities across five institutional tiers: federal, state, local government, school, and local food supply chain actors. Figure 3-1 illustrates this stakeholder architecture as set out in the policy.

- **Federal level:** At the apex, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD) provides overall policy leadership, strategic coordination and oversight for the Renewed Hope NHGSFP. The ministry works through the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) structure and a Multi-sectoral Advisory/Steering Committee that brings together key line ministries and agencies, including education, agriculture, health, finance and budget, as well as development partners. Recent policy forums have emphasized the need for a dedicated legislative framework to institutionalize the programme, clarify federal–state–local roles and embed cost-sharing arrangements that can survive changes in political leadership.
- **State level:** State governments are the primary implementation anchors under the policy. Each state is expected to designate a State Focal Point and establish a State School Feeding Office, supported by a State Multi-sectoral Advisory Committee (often aligned with or nested within the State Committee on Food and Nutrition, SCFN). In practice, these committees are typically chaired by a senior official from the State Planning Commission or a relevant ministry and include permanent secretaries or commissioners from education, agriculture, health, finance/budget, women's affairs and other sectors. Their mandate is to provide strategic direction, coordinate inter-ministerial action, align nutrition and agriculture interventions with school feeding, and oversee planning, budgeting and accountability.

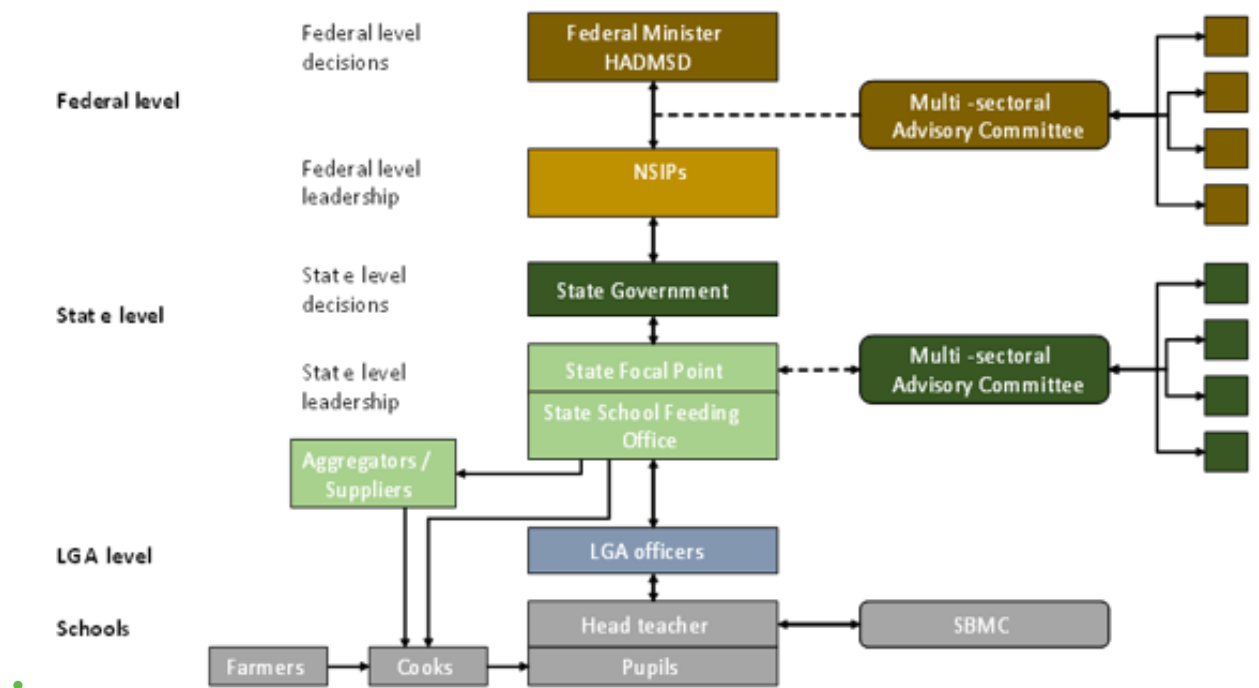
- **Local government level:** Local Government Area (LGA) officers serve as the operational link between state structures and schools. The policy envisages LGA-level coordination through designated officers who support day-to-day implementation, monitor vendor performance, verify beneficiary data and facilitate communication between schools and state offices. In some states, Local Government Committees on Food and Nutrition (LGCFN) or equivalent structures are expected to play a similar coordinating role, bringing together sectoral departments and civil society representatives at the LGA level.
- **School level:** At the school level, head teachers, cooks, pupils and School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) are directly involved in delivery and oversight. Head teachers are responsible for verifying enrolment and attendance data, supervising meal distribution and ensuring that feeding aligns with school timetables and nutrition standards. Cooks (often recruited from the local community) prepare and serve meals, while SBMCs and parent–teacher associations provide community-level monitoring, grievance handling and accountability. The policy emphasizes community ownership as a safeguard against mismanagement and a mechanism for sustaining the programme across political cycles.
- **Local food procurement and supply chain:** The fifth tier comprises farmers, aggregators and suppliers who constitute the “home-grown” component of the programme. Local smallholder farmers and farmer cooperatives are expected to supply food commodities to schools through aggregators who consolidate, quality-check and deliver produce. This layer is critical for linking school feeding to local agricultural markets, creating livelihoods for women and youth, and reducing dependence on imported or centrally procured food. However, it also introduces complexity around aggregation, logistics, quality assurance, seasonality and payment systems, all of which affect programme performance.

Coordination gaps and accountability weaknesses

While the policy articulates a clear division of labor, implementation experience reveals that this does not always hold in practice. Federal-level restructuring and leadership turnover have undermined continuity, while state-level structures such as School Feeding Offices and multi-sectoral committees vary in functionality i.e., these are active in some states, nominal in others. At the LGA, school and supply-chain levels, weak staffing, underused SBMCs, and inconsistent vendor payments and contract enforcement further constrain oversight.

