

Improving school feeding programming in Yemen

Submission date 27/10/2023	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 01/11/2023	Overall study status Completed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 07/07/2025	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Even before the onset of the current civil war, Yemen was one of the poorest countries in the world ranking 183 out of 191 countries and territories on the UN Human Development Index. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that currently 17 million Yemeni (half the population) are food insecure and 2.2 million preschool children are acutely malnourished (World Food Programme, 2023a). In 2022, 17% of school children in Yemen received school meals (WFP, 2022) and in 2023, the humanitarian response will cover only 8% of the needs of education sector, leaving it with the second highest unmet need (OCHA, 2023). WFP provides nutritious snacks (imported or locally procured), either fortified date bars or fortified high energy biscuits, to 1.55 million school children. There is an urgent need to understand how to improve access to nutritious school meals to support students and schools throughout the country. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-efficacy of adding a daily drink of milk to an ongoing school feeding program to improve children's diet.

Who can participate?

Children 6-8 years of age attending one of the schools included in the study

What does the study involve?

Schools will be randomly allocated to one of two groups to receive:

1. Standard of care: the standard WFP school feeding program involving daily distribution of high energy biscuits
 2. The standard of care intervention with addition of a daily drink of milk
- The intervention lasts approximately one school year (~7 months).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The intervention is expected to improve children's diets, cognition, learning scores, and nutritional status by providing additional protein and micronutrients through the milk distribution in addition to the high energy biscuits. The intervention is also expected to improve children's attendance and caregivers' perceptions and willingness to pay for school meals. There are no known risks related to the intervention involved.

Where is the study run from?

International Food Policy Research Institute (USA, Egypt)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2023 to July 2024

Who is funding the study?

1. CGIAR Initiative on Fragility, Conflict, and Migration (USA)

2. HSA Group (USA)

Who is the main contact?

Dr Aulo Gelli, A.Gelli@cgiar.org

Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal Investigator

Contact name

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers

Nil known

Study information

Scientific Title

Impact evaluation of an added milk intervention to a micronutrient fortified school feeding program: An effectiveness pilot trial in Yemen

Study objectives

The study will evaluate the cost, cost-efficiency and impact of adding a daily drink of milk to an ongoing school feeding program. The hypothesis is that the addition of milk will improve school-aged children's diet, nutrition, health, and education outcomes.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 28/09/2023, International Food Policy Research Institute (1201 Eye Street NW, Washington, 20005, United States of America; +1 (202) 862-5600; IFPRI-IRB@cgiar.org), ref: NDH-23-0942

Study design

Longitudinal cluster-randomized controlled trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Secondary study design

Cluster randomised trial

Study setting(s)

School

Study type(s)

Other

Participant information sheet

Not available in web format, please use the contact details to request a participant information sheet

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Improvement of dietary diversity in primary school-aged children

Interventions

1. Control - standard of care school feeding program which involves the distribution of high-energy biscuits
2. Intervention - standard of care school feeding program consisting of the distribution of high-energy biscuits plus distribution of 100 ml cartons of ultra high temperature (UHT) milk

The total duration of the intervention will be ~7 months from November 2023 to May 2024. Both study arms will be followed-up for ~7 months and interviewed at baseline and follow-up.

Schools were randomly assigned to intervention and control in Stata 18, stratifying by school size.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome measure

Diet diversity score in children 6-8 years of age, measured using the Minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W) guidelines at baseline and endline

Secondary outcome measures

1. Cognition in children 6-8 years of age, measured using the forward and backward digit span and the standard progressive matrices at baseline and endline
2. Learning in children 6-8 years of age, measured using literacy and numeracy scores at baseline and endline
3. Nutritional status, measuring using body mass index and height-for-age Z-score at baseline and endline
4. School attendance, measured using school observations at baseline and endline
5. Perceptions of school feeding program, measured using caregiver self-report at baseline and endline
6. Child health, measured using caregiver report of child morbidity symptoms at baseline and endline

Overall study start date

01/08/2023

Completion date

31/07/2024

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Children aged 6-8 years at baseline enrolled in schools involved in the study
2. Adult caregivers (≥ 18 years of age) of children aged 6-8 included in the study

Participant type(s)

Learner/student

Age group

Mixed

Lower age limit

6 Years

Upper age limit

100 Years

Sex

Both

Target number of participants

1,200

Total final enrolment

1299

Key exclusion criteria

Household head, child, parent or guardian unwilling to participate in the study

Date of first enrolment

04/11/2023

Date of final enrolment

30/11/2023

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United States of America

Yemen

Study participating centre

International Food Policy Research Institute

1201 Eye Street NW

Washington

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Sponsor information

Organisation

International Food Policy Research Institute

Sponsor details

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Sponsor type

Research organisation

Website

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ROR

<https://ror.org/03pxz9p87>

Funder(s)

Funder type
Research organisation

Funder Name
International Food Policy Research Institute

Funder Name
HSA Group

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan
Planned publication in a high-impact peer-reviewed journal

Intention to publish date
31/07/2025

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be available upon request from a.gelli@cgiar.org

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol file			22/05/2024	No	No
Statistical Analysis Plan		27/08/2024	27/08/2024	No	No
Results article		01/07/2025	07/07/2025	Yes	No