



Center for Research in
Education & Social Policy

School Lunch and Breakfast in the Bahamas

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MANY THANKS





Many thanks to Kristin Ward, Julia Weatherly and Jason Hammer!

Allison Karpyn, PhD

- Food Access, Food Policy area of expertise
- Bulk of my career spent in non-profit setting in Philadelphia (The Food Trust)
- Grew up in South Florida
- BS, Johns Hopkins University in Public Health
- PhD, University of Pennsylvania in Policy Research, Evaluation and Measurement



My work here this year

1. Understand strengths and weaknesses of the lunch and breakfast programs
 - Systematic Approach to data collection, standardized tools
 - Principal Interviews (all schools)
 - Student Surveys (450)
 - Vendor Interviews (all schools)
2. Support local and policy efforts to improve nutrition for children
 - Collaboration with Erecia Hepburn at UB, Nassau data collection as well

I HAVE 2 GOALS TODAY

1. Establish an improved understanding of the issue in Eleuthera
2. Motivate you to invest in improving school food

Start with a quiz

- Are there any guidelines for school meals?
 - IF so what do they apply to?
- What % of children here participate in the free School Lunch Programme?
- Do all schools participate?
- How much does the government reimburse for meals?
- What are the benefits for children having a healthy lunch?

Lets hear about lunchtime!

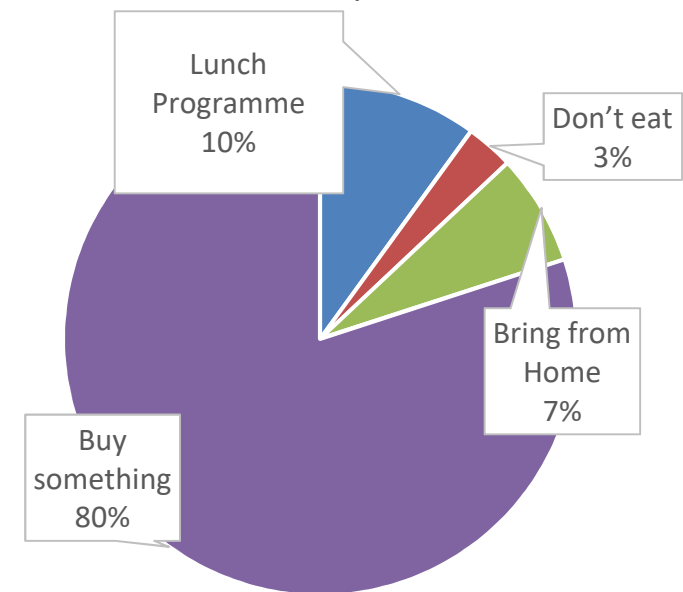
Benefits of a Healthy School Meals Program

- Reduced hunger and obesity and improved dietary quality
- Improved School Attendance
 - Children experiencing hunger are more likely to be hyperactive, absent, and tardy, in addition to having behavioral and attention problems more often than other children.
- Improved School behavior:
 - Behavioral, emotional, and mental health, and academic problems are more prevalent among children and adolescents struggling with hunger.
 - Teens experiencing hunger are more likely to have been suspended from school and have difficulty getting along with other children.
- Improved Academic Achievement:
 - Children and adolescents experiencing hunger have lower math scores and poorer grades.
 - Children with hunger are more likely to have repeated a grade, received special education services, or received mental health counseling, than low-income children who do not experience hunger.

School Lunch – Summary of Practices

- About 2,400 children in school on Eleuthera/Spanish Wells and Harbor Island
 - Less than 10% pack lunch, bring from home; many fewer in secondary school
 - Approx. 10% receive the National Lunch Programme (numbers are not easily found)
 - Recently declined; best guess is 3-5 years ago it was 20%
 - 80%+ buy from the vendors at school
 - Many schools see a few children with nothing for lunch, teachers pay kids share or just isolate themselves so no one sees

Eleuthera School Lunch Trend
Estimates, 2018



Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Schools are in a powerful position to influence children's lifelong dietary practices. Good nutrition is just as important as good grades. Therefore, it is important that school lunch vendors provide

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Healthy School Lunch



that 14% of children ages 2-10 years and 9% of the adolescent population are overweight. Research has shown that overweight children are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults. Being overweight increases their risk for nutrition-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and some cancers. The onset of these diseases begins in childhood and adolescence. Research shows that good eating practices established in early childhood are normally transferred into adulthood, therefore decreasing the risk of nutrition - related diseases.

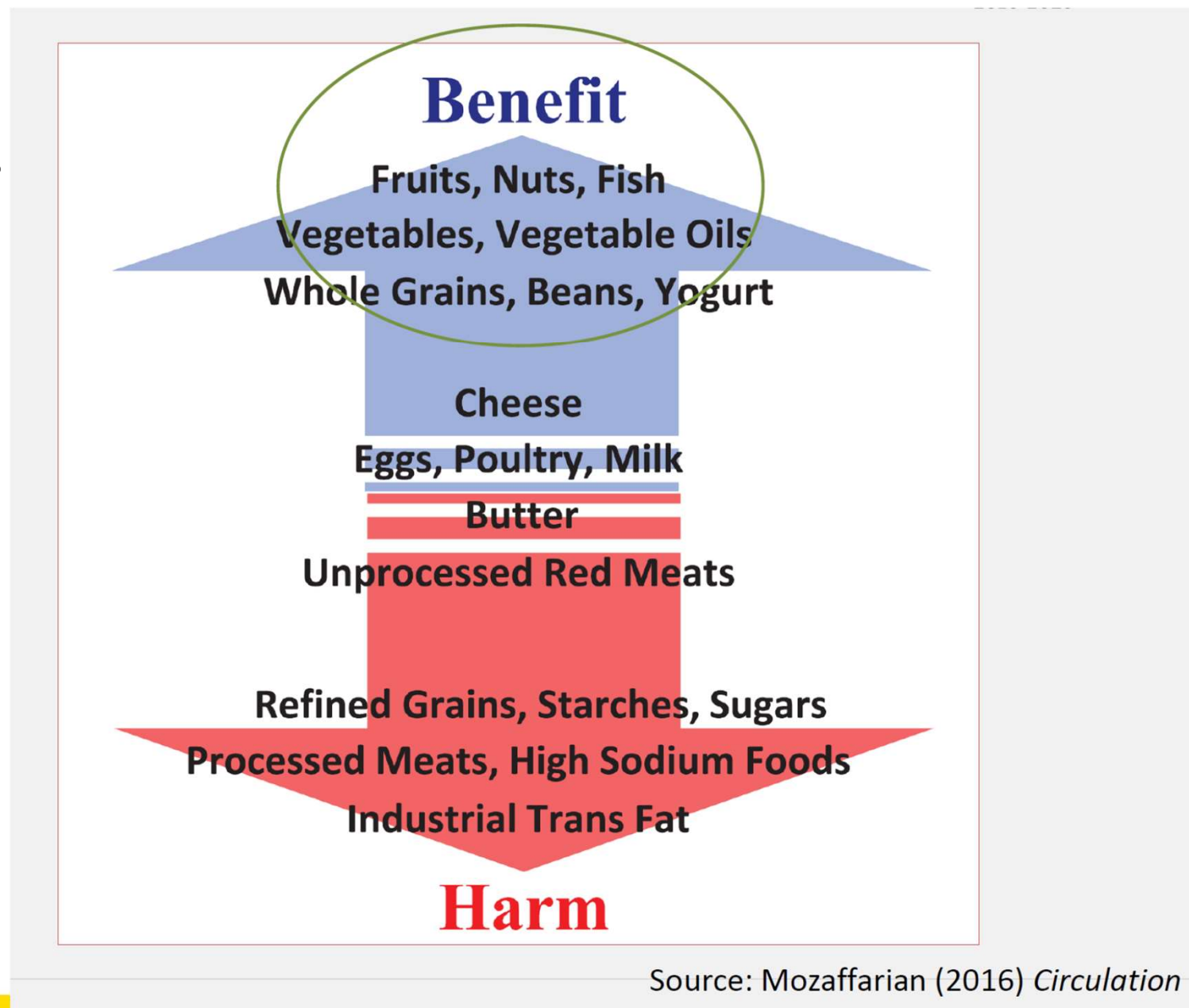
The Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch guides lunch vendors to offer students attractive, nutritious and safe lunch choices based on the Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas. These Standards also aim to promote the principles and practices of good nutrition in the school community which will in turn positively influence the overall health and well being of students, families and the wider community.

By implementing these standards, school lunch vendors will join in with national efforts to create a healthy eating environment for all students.

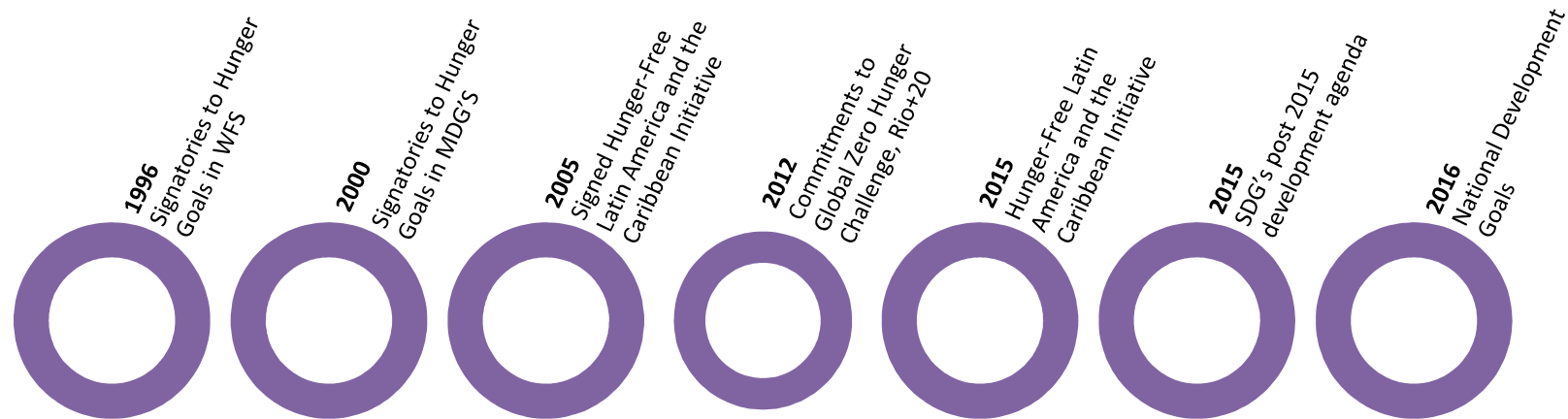
Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch, 2008

- Standards for general use, including “school vendors” - not just School Lunch Programme Vendors
- Food Components:
 - Starch required
 - No Fried potatoes
 - Peas and Rice offered weekly
 - Fruit: At least one serving daily, Bahamian preferred
 - Vegetable: At least one fresh or frozen must be served daily
 - Corn doesn't count (It's a starch)
 - Fish, Poultry, Meat and Meat Alternatives: At least one per day
 - Fish MUST be served once a week
 - No fried meats allowed
 - Fatty meats such as sausage, salami and bologna must not be served
 - Dairy: Must be served daily
 - Fats: Guidelines offered for limited use
 - Sweets, Sugars and Salt: No candy, no potato chips or cheese doodles; Fruit-based or low-fat deserts are permitted twice per week.

