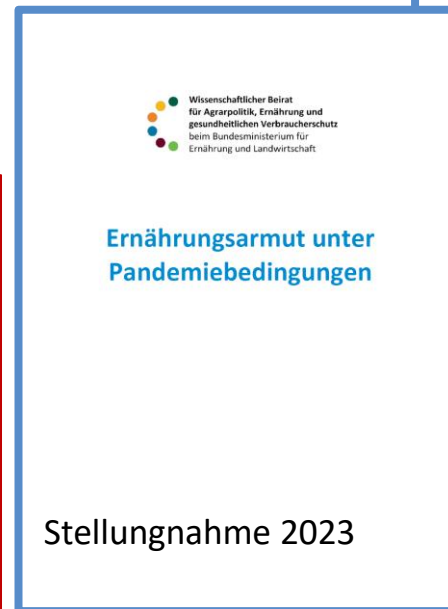


Food insecurity – situation in Germany and measures to combat



RISK OF POVERTY IN GERMANY

Poverty does not necessarily mean being affected by food insecurity

- 15.5% at risk of poverty = 13.1 million people
- 21.1% at risk of poverty or social exclusion 15.2% of children and young people = 2.2 million – one in seven children
- The majority of affected children grow up in poverty for a long period of time > 3 years
- 19.4% of older people aged 65 and over are considered at risk of poverty. Women are particularly affected by this, at 21.4%

Current threshold value: €16,571 (net) per year for people living alone

At risk of poverty in statistical terms: a person's income is less than 60% of the median income.

The use of charitable services, e.g. food banks, can also be seen as an indicator.

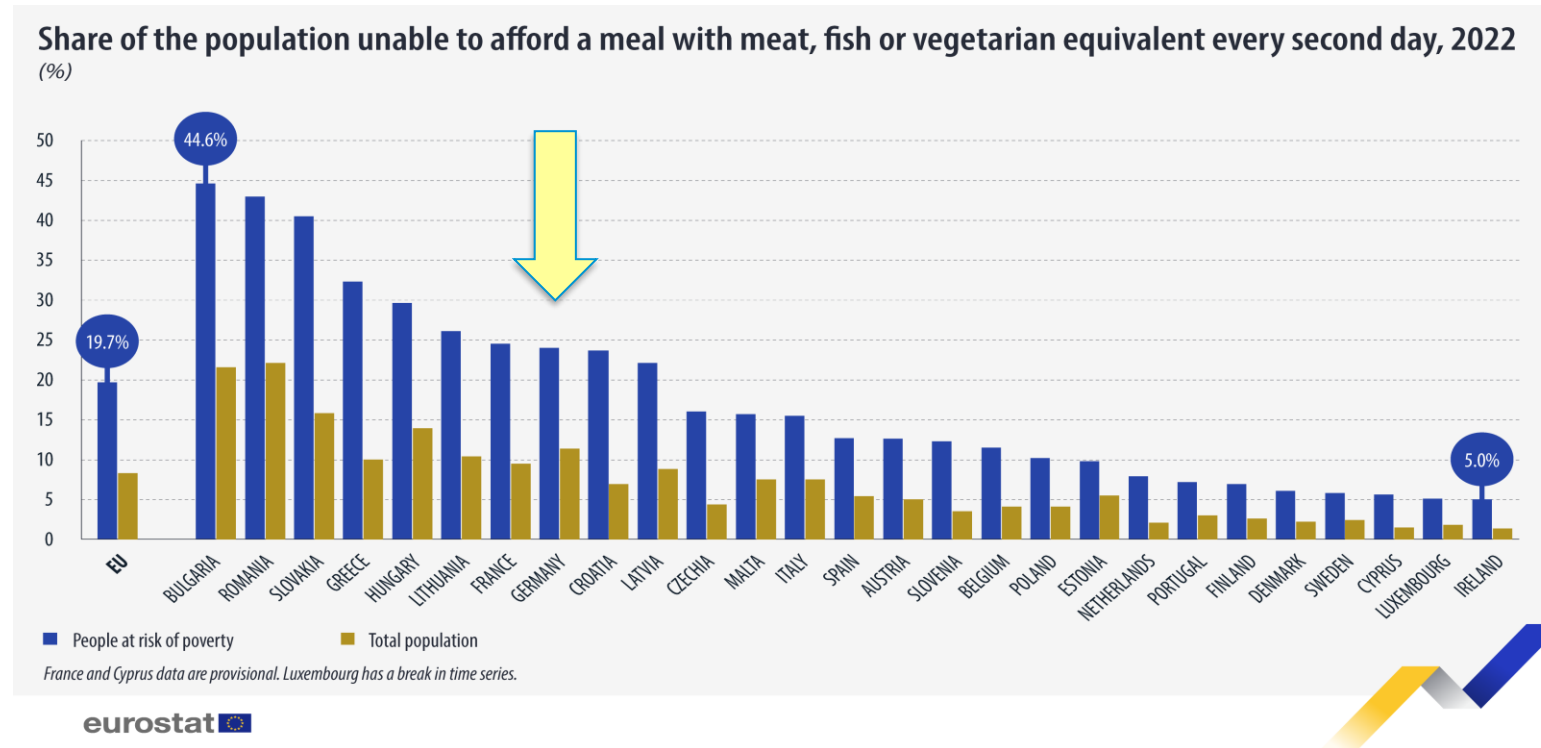
Based on the FAO scale (FIES), 3.5% of the population in Germany is affected by food poverty – that would be approximately 3 million people.

