

How Healthy is Food Served at School Canteens?

Observation in Depok and Solo

School is a second home to some children. This rings true amidst the implementation of a full-day school and 5-day school policy in Indonesia. Children spend at least six hours a day at school. They need healthy and nutritious food and beverages that support their well-being to be able to perform school activities.

Parents usually prepare lunch boxes for their children, however busy parents will let school take care of their children's needs for food, one of which through school canteens.

School canteen plays an important role in providing children with nutritious food, while promoting a healthier food consumption. In light of this, Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (The Indonesian Consumers Foundation), Gita Pertiwi Foundation and Perkumpulan Indonesia Berseru conducted an observation in 12 school canteens in Depok and Solo to investigate food procurement practices in school canteens.

The observation was carried out in 6 primary schools (3 public schools and 3 private schools) and 6 junior high schools (3 public schools and 3 private schools).

Canteen, Regulation & Guideline











School canteen plays an important role in influencing food choices for children. Some policies on school canteen:

- Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on National Education Standard, Chapter VII, Article 42, Section 2, states that school canteen supports learning activities.
- Decree of the Indonesia Ministry of Health No. 942/MENKES/SK/VII/2003 on Guidelines for Food Hygiene and Sanitation Requirement, Article 2-16.
- Decree of the Indonesia Ministry of Health, No. 1429/MENKES/SK/XII/2006 on Healthy School Canteen's Management.
- 2013 Guidelines for parents, teachers, and school management on balanced and nutritious school snacks.
- Towards Healthy School Canteen – Directorate General of Primary Education, the Indonesia Ministry of Education, 2011.

What food is available in school canteens?

Snacks are typical and popular food served in school canteens, both in Depok and Solo.

P: Primary School | J: Junior High School

Types of food served at school canteens	Depok		Solo		
	P	J	P	J	
	0%	16,67%	0%	0%	 Heavy meals such as fried rice, mix salad, soup, and rice cake.
	16,67%	0%	0%	0%	 Snacks, such as chips, pop corn, donut, jelly, biscuits, candies.
	0%	16,67%	0%	0%	
	50%	50%	50%	33,3%	 Mineral water, tea, orange drink, instant drinks, fruit juice.
	16,67%	0%	0%	0%	 Fruits and sliced fruits (papaya, melon, pineapple, oranges).
	16,67%	16,67%	50%	66,7%	



Fruits are the least favourite food in Depok and Solo

Respondents in both Depok and Solo like to snack. In Depok, respondents in Primary and Junior High Schools prefer heavy meals to snacks. Unfortunately, fruits are not students' favourite food, both in Depok and Solo. Especially in Depok, none of the respondents likes fruits.

Expired food & Complaint

There is a difference between canteen operators and students when it comes to expired food and complaint after consumption. Canteen operators found more cases of expired food than students did.

However, complaint about food served in canteens was only stated by students. Yet students did not report it to the school management, hence the case **was undetected not followed through.**



Source of food served in school canteens

Some of the food available in school canteens comes from food suppliers in the form of processed food.



P: Primary School | J: Junior High School

Source of food	Depok		Solo	
	P	J	P	J
Self-processed	16,67%	33,33%	0%	0%
Supplier	0%	16,67%	0%	0%
Buy from external sources	16,67%	33,33%	0%	0%
Self processed + Supplier	16,67%	0%	16,67%	0%
Supplier+ Buy from external sources	0%	0%	33,33%	16,67%
Self-processed+ Buy from external sources	33,33%	16,67%	33,33%	16,67%
Self-processed+ Supplier + Buy from external sources	16,67%	0%	16,67%	66,67%

The types of processed food that school canteens receive most are dry snacks and wet snacks. However, schools haven't had food procurement standard and policies to guarantee the safety and nutritional values of food.

Both in Depok and Bandung, food control over food suppliers is low, which is 33.33% for primary and junior high schools in Solo. In Depok, food control is only carried out in 16.65% of primary schools and 33.33% of junior high schools. The reason behind this is that suppliers usually are relatives/wives of the teachers working in the schools. Hence, the rate of supplier selection is also low, which is below 33.33%, with the exception of Depok where the selection rate is 66.67%.

In terms of food suppliers information, schools in Solo have a more refined database than schools in Depok does. Having a database is important, especially when a food poisoning case occurs.

Catering service is more likely to ensure food safety

Some schools provide catering services. There is already a non-written guideline on food procurement through catering services. The caterers also pay attention to nutritional value.

There are more catering services managed by school/foundation than ones managed by parents. Foundation-managed catering services have tighter food selection procedures, where school management, parents, and children are all involved in food selection by considering a balance diet.

All schools in Depok have Memorandum of Understanding with catering services and supervise and evaluate them regularly. In Solo, the rate is lower where around 66.67% of schools have MoU, supervision rate is 50%, and evaluation is below 50%.

Building and canteen facilities

Schools in Depok and Solo have complied to building standards and requirements. However, improvement is still needed in some aspects such as ventilation system, ceiling condition and cleanliness, especially in Depok.

Generally, sanitation facilities in primary & junior high schools in Depok and Solo are good. All observed canteens already have a clean water access. Almost all schools provide dish washing facilities. However, several schools don't have equipment drying facilities as found in primary schools in Solo (33.33%) and Depok (50%), also junior high schools in Depok (16.67%). Most schools have met the requirement of minimum recommended distance from canteen location to waste disposal area/restroom, although the rate is not yet 100% for both cities.

Almost all canteen buildings haven't accommodated students with disabilities, except Tirta Marta Primary School and Laziardi GCS Junior High School in Depok. Schools also haven't had adequate seating facilities, so students eat while standing.

Canteen Regulation & Management

Canteen should have regulation on: smoking, food-taking, and sanitation facilities. School canteens in Solo and Depok are not yet smoke-free. Although canteen operators say that the building is 100% smoke-free, yet students say that they still see people (teachers and school workers) smoking in the canteen area.

There are more canteens in Depok providing utensils to take food than ones in Solo.



Minimal complaint and feedback to improve school canteen quality!



Inadequate information on healthy food and drink options (limited to poster and brochure).

Training and Monitoring

100% of school canteen operators in primary schools and 83.33% of those in junior high schools in Solo have received training. In Depok, the number is lower which is 33.33% in primary schools and 50% in junior high schools.

Community Health Centre) is an institution providing training the most. Other institutions: Education Office and Drug and Food Control Agency.

School canteen strategies to support students'health and well-being

- Formulate a binding written regulation to develop Healthy Canteen, which clearly states coordination mechanism, canteen operators/managers and fruit & vegetables procurement.
- Promote the regulation to canteen managers and other related stakeholders.
- Improve the capacities of Healthy Canteen team members.
- Canteen manager makes sure Healthy Canteen requirements are in line with existing regulation.
- School management makes rule that all stakeholders must obey
- Raise students' awareness on healthy canteen, either directly or through other attractive media
- Carry out regular training on healthy canteen and assistance by respected government offices.