These frictions are central to what “readiness” means in this context; they are examined in depth in Section 8 as part of the institutional readiness assessment.

Figure 3-1 Institutional stakeholder mapping of school feeding in Nigeria



Source: FMHADMSD 2023

4. PROGRAM SUSPENSION: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY

Nigeria's school feeding effort has been suspended, in practice or formally, three times, and the drivers differ each time, which is a distinction that matters for what a revitalization strategy needs to fix.

- 2007/08 co-financing dispute:** The original 2005 pilot lost momentum when the federal government stopped disbursing its share of funding in 2007. The affected states blamed the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) for delayed releases, while the UBEC pointed to states' non-remittance of required counterpart funds. This dispute foreshadowed the same problem that remains unresolved under the current program (FMHADMSD 2023).
- 2022 cash shortages:** The federal government stopped paying school-meal caterers in several states from late 2022. This cessation was distinct from the formal suspension later in 2024. Reports from the states documented that vendors of catering services withdrew from schools over non-payment—some had been unpaid since September 2021. Dorlach et al. (2025) note that the reasons for the halt in payments are not fully clear, but point to political transitions at the time compounded by the cash shortage that followed the redesign of the naira in 2022/23. The naira redesign left caterers who had technically been paid through bank transfers unable to withdraw cash to purchase food.
- Formal suspension in January 2024:** On 12 January 2024, President Tinubu formally suspended all programs run by the National Social Investment Programme Agency, including N-Power, the Conditional Cash Transfer program, the Government Enterprise

and Empowerment Programme, and the NHGSFP. Initially, it was stated that the suspension would be for six weeks, citing an ongoing investigation into alleged financial malfeasance in the agency's management. The House of Representatives subsequently pushed back against the president's decision to suspend these programs in March and July 2024, arguing that a blanket suspension risked doing more harm than the problems the suspension was meant to address, given the adverse effects on school enrolment and attendance, child nutrition, and smallholder farmer incomes caused by the closing of these programs.

The allegations were specific and reached the top of the delivery chain. The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, was suspended over the alleged diversion of about ₦585 million into a private account, while the National Coordinator of the NSIP Agency, was suspended and questioned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in connection with a broader probe into billions of Naira—figures variously reported at ₦37.1 billion and higher—moving through the ministry and agency (ICIR 2024). As of mid-2026 the EFCC had not published the findings of these investigations, and no independent public account of the ministerial review has been released. The unresolved status of these cases is itself an institutional-readiness problem: it leaves the sector without a clear, evidence-based diagnosis of what failed, and it corrodes the public trust on which any credible relaunch depends.

The three episodes show a program whose federal-level continuity has depended less on program design flaws than on the political cycle and on governance failures in adjacent federal agencies.

5. CURRENT STATUS

The national school feeding program in Nigeria, relaunched in 2025 as the RH-NHGSFP, targets a 20 percent increase in school enrolment and attendance and a 15 percent improvement in academic performance. A parallel track targets out-of-school children and those in traditional Islamic Almajiri schools, using National Identity Management Commission verification to address earlier concerns about unidentifiable beneficiaries and non-existent schools. In practice, however, available reporting indicates that RH-NHGSFP's implementation has so far been limited largely to pilot activities in Lagos and Kano states.

The relaunch has been backed by a substantial budget commitment. The federal government allocated ₦100 billion to the RH-NHGSFP in the 2025 budget and formally relaunched the program on 29 May 2025, framing it around locally sourced meals for pupils in Primary 1–3, QR-coded supply chains, and real-time digital tracking intended to improve transparency (Sahara Reporters 2025). A parallel Alternate Education track, implemented with the [National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education \(CAOOSCE\)](#) and using National Identity Management Commission verification, sets the ambitious goal of reaching up to 20 million out-of-school and informal-sector children by 2026 (Punch 2025). Whether these commitments translate into sustained delivery—rather than announced targets that have historically outpaced implementation—will be the central test of the program's institutional readiness.

The RH-NHGSFP has expanded its recent activities beyond the traditional midday meal through the introduction of the “Snacks for Thought” breakfast initiative formally launched in

the FCT. The intervention is intended to provide pupils with a morning snack and drink before classroom activities, complementing rather than replacing the existing midday meal. Its stated objectives include improving pupils' alertness, concentration, attendance and learning.

The first pilot was launched in Kano State in October 2025 in selected public primary schools. With support from development partners, the pilot reached more than 1,800 pupils across three schools and provided locally prepared, whole-grain brown rice-based meals. The Kano pilot was intended to test the use of locally sourced foods and implementation arrangements ahead of further expansion. A larger pilot followed in Lagos State in June -July 2026. RH-NHGSFP, working with the Lagos State Government and the 57 local government areas and local council development areas, targeted approximately 30,000 public primary school pupils. Snacks and beverages were distributed across participating schools over several school days. A digital platform was also introduced to allow prospective sponsors to identify schools, view enrolment information and make sponsorship commitments. The platform is intended to support the management and transparency of the sponsorship model.

These pilots are being used to test implementation arrangements before wider expansion. The experience from Kano and Lagos will be important for assessing the operational requirements, financing arrangements and accountability mechanisms needed before wider expansion.

At the same time, a small number of states have sustained school feeding independently of the federal cycle, financing it wholly or partly from state budgets. These are the subjects of short case studies presented in the next section. These state programs provide a foundation for institutional readiness at sub-national scale even while the federal program has been intermittent. The findings presented for Zamfara and Kebbi states draw from several sources including the IFPRI-WFP-NHGSFP field visit (Kirui et al. 2026), state policy documents, and a recent stakeholder consultation workshop organized by IFPRI-Nigeria in the FCT. Participants included representatives from 6 states (Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Enugu, Kano, Kebbi, Zamfara), and the FCT, the NHGSFP, and development partners.

6. CASE STUDIES: SUSTAINING SCHOOL FEEDING IN NIGERIAN STATES

Osun state: Osun state in southwestern Nigeria was one of the two states from the original 2005 pilot that continued implementing school feeding after federal funding was withdrawn. The other state was Kano, although Kano later discontinued the program. Osun's program was briefly suspended in 2011 and reinstated in 2012 as 'O-Meals' (Adams 2019). During its implementation, the program benefited from sustained state government commitment and additional financing alongside federal support. An IFPRI scoping visit to Osun in 2024 found that the program was serving over 95,000 students across 1,475 schools, with the state government providing additional funding to supplement the federal contribution (Amare et al. 2024). However, Osun state is no longer implementing the program. Its experience, nonetheless, provides an important example of how state-level political and financial commitment can support school feeding beyond the federal program cycle.

Zamfara state: Zamfara state in northwestern Nigeria illustrates how a state can build a school meal program from a position of acute fragility. Zamfara State is developing a state-supported school feeding programme as part of its broader response to the state's education challenges, in a context of high numbers of out-of-school children and concerns about enrolment,

attendance and retention. The state identifies school feeding, alongside school renovation and the integration of Almajiri and Islamiyya schools into basic education, as part of its wider education response.

Zamfara previously participated in the federal NHGSFP, though coverage fell substantially short of the potential beneficiary pool: of 369,615 pupils identified, 223,388 (roughly 60 percent) were enrolled; 883 of 1,527 identified schools were covered; and 2,108 of a planned 5,167 food vendors or cooks were reportedly enrolled. The state reports improvements in enrolment and attendance when feeding was operational, consistent with earlier field evidence of higher school participation during periods when meals were provided.

The current programme remains at the transition stage. Following Governor Lawal's 2023 declaration of a state of emergency in education, the state launched in 2025 a school meal pilot program that initially reached about 3,300 pupils in a handful of schools. The state now intends to expand the program to reach 50,000 children across 14 LGAs. A February 2026 joint IFPRI-World Food Programme (WFP)-NHGSFP field visit documented some concrete effects. After meals began to be provided to students at Danturai primary school, enrolment reportedly rose from around 1,050 to 1,200 pupils, about a 14 percent increase (Kirui et al. 2026). Under the home-grown model, local women recruited as cooks each serve roughly 60 children and earn about ₦20,000 per month, anchoring the program in the community while creating household income.

The same February 2026 visit identified implementation gaps that mirror the national picture. School kitchens lack basic equipment, forcing cooks to prepare food at home; water and sanitation (WASH) infrastructure is limited; and monitoring systems remain too weak to reliably verify meal distribution and track beneficiaries. Conflict-related insecurity continues to affect rural attendance, access and supervision. The state also identifies broader weaknesses in procurement, food delivery, documentation and quality assurance, while food-price inflation raises the importance of predictable financing. Meal provision has not yet been extended to integrated Almajiri schools, where parents remain responsible for feeding children - a gap the state government has identified as a priority for scale-up, alongside kitchen and WASH rehabilitation, digital monitoring, stronger School-Based Management Committees, and formalised supply-chain contracts.

The state is also strengthening the programme's institutional basis as a draft school feeding policy is being developed, and an improved implementation strategy is under preparation. Executive orders reportedly authorize the use of part of the education levy and proceeds from endowment funds for school feeding, broadening the financing base, though sustainability will depend on effective legal implementation, transparent budget processes and timely release of funds.

Zamfara has therefore established the initial elements of a state-supported school feeding system but has not yet reached state-wide scale. Immediate institutional priorities are to consolidate the financing framework, clarify implementation procedures, close infrastructure and procurement gaps, extend coverage to integrated Almajiri schools, and build reliable systems for monitoring beneficiaries, meals and programme performance.

Kebbi state: Kebbi State, also in northwestern Nigeria, illustrates how a state can sustain school feeding through subnational financing after the withdrawal of federal support. Following the suspension of the federal NHGSFP for primary school pupils, Kebbi maintained an

operational programme with financing coming primarily from the state and additional support from development partners. The current state programme covers 326 junior and senior secondary schools, organised around state financing and institutional responsibility, with the Ministry of Education serving as the lead institution and coordination extended to agriculture, health and budget authorities. The state identifies government ownership, predictable financing, institutional coordination, local food-system linkages, nutrition and food safety, and monitoring and accountability as the core elements of its approach.

However, important elements of the system are still being consolidated: respondents call for a dedicated and protected budget line, clearer policies, operational guidelines and school feeding standards, and a clearer division of responsibilities across federal, state and local governments. Financing and implementation remain areas requiring attention. Respondents identify delayed disbursements, diversion risks and insufficient allocations as potential threats to continuity, and support safeguards such as beneficiary registries, electronic payments to caterers, independent audits and greater access to budget information - measures that would both strengthen financial controls and generate better information on coverage and implementation. Operationally, irregular food supplies, delayed payments, and gaps in monitoring and evaluation remain challenges, while reliable data on beneficiaries and meals served are still limited.

The programme also faces the common challenge of connecting school feeding with local agricultural production. Regular payments, adequate aggregation and logistics, and stronger farmer organizations are seen as the necessary conditions for increasing smallholder participation as suppliers. Similarly, community-level accountability is an acknowledged area for further development, with suggested measures including clearer responsibilities for school-based management committees, public disclosure of menus and budgets, and greater involvement of local women's groups.

Kebbi has therefore demonstrated that a state-led arrangement can sustain school feeding beyond the suspension of the federal primary-school programme. The central institutional question is whether it can consolidate financing, formalize institutional roles, strengthen procurement and supply arrangements, and build the monitoring and accountability systems needed to sustain the programme over time.