Standards
ARE
aligned
with what
we know
we should
eat



Lunch Emphasis is also aligned with Bahamas commitment to Hunger



UN Member states committed to Ending Hunger by 2030



Goal 1: Ending poverty

Goal 2: Ending hunger, achieving
food security and improving nutrition, and
promoting
sustainable agriculture by 2030

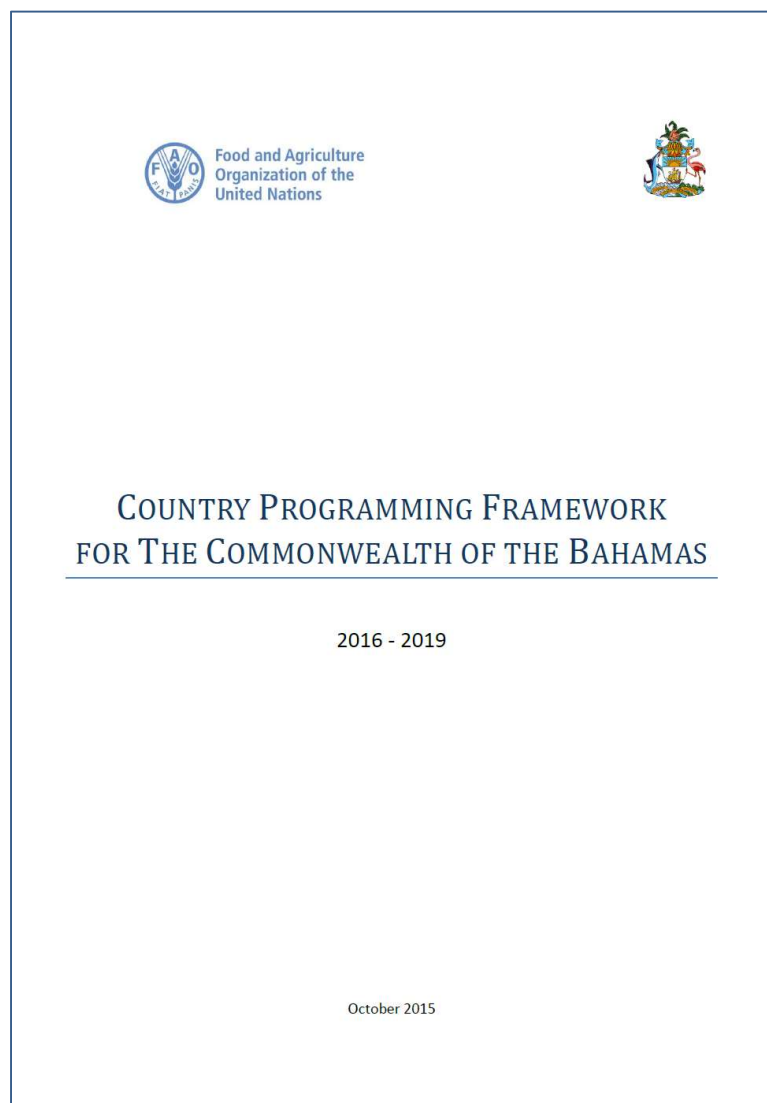
Country Programming Framework

Sets 3 priority areas for collaboration between FAO and Bahamas:

Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security and Safety

Priority 2: Climate Change and Sustainable Resource management

Priority 3: Poverty Elimination



Priority 1: Food and Nutrition Security and Safety

Output	Indicator Target
Output 1.1: Market oriented production and productivity capacity of the agricultural sector of The Bahamas strengthened and modernized with improved linkages to markets to absorb increased production.	<i>Extension officers and farmers trained in at least 3 key production and post-harvest practices by 2017</i> <i>By 2018 at least one policy process is reviewed with the support of FAO</i> <i>By 2017, a review of agricultural data management is prepared</i>
Output 1.2: Improved food safety practices developed and implemented for Bahamas, with the support of FAO.	<i>Public education and communication programme on food safety, particularly for school environments is developed with FAO support by 2018</i> <i>A policy for the reduction of food waste is prepared by 2019</i>
Output 1.3: Incidence of over and under nutrition in the country reduced.	<i>Food and Nutrition Security Plan amended by 2016</i>
Output 1.4: National School Feeding Programme is strengthened.	<i>By 2017 assessment of School Feeding Programme undertaken with gender focus to develop gender differentiated intervention</i> <i>A model for improved linkages between the school feeding programme and produce from small farmers developed with FAO support by 2019</i>

