



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

FACT SHEET

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McGOVERN–DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

The McGovern–Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern–Dole program) helps support education, child development, and food security for some of the world’s poorest children. It provides for donations of U.S. agricultural products, as well as financial and technical assistance, for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education.

The McGovern–Dole program was originally authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The legislation called for the use of \$100 million in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds to launch the program in fiscal year 2003, with future funding coming from Congressional appropriators. The program was reauthorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. That legislation provides for the use of \$84 million in CCC funds and allows for annual Congressional appropriations, which has been approximately \$100 million annually in recent years. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service and is named in honor of Ambassador and former Senator George McGovern and former Senator Robert Dole for their tireless efforts to encourage a global commitment to school feeding and child nutrition.

Background: Due to hunger or malnutrition, an estimated 120 million school-age children around the world are not enrolled in school. The majority of these children are girls. The key objectives of the McGovern–Dole program are to reduce hunger and improve literacy and primary education, especially for girls. By providing school meals, teacher training, and related support, McGovern–Dole projects help boost school enrollment and academic performance. At the same time, nutrition programs are offered for pregnant and nursing women, infants, and pre-school youngsters to sustain and improve the health and learning capacity of children before they enter school.

In implementing the McGovern–Dole program, USDA drew on the experience it gained from administering the pilot Global Food for Education initiative between fiscal years 2001 and 2003. Under the pilot program, USDA donated about 800,000 metric tons of commodities to provide nutritious school meals to nearly 7 million children in 38 countries. These efforts resulted in more children entering schools, improved student performance, and greater parental and

community involvement in education. In fact, organizations implementing McGovern-Dole food for education activities in fiscal years 2003 and 2004 showed a net enrollment increase of 14 percent with female student enrollment increasing by 17 percent.

U.S. Commitment: The McGovern-Dole program reaffirms the U.S. global commitment to childhood education and nutrition. Since 2001, the McGovern-Dole program has supported projects in 44 countries. Today it continues to support projects in 32 countries. The program provides about \$100 million annually to support commodity, transportation, and implementation costs that allow organizations to implement 10-15 projects using donations of around 90,000 metric tons of U.S. farm commodities. The United States continues to encourage other donor countries, foundations, and international organizations to support, sponsor, or participate in similar programs.

How the Program Works: The school feeding and nutrition projects within recipient countries are conducted by nonprofit charitable organizations, cooperatives, the United Nations World Food Program, and other international organizations. USDA invites proposals for projects, which are then carefully reviewed. Proposals are selected based on several criteria, including the following: (1) the implementing organization's experience in school feeding; (2) additional, non-McGovern-Dole program resources that will be available to implement multi-year, sustainable projects based on assessed needs; (3) targeting of low-income areas with low school attendance or enrollment rates, especially for girls; (4) coordination of supplementary feeding with nutrition programs; and (5) involvement of local institutions and communities.

Organizations conducting McGovern-Dole projects must develop and initiate plans for sustainability, so that the communities being served under the program can "graduate" from USDA assistance and continue the sponsored activities on their own or with support from other sources, such as the host government or community.

The McGovern-Dole program focuses on countries that meet the poverty criteria established by the World Bank. The national government of the recipient country must be fully committed to achieving the goals of the World Declaration on Education for All and should be taking steps to raise nutritional standards and improve the quality and availability of education. USDA selects priority countries for the program each year. USDA announces its list of priority countries at the International Food Aid Conference held in Kansas City. The criteria are based on several factors, including the following: per-capita income of \$3,595¹ or less, malnutrition rate of 20 percent or more², and adult literacy rate of 75 percent or less³. The recipient countries must be free of internal strife that would prevent support for the program and must be net importers of food. USDA also gives priority to countries that are covered by USDA agricultural attachés. This improves USDA's ability to monitor the implementation of the projects and to deal with any issues that may arise.

In addition to donating and shipping agricultural commodities, USDA may, at its discretion, pay transportation, storage, and handling costs within the recipient country, administrative expenses

¹World Bank definition of low and lower middle income countries.

²Based on United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization data.

³Based on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization data.

of the participating organizations, as well as activities, where such expenses enhance program effectiveness.

Additional Information: For more information, contact: Food Assistance Division, Office of Capacity Building and Development, FAS/USDA, Stop 1034, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-1034; tel.: (202) 720-4221; fax: (202) 690-0251.

Information about USDA food aid efforts is also available on the FAS Web site:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp>

General information about FAS programs, resources, and services can be found at:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov>