

# Impact of School Milk Feeding programs in Kenya, and Community Motivation towards them

## Key project details

### Title of the project:

Impact of School Milk Feeding programs in Kenya, and Community Motivation towards them

### Client/Partners:

US Dairy Export Council, Global Dairy Platform, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

### Researchers/Staff Involved:

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### Summary Author:

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### Behavioral Themes:

Cooperation and Trust

### Sector/Field of work:

Food system resilience

### Location:

Kenya (Nairobi, Bomet, Nyandarua)

### Sample Size:

156



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# Summary

## **Brief overview:**

This project studies school milk feeding programs in Kenya with a view to understanding the impact and community motivation towards them. It considers the set of challenges well documented in literature, as a motivator, and the subsequent value of using a behavioral science approach to examine the realized impacts of county financed school feeding programs and to better understand the barriers and levers of such programs. This research contributes valuable insights to guide the implementation and optimization of school milk feeding programs in Kenya and potentially in other regions as well.

## **Result:**

In this study, a mixed methods approach was employed to thoroughly examine existing school milk feeding programs. The research encompassed a comprehensive investigation into the key actors involved, influential factors, and grassroots-level challenges. Moreover, the study assessed the reported impact and benefits of these programs from primary caregivers' perspectives. Additionally, the levels of motivation among key stakeholders in the entire facilitation process were examined to gauge the feasibility of implementing a community-led milk feeding program.

Our findings indicate that the success of a county-financed milk feeding program largely hinges on two crucial factors: (i) the motivation and ownership exhibited by ECDE heads and teachers, and (ii) the establishment of a stable and consistent distribution network of transporters. These factors emerged as pivotal determinants in ensuring the program's effectiveness and sustainability.

## Context

School feeding is a widely recognized effective approach to enhance children's nutrition and education while also serving as a valuable tool in the fight against disease. These programs have demonstrated their ability to attract and retain children in schools by providing them with nourishing snacks or meals. Notably, they have shown to contribute to improved nutritional status, increased school enrollment, enhanced attendance, and improved attention span among students. Moreover, they play a significant role in addressing community health issues.

In line with the United Nations Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs), the Global Dairy Platform (GDP), in collaboration with the US Dairy Export Council (USDEC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is conducting evaluations in various countries to understand the impact of school milk programs on nutritional, educational, and gender-related outcomes.

The Busara Center for Behavioral Economics led the research in Kenya as part of this initiative.

The aim was to investigate the factors influencing the adoption of school milk programs in the country. To achieve this, two types of communities were surveyed: those with an active feeding program (Nairobi and Bomet) and those without (Nyandarua). This comparison allowed for valuable insights to inform the potential scalability of similar programs to other communities.

The primary objectives were as follows:

- 1 To explore the structural, social, and behavioral factors that are critical to the success of county-led milk feeding programs.**
- 2 In counties where milk feeding programs have been successful, to examine their impact on primary caregivers.**
- 3 To understand the knowledge, attitudes, and willingness of stakeholders to support future community-driven efforts.**

## Intervention: Design

The research process utilized a mixed method approach, commencing with a county scoping exercise to identify and verify active milk feeding programs in Kenya. This scoping was done in collaboration with the Kenya Dairy Board, focusing mainly on Nairobi and Bomet, as other regions did not have clearly active milk programs at the time of this study.




Sampling and respondent identification for the study involved a combination of desk research and consultations with various authorities, including the department of education, Nairobi County livestock officers, and local ward officers in charge of milk distribution. A convenient sampling method was used with the assistance of local county officers responsible for education and agriculture.

The research was conducted in two phases: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative phase aimed to gain an understanding of the operations and challenges related to milk programs. The quantitative phase complemented this by seeking respondents' ratings of various impact and hassle factors on a scale. This phase aimed to assess the realized impact on primary caregivers and determine stakeholders' willingness and perceptions concerning contributing to and operating a community-driven program.

In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with 36 respondents (an average of 12 per county) to gather detailed insights. Open-ended questions were posed to participants, covering their roles and responsibilities in facilitating the milk feeding program, perceptions of existing challenges, potential solutions, and enablers and barriers affecting program implementation. The interviews also focused on awareness and the observed impact on primary caregivers, as well as their recommendations for program improvement.