7. LESSONS LEARNED

Five principal lessons were drawn from the review of the experience of repeated starts and stops in national school feeding programs in Nigeria.

- **State-level co-financing and ownership**, not just federal design, appear to be the a key determinant of continuity: Osun's decades-long survival and Zamfara's and Kebbi's ongoing school feeding programs both rest on explicit state government financial investments and political commitment, which the national program's design has never been able to guarantee for most other states.
- **The federal program's disruptions** have been driven more by political-economy shocks, including election-cycle dynamics, agency-level corruption allegations, and leadership turnover, than by flaws in the underlying program model. This means that legal and financing reforms alone will not fix the problem of discontinuity in the national

school feeding program unless such reforms also insulate the program from these political cycles and shocks.

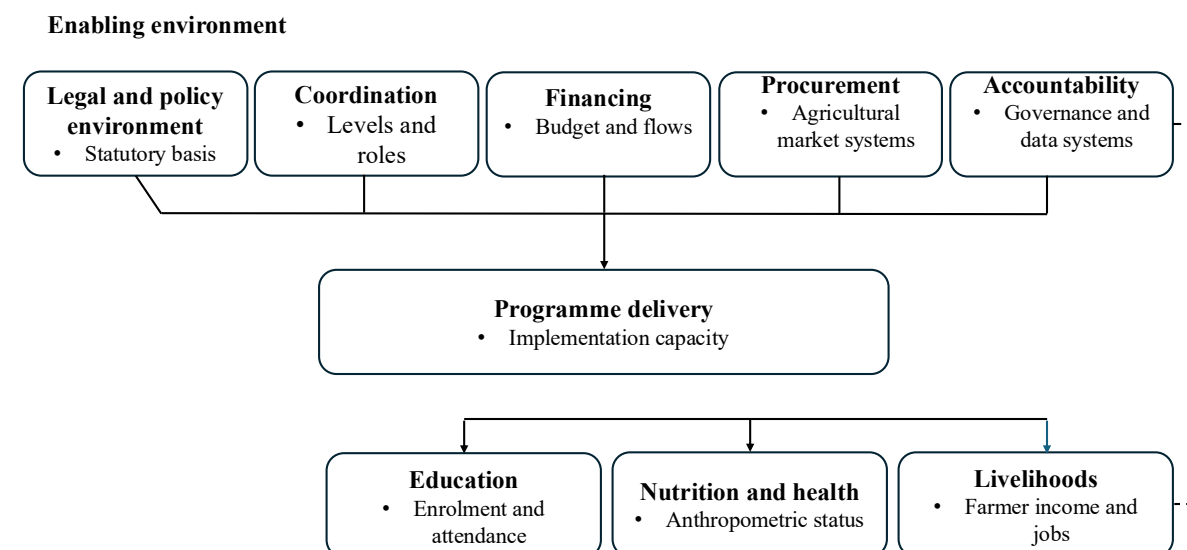
- **Basic infrastructure**, including functioning kitchens, water and sanitation, and storage, remains a binding constraint, even in politically well-supported pilots such as Zamfara's. Scale-up plans for school feeding programs need capital investment budgeted alongside per-meal financing and not as an afterthought.
- **Monitoring and verification** weaknesses are consistent across program eras and states, from unidentifiable beneficiaries at the federal level to the absence of reliable meal-distribution tracking in Zamfara state. These informational deficiencies point to the need for digital monitoring and the strengthening of School-Based Management Committees as a cross-cutting rather than state-specific priority.
- **Coverage of the hardest-to-reach children**, especially Almajiri students and out-of-school children, continues to lag behind mainstream public primary coverage in both the federal design and in leading state examples. These children who are now being left behind need to be treated as a distinct area of focus in any reboot of the national school feeding program. It should not be assumed that they will benefit from school feeding automatically simply from a general expansion of the program.

8. CONCEPTUALIZING INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

Institutional readiness is generally understood as the preparedness of an organization or program to respond to change and to deliver services reliably, underpinned by a mix of sound processes, appropriately resourced people, and adequate infrastructure (Agbabiaka and Ojo 2014). Readiness frameworks developed for public-sector service delivery typically decompose this preparedness into a small number of interacting domains, commonly including legal and regulatory foundations, process and coordination capacity, resource and financing capacity, and governance and accountability mechanisms (Agbabiaka and Ojo 2014). The institutional arrangements readiness tool of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) similarly organizes its assessment around building blocks spanning strategy, rules, structures, and competencies (UNPAN 2026).

Applied to Nigeria's school feeding program, we adapt this logic into five linked readiness dimensions, each assessed in the sections that follow: (i) the legal and policy environment, (ii) institutional arrangements and coordination, (iii) financing, (iv) the market system that supplies food to schools, and (v) governance and accountability. Weakness in any one dimension can undermine performance even where the others are strong.

Figure 8-1 Conceptual framework for an enabling environment for sustainable programs of school feeding in Nigeria



Source: Authors' compilation.

8.1 Legal and policy framework

Nigeria's school feeding effort has long operated with policy instruments rather than binding legislation. The 2023 National Home-Grown School Feeding Policy, developed jointly by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD) and the World Food Programme, is a significant step, but it carries ministerial rather than stronger statutory authority (FMHADMSD 2023). The Ministry itself identifies the absence of a dedicated National Home-Grown School Feeding Act as an outstanding gap, and other instruments still reflect incomplete coverage. The National Social Protection Policy 2021 explicitly excludes children in Basic 4-6 and private primary schools from the NHGSFP (FMHADMSD 2023).