Bahamas National Development Plan

- 5.1.5 Improve health education and awareness
 - Training and Certification of school lunch vendors on nutrition
- 5.4.3 Promote Healthy Eating
 - Introduction of a tax on empty calories items such as soda, sweets, white bread.
 - Introduction of a tax on fast food.
 - Provision of tax concessions on health food items such as fruit and vegetables.
 - Introduction of a ban on the sale and consumption of soda and other sugary drinks at all medical facilities, schools (including universities) and public building with strong penalties for violation of the ban
 - Launch of an education campaign on eating healthy (Campaigns should also be able to be assessable to persons with disabilities)
 - Introduction of nationally funded wellness and weight-loss programmes for persons with a BMI over 35
 - Nutrition classes at schools
 - Require vendors at schools to undertake nutrition classes
 - All lunch vendors at school should be required to provide healthy meals
- 6.5.1 Ensure that education is universal and inclusive
 - Development of school lunch programmes in public schools (not means tested)

What do vendors sell?



Purchased Items from School Vendors





Total \$19.00 2 [REDACTED]

1. Darrus - corn dog
2. Wikendy - corn dog
3. Kerva - hot patty
4. Sakobe - hot patty
5. Troy - hot patty & soda.
6. Pattraneanah - special
- 7 Kayla - nugget & fries \$3.00
8. Syrai - hot patty NOT paid (Dad paid) & soda
9. [REDACTED] hot patty & soda BREAK TIME

How are school vendors regulated, selected?

- Must have food safety certification
 - Most report having inspections in recent past
- Must register to vend with the govt. pay a fee for certificate
- Oversight for food compliance left to principals
- Vendor application references requirement for compliance with “guidelines”
- No guidelines on portions, prices or mechanisms to prevent overcharging
 - \$2-4 for single slice of pizza for example
- Most do not sell drinks does but of those that do, soda and sugary beverages
- *Tuck Shops* run by schools vend drinks, snacks - guidelines unclear
- Initially vendors are recommended and names forwarded by principals, no limit on how many per school, most have 1-3
 - Philosophy often “share the wealth” to have one vendor do lunch programme and another do school vending.

School Lunch Programme



Who is Eligible for the National School Lunch Programme?

National Lunch Programme

Families who have insufficient or no income to provide nutritional lunch for their school aged children while at school, can access lunch from the national lunch programme. This service provides a well balanced lunch for school aged children while at school.

Eligibility

- Persons earning minimum wage or lower.
- Bahamian citizen or permanent resident.
- Over the age of 18 years.
- Applicant must be head of their household.

Process

1. Applicant can visit the Department of Social Services/School Welfare Division (SWD) to make a request to the School Social Worker. Families or their children can be referred to the School Social Worker attached to the various government schools by the Guidance Counsellor. Referrals can be made from the community.
2. The School Social Worker in the SWD conducts an interview to assess the applicant's eligibility.
3. SWD conducts a home investigation and completes a social history report including a recommendation.
4. Applicant will be contacted and informed of eligibility by the SWD.
5. SWD informs the Guidance Counsellor of the names of the children to be added to the National Lunch Programme list at the various schools.

Note: Families who are approved will be reassessed after each school semester to determine if a need still exists for their participation in the National Lunch Programme.

Application Form(s)

The relevant application form will be completed by the School Social Worker during the office visit.

Supporting Documents

For Citizens

- Passport, Birth Certificate for applicant and children.

For Non-Bahamians

- Permanent Residency Certificate.
- National Insurance Card.
- Birth Certificates for children.