## Intervention: Design (contd.)

The following categories of respondents were included in the interviews:

 <b>Heads of ECDEs</b>	 <b>Local county officers</b>	 <b>Representatives of Processors</b>
Teachers involved in picking up and distributing milk to ECDE children.	Education officers responsible for coordinating the program within schools in their respective counties.	Officers from partner processors, providing insights from the supply side.

Additionally, 120 quantitative surveys were conducted with various stakeholders:

<b>65</b> Female caregivers	<b>28</b> Dairy farmers	<b>19</b> Transport personnel	<b>8</b> Distributors
Mothers of children currently attending ECDE, to gauge their awareness and the program's impact on them.	Local livestock farmers who are part of registered cooperatives, to understand their attitudes towards different sales channels for their milk.	Riders/drivers responsible for delivering milk to beneficiary schools on various delivery routes.	County-appointed distributors overseeing logistics and milk distribution to schools.

In the survey, a storyboard prototype depicting a local community-driven initiative for milk feeding programs in schools was also presented. This innovative approach allowed for more exploratory data collection by utilizing a visual tool that was easier for respondents to comprehend. This setup, referred to as 'lab in the field,' enabled us to identify attitudes and knowledge gaps among the sampled population more effectively.

## Intervention: Results

The findings reveal a positive willingness among various actors within the milk feeding program to participate in a community-driven initiative. The program is perceived to be highly beneficial, particularly in creating a market for dairy farmers. However, there are some key requirements and challenges highlighted by the stakeholders.

The main requirement emphasized by actors is the need to educate primary caregivers about the program's operations and benefits, focusing on building trust. Financial buy-in from caregivers and concerns about payment frequency and sources to dairy farmers were the primary challenges raised.

Regarding transporters, approximately **80%** of the sample found a community-led program feasible, with around **60%** expressing strong interest in participating. Moreover, there is a notable correlation between respondents willing to pledge their incentive and those having a child enrolled in an ECDE center. More than half of the transporters (**52.63%**) expressed their willingness to participate, with **36.84%** showing a strong agreement to be part of the community-led effort.

The interest among dairy farmers is also positive, with the majority expressing willingness to participate in the program and be part of a pilot. This enthusiasm exists despite most farmers not having prior experience with such initiatives.

Caregivers unanimously agree that milk is a crucial part of children's diets, with **78.46%** strongly emphasizing the importance of dairy as an essential nutrient in daily dietary intake. On average, caregivers in Nairobi and Nyandarua are willing to contribute around **KSH 90 to KSH 92** for the milk program, while those in Bomet are willing to give **KSH 116**. Moreover, **76.19%** of caregivers agreed to let go of their respondent incentive (**KSH 300**) to support the program.

Additionally, caregivers strongly believe that they should handle the milk between the source at the dairy farmer and its distribution at schools. Their concerns mainly revolve around the safety and storage of the milk consumed, leading them to favor direct involvement in the handling process.

## Discussion and Exploration:

**Documentation and Stakeholder Engagement:** The research highlights the absence of a centralized system providing accessible information on counties with functional school feeding programs. To address this, collaborative efforts are necessary to document and engage stakeholders effectively. Strengthened coordination and collaboration, such as ensuring the burden of sustainability and troubleshooting is not only on the ECDE teachers who have other responsibilities, and inter-ministerial coordination as a way to appeal to the government for consistent funding support to school milk feeding initiatives, are needed.

**Alternative Financing and Resource Supply Models:** Exploring different financing models, such as internally facilitated activities, can promote program sustainability during funding and supply deficits. According to the findings, it is essential to encourage teachers to consistently sensitize parents about the advantages of a school feeding program and the crucial role they play in ensuring its sustainability. Though an intervention such as parents contributing to a common fund can play a significant role in bridging financial gaps, solely, it may not be effective in achieving the desired outcomes.

**Improved Community and Parental Participation:** The study demonstrates the substantial benefits of stakeholder involvement in school feeding programs, including better teacher-parent collaboration, stronger school-community ties, and a sense of ownership among the community. To enhance these advantages, active engagement of parents and communities throughout the planning and implementation process is crucial.

**Enhancing Delivery Logistics:** Feedback from ECDE teachers indicates persistent challenges with weak supply channels and distribution. Simply recruiting transporters is insufficient, as evidenced by respondents covering multiple ECDE centers on a single route. To overcome these issues, optimizing planning and expanding the network of reliable distributors and officers are essential steps to address staff shortages and improve the distribution process.