The Brazilian National School Feeding Program (PNAE) offers a useful comparator. It has operated under a constitutional guarantee since 1988, with a dedicated federal executing agency, the National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE), and a 2009 law mandating that 30 percent of federal transfers go to family-farm produce. This policy framework has given Brazil more than three decades of continuity in its PNAE across changes of government—a history of continuity that Nigeria's program has not had (Sidaner et al. 2013; da Silva et al. 2022).

At an August 2025 forum, Federal government officials called for a dedicated NHGSFP Act, but, as of mid-2026, no such Act has been passed. A more immediate, positive development is Nigeria's 2025 National Guidelines on Healthy Public Food Procurement, which apply to schools and set enforceable nutrition standards. The effect of these guidelines will depend on whether financing and implementation capacity keep pace.

8.2 Institutional arrangements and coordination

The NHGSFP is coordinated nationally within FMHADMSD under the National Social Investment Programme, historically through a National Programme Manager, with a multi-

sectoral Technical Coordination Group intended to draw in education, health, agriculture, water resources, women's affairs, and finance ministries at federal and state levels (FMHADMSD 2023; Adesanmi et al. 2023). In practice, many state program offices lack the seconded line-ministry staff envisioned in this design, weakening the integration of school feeding into the states' regular work programs (FMHADMSD 2023).

Nigeria's delivery model sits in the 'third-party' category of the FAO and WFP typology of home-grown school feeding models: states hire catering firms who source the food from farmers or local markets, and arrange it to be cooked and prepared and then served to the students, rather than schools contracting farmers and cooks directly (FAO and WFP 2020, Adeyanju et al. 2024). This concentrates financial and quality-control risk at the catering layer — a meaningfully different design from Brazil's municipally administered, semi-decentralized system (da Silva et al. 2022). FMHADMSD's own review found weak oversight of food procurement aggregators specifically—cooks reported that the aggregators did not always deliver food for school meals as planned, but these reports did not reliably reach program management (FMHADMSD 2023). Community oversight mechanisms, such as School-Based Management Committees, exist but are not yet used systematically for monitoring or feedback (Bano 2022), leaving the physical and administrative distance between state offices and local community levels as a persistent accountability gap.

8.3 Financing

Financing is the program's most binding constraint. By design, the federal government funds meals for primary classes 1 to 3 while the states are expected to finance school feeding for primary classes 4 to 6 from their own budgets. In practice, counterpart funding has been inconsistent across states, leaving many eligible pupils outside the school feeding program entirely.

The daily per-child flat rate has also been eroded by inflation. Raised from an original ₦70 to ₦100, this nominal rate was worth roughly USD 0.25 per child per day at 2021 exchange rates but had fallen to approximately USD 0.07 by mid-2026 (Adeyanju et al. 2024; NBS 2026). Food inflation stood at 17.0 percent in May 2026, with headline inflation at 15.9 percent (up from 15.7 percent in April; NBS 2026). Without indexing its value to inflation, the transfer's real value keeps shrinking, pressuring the catering firms and cooks and reducing meal quality and the reliability of meal provision year over year.

The financing challenge can be quantified. Feeding roughly 10 million pupils for about 200 school days at even the current nominal ₦100 per meal implies an annual requirement on the order of ₦200 billion for the Primary 1–3 cohort alone—roughly double the ₦100 billion appropriated in 2025—and substantially more if the rate is adjusted toward a nutritionally adequate meal and if Primary 4–6 and out-of-school children are included. This gap sits against strong evidence on returns, with multi-sectoral analyses finding benefits well above costs (Verguet et al. 2020) and global estimates of US\$7–35 returned per US\$1 invested (WFP 2025). Predictability is further constrained by fiscal federalism: wide disparities in states' internally generated revenue mean that many states cannot reliably meet the counterpart obligations the model assumes, so co-financing mandates that are not matched to fiscal capacity tend to fail precisely in the states with the greatest need. A 2025 World Bank assessment nonetheless identified the NHGSFP's individual-level targeting as a comparative strength within Nigeria's social protection architecture, in which most programs dilute benefits

across large households (World Bank 2025)—an argument for protecting and adequately financing the program rather than allowing it to lapse.

Proposed but unimplemented financing innovations to support school feeding programs include earmarked taxes on alcohol, tobacco, or sugar-sweetened beverages; a dedicated school-meal trust fund; and broader public-private partnership and domestic philanthropy mechanisms. These echo, without yet matching, the ring-fenced 30 percent family-farming procurement mandate for Brazil's PNAE program (Sidaner et al. 2013) and Mali's semi-decentralized model, which combines central budget allocation, donor funding, and direct household contributions of vegetables, condiments, and seasonings (Aurino et al. 2019; Masset and Gelli 2013). Ghana faces a comparable financing gap—irregular or delayed disbursements continue to undermine caterer accountability there, despite Ghana's own cost-benefit analysis showing strong returns to increased investment (Dunaev and Corona 2019).

8.4 Market system

The third-party procurement model depends on aggregators, typically farmer cooperatives, to serve as the bridge between the individual smallholders who produce the food and the school cooks, solving the scale and consistency problem that arises when a cook needs reliable weekly volumes from producers who individually cannot guarantee them (Adeyanju et al. 2024). This is a known weak point in home-grown school feeding programs.

Comparable evidence from Kenya finds smallholder access to school-feeding procurement constrained by limited surplus production, low producer prices, and weak transport infrastructure (Gresse 2023; Kamau et al. 2025). The experience of Ethiopia shows that standard public-procurement rules, designed for large formal suppliers, do not easily accommodate purchases from many dispersed smallholders without special regulatory adjustment (Desalegn et al. 2022). In Nigeria, as noted, the aggregator layer is also the least monitored part of the supply chain for school feeding programs (Omoge et al. 2026).