Advancing the Quality of School Meals: Approaches for Discussion

- Time to update guidelines, retrain on rules
- Oversight to ensure quality, equity
- Lower costs for vendors
 - Remove VAT for vendors?
 - Mechanism to bulk buy at regional level
 - Local produce buying, donations, partnerships with packing houses?
- Data transparency
 - # children enrolled annually
 - Program costs
 - Clear eligibility guidelines
- Mechanism to provide children who consistently have no food with food
 - Principal emergency enrollment authority or similar
- Student nutrition education including exposure to local healthy foods
- Consider reduced meal option – sliding scale?

OEF role, opportunity

- Convene and Inform:
 - Oversight lacking: no mechanism to ensure quality of food on campus, alignment with guidelines
 - Social Service Decision making obscure, alienating for some, guidelines not clear and many families feel its based on who you know.
 - Need for work around mechanism empowering principals or teachers to act when they see the same few kids with no meals.
- Innovate:
 - Pilot to allow students to prepare healthy foods which they sell on campus
 - Recipe Development, regional awards, competitions?
 - Establish a School Vendor Association
 - Packing House Partnership
 - Bulk Purchasing of staple foods
 - Advocate for VAT tax removal
 - Reduced price meal provision
 - Bring back school gardens to expose younger children to variety of flavors, vegetables and fruits

