

# Improving school feeding programming in Yemen

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

Dr Aullo Gelli

### Contact details

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## Additional identifiers

### Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

### ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

### Protocol serial number

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

## **Study type(s)**

Other

## **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(s)**

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

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

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

**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 ( $\geq 18$  years of age) of children aged 6-8 included in the study

**Participant type(s)**

Learner/student

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Mixed

**Lower age limit**

6 years

**Upper age limit**

100 years

**Sex**

All

**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  
United States of America  
20005

## Sponsor information

**Organisation**  
International Food Policy Research Institute

**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

### 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](mailto:a.gelli@cgiar.org)

### IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>		01/07/2025	07/07/2025	Yes	No

<a href="#">Protocol file</a>		22/05/2024	No	No
<a href="#">Statistical Analysis Plan</a>	27/08/2024	27/08/2024	No	No