Physical market infrastructure compounds these issues. Poor rural road connectivity raises transport costs and delivery delays, while inadequate storage at schools and distribution centers contributes to spoilage and supply gaps (Adeyanju et al. 2024). Heavy reliance on rainfed agriculture adds a seasonality constraint. Often when local supply fails, vendors turn to unregulated alternative sources that undercut the program's nutritional and food-safety intent (Ben-Enukora et al. 2023; Adeyanju et al. 2024). Even a well-financed, well-governed program could still underdeliver locally if the value chain used to supply food to school feeding programs—storage, transport, aggregators, and farmer organizations—cannot reliably move food from farm to school on schedule.

8.5 Governance, accountability, and political economy

The history of disruption in Nigeria's national school feeding programs discussed earlier shows a consistent thread: Nigeria's monitoring and evaluation system has focused on demonstrating outputs from such programs, such as the numbers of students fed or the number of cooks employed, rather than on evidence of more systemic improvements in education, nutrition, or local agriculture. There has been no published independent account of what the 2024 ministerial review actually found or changed after the national school feeding program was formally suspended in January 2024. A recent scoping review of the wider evidence base on school feeding programs in Nigeria reaches a similar conclusion—available studies from

Nigeria on such programs document positive enrolment and food-security impacts but consistently flag weak monitoring systems and governance inefficiencies as unresolved (Omoge et al. 2026).

These governance concerns are not merely academic. The recurring pattern—ghost schools and inflated enrolment figures under the federal program, the contested COVID-19 take-home ration scheme, and the unresolved EFCC investigations that triggered the January 2024 suspension—points to a monitoring and accountability architecture that has not kept pace with the program’s scale (Guardian 2024; ICIR 2024). Independent third-party monitoring, published beneficiary registries, transparent per-school allocation and expenditure data, and outcome-oriented evaluation are therefore not optional add-ons but preconditions for restoring the credibility and continuity the program has repeatedly lost.

To summarize the findings from this assessment, Table 8-1 highlights many of the constraints that undermine the performance and sustainability of school feeding programs in Nigeria and suggests some of the steps that could be taken to address them.

Table 8-1 Summary of key constraints hampering the effectiveness of national home-grown school feeding programs in Nigeria and possible policy responses

Constraint	Why it matters	Policy response
Legal uncertainty	Program depends on policy discretion, rather than statutory protection, making it vulnerable to political and administrative changes.	Enact a dedicated NHGSFP Act.
Unsustainable financing	Inflation, delayed releases, absence of state co-financing, and reliance on annual appropriations reduce program predictability and purchasing power.	Index the per-child allocation of public funding to inflation, operationalize sustainable financing mechanisms, strengthen state co-financing, and establish a dedicated trust fund.
Weak market systems	Fragmented aggregation, poor rural infrastructure, inadequate storage, seasonal supply constraints, and limited oversight of aggregators reduce the reliability and quality of food supplied to schools.	Strengthen local procurement systems by investing in farmer organizations, aggregation centers, storage facilities, transport infrastructure, and market monitoring.
Fragmented coordination	Weak communication among federal and state program offices, aggregators, cooks, schools, and local stakeholders slows implementation and weakens problem-solving.	Clarify institutional roles, strengthen reporting and feedback mechanisms, and institutionalize regular coordination across sectors and levels of government.
Weak accountability	In scrutinizing these programs, output counting is done at the expense of the more necessary outcome monitoring.	Publish review findings and shift to outcome-based monitoring and evaluation approaches.
Fiscal federalism and state capacity gaps	Revenue and governance disparities mean many states cannot reliably meet co-financing or oversight roles.	Strengthen conditional transfers tied to verifiable commitments and support weaker states with technical assistance.
Implementation capacity gaps	Limited operational capacity, including staffing, supervision, data systems, logistics, procurement management, and routine monitoring, reduces the effectiveness of otherwise well-designed policies. Evidence on these implementation bottlenecks remains limited.	Invest in implementation systems, strengthen operational capacity at all administrative levels, and generate evidence on implementation processes through routine learning and operational research.

Source: Compiled by authors.

9. CONCLUSION

Nigeria's experience with school feeding demonstrates that the potential of such programs has never been in question. Rather, program implementation has been constrained by recurring governance, financing, and coordination challenges that have repeatedly interrupted the reliable delivery of food to students in their schools despite strong policy intentions. While recent efforts to revive the national school feeding program signal renewed commitment, the historical experience suggests that expanding coverage alone will not be sufficient unless the institutional conditions required for effective implementation are in place. The institutional mapping and review of the program's evolution presented in this paper provide an important foundation for understanding these conditions.

Building on this review, the next phase of the study on home-grown school feeding programs in Nigeria will undertake a comprehensive institutional readiness assessment to identify the strengths, gaps, and opportunities for strengthening such programs in Nigeria. The assessment will include:

- **Analysis of administrative and policy documents** to assess existing governance, coordination, financing, monitoring, and implementation arrangements.
- **Application of the institutional readiness framework** sketched out in this paper to identify institutional strengths and critical gaps across the key readiness dimensions.
- **Validation of findings** through stakeholder engagement to ensure that the assessment reflects implementation realities and builds consensus around priority actions.
- **Development of actionable recommendations** to inform the design and implementation of a sustainable, accountable, and scalable school feeding program in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Abay, K.A., M. Amare, L. Tiberti, and K.S. Andam. 2021. "COVID-19-Induced Disruptions of School Feeding Services Exacerbate Food Insecurity in Nigeria." *The Journal of Nutrition*, 151 (8): 2245–2254. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/nxab100>
- Acosta, A.M., and B. Bedasso. 2024. *Do School Meals Boost Education in Low- and Middle-Income Countries? A 15-Year Review*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/do-school-meals-boost-education-low-and-middle-income-countries-15-year-review>
- Adams, S. 2019. "Osun uses school-feeding to fight poverty and improve education." *Business Day*. 27 June. <https://businessday.ng/education/article/osun-uses-school-feeding-to-fight-poverty-and-improve-education/>
- Adesanmi, A., S. Singh, D.A.P. Bundy, and L. Drake, eds. 2023. *Nigerian National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme Sourcebook*. Singapore: World Scientific. <https://doi.org/10.1142/q0423>
- Adeyanju, D., M. Amare, K. Andam, T. Bamiwuye, A. Gelli, and I. Idowu. 2024. *Challenges and Opportunities in Nigeria's Home-Grown School Feeding Program: Toward a More Efficient and Sustainable Model*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 02290. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/158431>
- African Union. 2016. Decision on the Institution of an African Day of School Feeding, Assembly/AU/Dec.589(XXVI). Addis Ababa: African Union.
- African Union. 2026. Africa Commits to the Next Decade of School Feeding: Nutritious Meals, Clean Water, and Local Prosperity. Press release, 1 March. Addis Ababa: African Union. <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20260301/africa-commits-next-decade-school-feeding-nutritious-meals-clean-water>
- Agbabiaka, H.I., and A. Ojo. 2014. "Framework for Assessing Institutional Readiness of Government Organisations to Deliver Open, Collaborative and Participatory Services." *ICEGOV '14—Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance*, pp. 186–189. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2691195.2691251>
- Amare, M., T. Bamiwuye, and I. Idowu. 2024. *Strengthening Nigeria's national home-grown school feeding program in Osun State*. IFPRI Blog. Abuja: IFPRI-Nigeria. <https://nssp.ifpri.info/2024/04/12/strengthening-nigerias-national-home-grown-school-feeding-program-in-osun-state/>
- Aurino, E., A. Gelli, C. Adamba, I. Osei-Akoto, and H. Alderman. 2023. "Food for Thought? Experimental Evidence on the Learning Impacts of a Large-Scale School Feeding Program." *Journal of Human Resources*, 58 (1), 74–111. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.58.3.1019-10515R1>
- Aurino, E., J.-P. Tranchant, A. Sekou Diallo, and A. Gelli. 2019. "School Feeding or General Food Distribution? Quasi-Experimental Evidence on the Educational Impacts of Emergency Food Assistance During Conflict in Mali." *Journal of Development Studies*, 55 (sup1): 7–8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2019.1687874>
- Bano, M. 2022. *International Push for SBMCs and the Problem with Isomorphic Mimicry: Evidence from Nigeria*. RISE Working Paper 22/102. Oxford: Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Programme. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2022/102
- Ben-Enukora, C., A. Ejem, C. Aremu, B. Adeyeye, and A.F. Oloruntoba. 2023. "Access to Dry Season Agricultural Content in the Broadcast Media and Dry Season Irrigation Farming Among Smallholder Farmers in Nigeria." *Agriculture*, 13 (6): 1139. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture13061139>
- da Silva, E.A., E.A. Pedrozo, and T.N. da Silva. 2022. "PNAE (National School Feeding Program) and Its Events of Expansive Learnings at Municipal Level." *World*, 3 (1): 86–111. <https://doi.org/10.3390/world3010005>
- Desalegn, T., S. Gebremedhin, and B. Stoecker. 2022. "Successes and Challenges of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Sidama Region, Southern Ethiopia: A Qualitative Study." *Journal of Nutritional Science*, 11: e87. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jns.2022.77>

- Dorlach, T., U. Sule, and N. Umukoro. 2025. "School Food Politics in Africa: Two Nigerian School Feeding Programs in Comparative Perspective." *Global Social Policy*, 25 (3): 492–511. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14680181251387293>
- Dunaev, A. and F. Corona. 2019. *School Feeding in Ghana—Investment Case: Cost-Benefit Analysis Report*. Accra: World Food Programme and the Ghana School Feeding Programme Secretariat. <https://ghana.un.org/en/21048-school-feeding-ghana-investment-case-cost-benefit-analysis-report>
- FAO and WFP. 2020. *Home-Grown School Feeding Resource Framework*. Technical document. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP). <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ca0957en>
- FME. 2006. *National School Health Policy*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Education (FME). <https://partnersunited.org/storage/media/application/pdf/fdImBWPpwK2NQrUvnIOLfYdrfbhSSrNd mH3zXB2.pdf>
- FMHADMSD. 2023. *National Home-Grown School Feeding Policy*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD).
- FMHADMSD. 2024. *NHGSFP Enrolment Figures*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD)
- Gelli, A., E. Masset, C. Adamba, H. Alderman, D. Arhinful, E. Aurino, G. Folsom, I. Osei-Akoto, and F. Asante. 2021. *School Meals as a Market for Smallholder Agriculture: Experimental Evidence from Ghana*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 02045. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). <https://hdl.handle.net/10568/143467>
- Gresse, P.A. 2023. "School Nutrition Programmes in the Sustainable Food Systems Value Chain." *Journal of Nutrition & Dietetics*. <https://doi.org/10.57039/JND-Conf-Knt-2023-005>
- Guardian. 2020. "Lockdown School Feeding Programme: When a Humanitarian Service Stirs Controversy." *The Guardian (Nigeria)*, 23 May. <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/lockdown-school-feeding-programme-when-a-humanitarian-service-stirs-controversy/>
- Guardian. 2024. "How Poor Planning, Corruption Ruin N200b School Feeding Initiative in States." *The Guardian (Nigeria)*, 19 January. <https://guardian.ng/education/how-poor-planning-corruption-ruin-n200b-school-feeding-initiative-in-states/>
- Kamau, J., C. Okoyo, T. Kanyui, C. Mwandawiro, S. Singh, and L. Drake. 2025. "Exploring Smallholder Farmers' Access and Participation in the Home Grown School Feeding Programme in Selected Counties of Kenya." *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12: 1476888. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1476888>
- Kirui, O.K., C. Nwagboso, A. Maidawa, and A.O. Ololade. 2026. *How school meals are transforming education in Zamfara State, Nigeria*. IFPRI Blog. 27 March. Abuja: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/how-school-meals-are-transforming-education-in-zamfara-state-nigeria/>
- ICIR. 2024. "Suspended NSIPA Coordinator, Halima Shehu in EFCC Custody over Alleged N37.1bn Fraud." *The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)*, 3 January. <https://www.icirnigeria.org/suspended-nsipa-coordinator-halima-shehu-in-efcc-custody-over-alleged-n37-1bn-fraud/>
- MacArthur Foundation. 2025. *Promoting Accountability in Nigeria's School Feeding Program*. Chicago: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. <https://www.macfound.org/press/grantee-stories/promoting-accountability-in-nigeria-school-feeding-program>
- Masset, E., and A. Gelli. 2013. "Improving Community Development by Linking Agriculture, Nutrition and Education: Design of a Randomised Trial of 'Home-Grown' School Feeding in Mali." *Trials*, 14: 55. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1745-6215-14-55>
- NBS. 2026. *Consumer Price Index / Inflation reports, May 2026*. Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241583>
- Omoge, M.O. Omoge, O.B. Erinsakin, O.O. Oyetunji, and B.M. Ogeh. 2026. "Evaluation of the School Feeding Scheme in Nigeria: A Scoping Review of Its Impacts, Challenges, Successes, Implications, and Solutions to Achieving Sustainable Development Goals." *Mental Wellness*, 4: 45. <https://doi.org/10.4081/mw.2026.45>

- Punch. 2025. "FG Expands School Feeding Programme to Include 20 Million Out-of-School Children." The Punch (Nigeria), 27 May. <https://punchng.com/fg-expands-school-feeding-programme-to-include-20-million-out-of-school-children/>
- Sahara Reporters. 2025. "Despite Past Fraud Cases, Tinubu Govt to Relaunch Troubled School Feeding Programme May 29." Sahara Reporters, 23 April. <https://saharareporters.com/2025/04/23/despite-past-fraud-cases-tinubu-govt-relaunch-troubled-school-feeding-programme-may-29>
- School Meals Coalition. 2025. Nigeria Plans Massive Investment in School Meals to Reach 20 Million Children. School Meals Coalition. <https://schoolmealscoalition.org/nigeria-investment-schoolmeals>
- Sidaner, E., D. Balaban, and L. Burlandy. 2013. "The Brazilian School Feeding Programme: An Example of an Integrated Programme in Support of Food and Nutrition Security." *Public Health Nutrition*, 16 (6): 989-994. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980012005101>
- UNICEF. 2024. UNICEF Nigeria Annual Report 2024. Abuja and New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). <https://open.unicef.org/download-pdf?country-name=Nigeria&year=2024>
- UNPAN. 2026. "Readiness Assessment on Institutional Arrangements for Policy Coherence to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." *United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN)*. New York: UNPAN. <https://unpan.un.org/capacity-development/otc/self-assessment-tools/self-assessment-questionnaire>
- Vanguard. 2022. "NHGSFP: How FG Encourages School Enrollment with Feeding of 10m Children." Vanguard (Nigeria), 31 May. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/05/nhgsfp-how-fg-encourages-school-enrollment-with-feeding-of-10m-children/>
- Verguet, S., P. Limasalle, A. Chakrabarti, A. Husain, C. Burbano, L. Drake, and D.A.P. Bundy. 2020. "The Broader Economic Value of School Feeding Programs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Estimating the Multi-Sectoral Returns to Public Health, Human Capital, Social Protection, and the Local Economy." *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8: 587046. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.587046>
- WFP. 2025. *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2024*. Rome: World Food Programme (WFP). <https://publications.wfp.org/2024/state-of-school-feeding/>
- Wineman, A., M.C. Ekwueme, L. Bigayimpunzi, A. Martin-Daihirou, V.N. de Gois. E.L. Rodrigues, P. Etuge, Y. Warner, H. Kessler, and A. Mitchell. 2022. "School Meal Programs in Africa: Regional Results from the 2019 Global Survey of School Meal Programmes." *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10: 871866. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.871866>
- World Bank. 2025. Nigeria Poverty and Social Safety Nets Assessment. Washington, DC: World Bank.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Chibuzo Nwagboso is a Research Analyst in the Development Strategies and Governance (DSG) Unit of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and a member of IFPRI's Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP), based in Abuja, Nigeria. **Ebuka Orjiakor** is a Research Intern working with IFPRI's NSSP, based in Abuja. **Oliver K. Kirui** is a Research Fellow in the DSG Unit of IFPRI and Leader of IFPRI's Nigeria and Ghana Strategy Support Programs, based in Abuja. **Bedru Balana** is a Senior Research Fellow in the Agrifood Innovation and Resilience Unit of IFPRI and a member of IFPRI's NSSP, based in Abuja.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This review has been prepared as part of IFPRI's Institutional Readiness Support for Scaling School Feeding in Nigeria under the CGIAR Scaling for Impact (S4I) Program's Enabling Environment Lab (Area of Work 3).

The Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) is managed by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). This publication has been prepared as an output of the NSSP and has not been independently peer reviewed. Any opinions expressed here belong to the author(s) and are not necessarily representative of or endorsed by IFPRI.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A world free of hunger and malnutrition

IFPRI is a CGIAR Research Center

IFPRI Nigeria; Office 11, Floor 2, Solutions Plaza; 23 Ibrahim Tahir Lane, Cadastral Zone B05; Utako, Abuja, Nigeria

Email: ifpri-nigeria@cgiar.org | <https://www.ifpri.org/program/nigeria-strategy-support-program/>

© 2026, copyright remains with the author(s). All rights reserved.