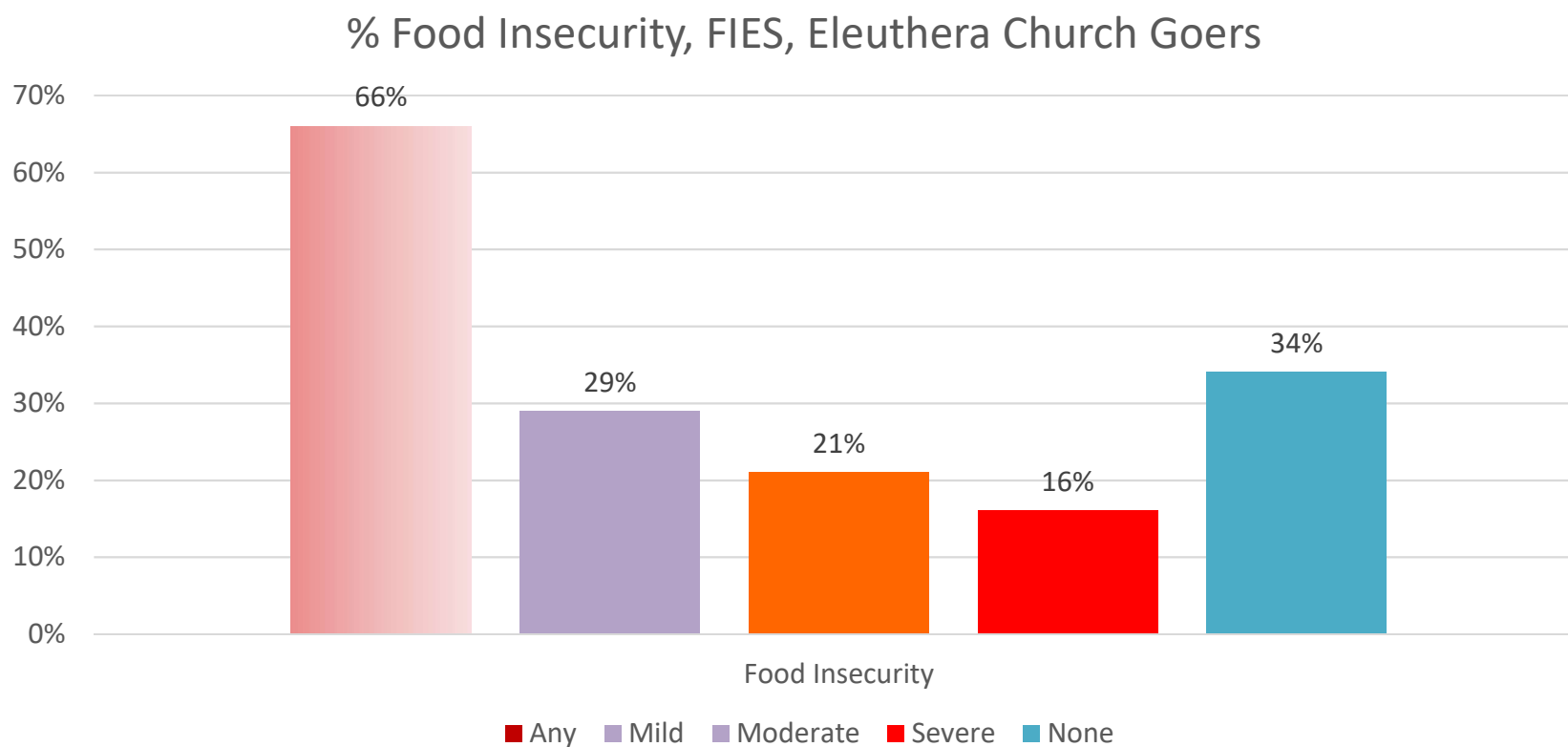
Start with a quiz

- Are there any guidelines for school meals?
YES!
 - IF so what do they apply to? All Vendors
- What % of children here participate in the free School Lunch Programme?
About 10%
- Do all schools participate?
NO, smaller schools have no children on the program
- How much does the government reimburse for meals?
\$4.00 for primary, \$4.25 for secondary
- What are the benefits for children having a healthy lunch?
Improved health, nutrition, academic performance

Pilot study of FIES across Eleuthera, 3 towns (upper, central and lower)

- 62 local church goers
- Surveys completed in February 2017
- First use of FIES data in Bahamas
- Because of limited sample, findings are limited

Food Insecurity on Eleuthera, Sample Churchgoers (n=62)



Pilot study of food prices

- 27 stores in Nassau
- 18 stores in Eleuthera
- Recorded prices of available food products
- Aligned with Food Basket

Cautions: Early Data

- Not all categories of foods included
- Not all stores, just a sample

Have prices shifted since the 2014 Report?

Product	price 2014	avg price today	change since 2014	% change since 2014
grits	0.14	0.16	0.02	14.29%
sugar	0.09	0.13	0.04	44.44%
carrot	0.09	0.1	0.01	11.11%
banana	0.15	0.24	0.09	60.00%
eggs	0.07	0.07	0	0.00%
cheese	0.11	0.42	0.31	281.82%
margarine	0.03	0.04	0.01	33.33%
TOTAL	0.68	1.16	0.48	70.59%

What are the differences in prices in Nassau as compared to Eleuthera?

Product	Nassau	Eleuthera	difference	% change
banana	\$ 1.12	\$ 2.14	\$ 1.02	91.07%
carrots	\$ 1.31	\$ 1.89	\$ 0.58	44.27%
tomato paste	\$ 2.19	\$ 2.54	\$ 0.35	15.98%
evaporated milk (13 oz)	\$ 2.29	\$ 2.65	\$ 0.36	15.72%
margarine	\$ 1.70	\$ 1.73	\$ 0.03	1.76%
eggs	\$ 2.10	\$ 2.72	\$ 0.62	29.52%
milk 1/2 gallon	\$ 3.91	\$ 6.64	\$ 2.73	69.82%
oil 24 oz	\$ 3.17	\$ 3.36	\$ 0.19	5.99%
TOTAL	\$ 17.79	\$ 23.67	\$ 5.88	33.05%

What does food insecurity look like in the Bahamas?



We have an opportunity!

- Household Expenditure Survey 2018?
- Living Conditions Survey
- Add the 8 FIES questions to measure FOR THE FIRST TIME, Food Security.
- The US has fought hard to reverse the problem, lets not let it get that bad here!

Let's get out ahead!

- FIES is a UN monitoring indicator for SDG 2
- The FAO will help!
- As long as it's a state effort, they will provide the technical assistance for the analysis and reporting.