Statistische Bundesamt Dastatis (Hrsg.) : PM 036 vom 29. Januar 2025 und PM 065 vom 17. November 2025

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Hrsg.): Factsheet Kinderarmut in Deutschland. Gütersloh 2020, Cafiero C et.al. (2024): Validating the food insecurity experience scale for Recent food insecurity, Global food insecurity 42

RISK OF POVERTY IN EUROPE

8.3% of the population could not afford an adequate meal every other day, and 19.7% are considered at risk of poverty (European average).



Source: Eurostat 2024– datas refer the year 2022



Unicef estimates that 1.3 million children in Germany are suffering from concrete restrictions of poverty

EFFECTS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Food insecurity during the first **8,000** days has a lot of negative effects

- More frequent overweight, more frequent stunting
- Reduced immune defence
- Reduced attention span and lower learning success
- Reduced fitness and limitations in physical activity
- Increased risk of nutrition-related diseases in later years
- Lower stress resilience
- Poorer school qualifications and
- lower career opportunities

Less well researched are links to social behaviour and mental illnesses such as depression.

Compared to other children and adolescents, resilience is significantly lower in cases of malnutrition and poor nutrition.

Hartline-Grafton HRD et.al.(2021): Food Insecurity and Health, Practices and Policies to adress Food insecurity among Children, Academic Pediatrics 21 (2) ;205-210

Gallegos G et.al. (2021): Food Insecurity and child Development. A State-of-the Art Review Int. J. Environ. Res Public Health 18: 8990

Dantas de Oliveira KH et.al. (2020): Household Food Insecurity and childhold development: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis Matern. Child Nutr 16: e12967

Biesalski HK (2021): Ernährungsarmut bei Kindern, Ursachen, Folgen, Covid-19, Aktuel. Ernährungsmedizin 46, 317-332

AREAS OF ACTION – NUTRITION STRATEGY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE FEDERAL STATES

At government level



objectives

- Eat a balanced diet and make sure you get enough exercise.
- More vegetables, fruit and pulses.
- Grow up healthy and stay healthy as you age.
- Eat a varied diet at nursery, school and in the canteen.
- Good food for us and our planet – increase the range of sustainable and organic food on offer.
- Appreciate food, reduce food waste.

- ✓ Health-promoting, sustainable food environments
- ✓ Healthy, sustainable eating patterns
- ✓ Efficient structures and processes
- ✓ Ongoing research

at level of the federal states

Example Hessen

The Hessian Food Strategy concept is based on five areas of action:

- Promoting healthy and sustainable options in community and school catering
- Strengthening the production, supply and marketing of sustainable, organic and regional food
- Improving nutrition education
- Strengthening civil society engagement
- Effectively reducing food waste

AREAS OF ACTION – MEASURES UNDERTAKEN

- Improving the quality of food in communal catering in all settings
- System change: contribution-free childcare and school catering
- During the transition period: increased use of the Education and Participation Programme
- Supporting the work of food banks



Tafel Deutschland e.V. · Germaniastraße 18 · 12099 Berlin

Hintergrundinformation

www.tafel.de 30 Jahre Tafeln in Deutschland, WBAE (Hrsg.) 2020 Gutachten und Stellungnahme 2023

https://dgevesch-ni.de/arbeitshilfe_schulmittagessen_bildungspaket/ <https://familienportal.de/familienportal/familienleistungen/bildung-und-teilhabe>

**Lebensmittel
retten.
Menschen
helfen.**



The nationwide Education and Participation Programme makes it possible to request free meals in daycare centres and schools. On average, 44% of those eligible take advantage of this opportunity.

There are currently 975 food banks in Germany and over 2,000 distribution points (February 2024).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUALITY-STANDARDS OF THE GERMAN NUTRITION SOCIETY

- Derive the quality and frequency of foods in the menu based on food-related nutritional recommendations
- Show alternatives in an ovo-lacto-vegetarian menu line, and if necessary, also in a vegan line (only for adults)
- Provide guidance for providers on portion sizes and recommendations for purchasing regional and organic food
- Highlight opportunities for waste prevention
- Formulate requirements for the dining environment and staff
- Provide tips for successful catering, feedback and participation



<https://www.dge.de/gesunde-ernaehrung/gut-essen-und-trinken/dge-ernaehrungskreis/>

The food on offer is plant-based with small amounts of animal products. Health promotion is balanced with environmental, animal welfare and social requirements.



THE GERMAN NUTRITION SOCIETY IS...

- A scientific association (registered association)
- It develops nutritional science statements and nutrition related recommendations and transfers these into practice.
- It promotes a balanced and sustainable diet so that people in Germany can stay healthy or become healthy.

The organs of the scientific association:

- The scientific presidium (30 people from various fields, working on a voluntary basis)
- The head office in Bonn (approx. 124 people work here part-time or full-time) and sections in 6 federal states
- Currently 4,199 members (December 2024)



Reference value of iodine



THE IMPORTANCE OF MEALS FOR FREE

At national level: since 2024/2025 support by the Start-Chancen Programme for schools with a high proportion of children from low socio-economic level. Receiving special investment in classrooms and intensive teaching support.

https://www.bmfr.bund.de/DE/Bildung/Schule/Startchancen-Programm/startchancen-programm_node.html

- Prevents exclusion and discrimination.
- Has a positive impact on the body weight of children and adolescents, reducing the prevalence of obesity.
- Leads to better cognitive and physical performance.
- Shapes positive eating habits from an early age, especially in conjunction with nutrition education.
- Promotes well-being and social integration, positively influencing the atmosphere in schools and daycare centres.
- Improves career prospects and opportunities

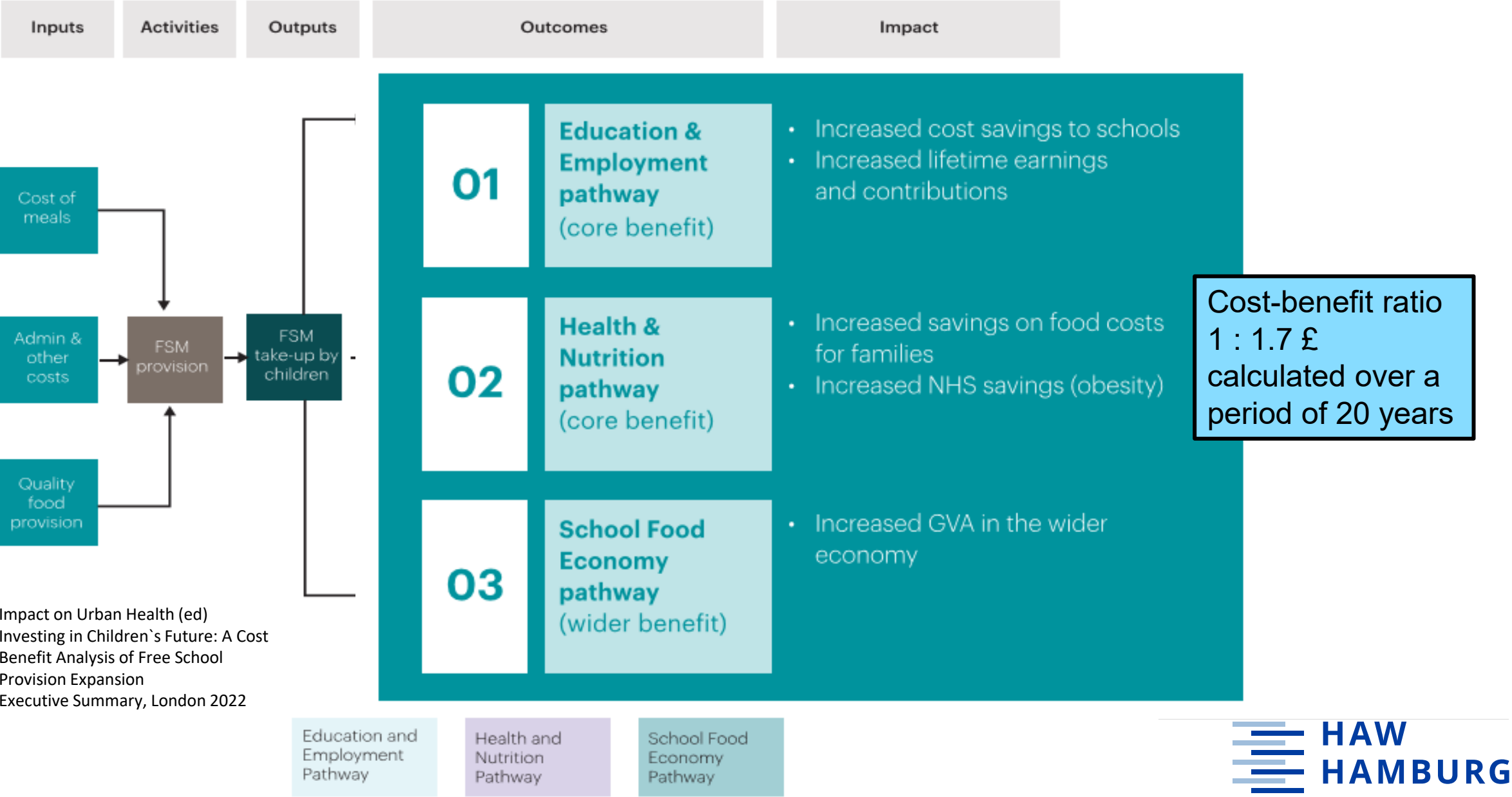


Holford A, Rabe B (2022): Going universal: The impact of free school lunches on child body weight outcomes. Journal of Public Economics Plus 3

O`Connell R et.al. (2022): School meals as a resource for low income families in three European countries : a comparative case approach. European Societies 24 (3): 251-282

Lundborg, P et.al (2022).: Long-term Effects of Childhood Nutrition. Evidence from a School Lunch Reform, Review of Economic Studies 89, 876-998

CONTRIBUTION-FREE CHILDCARE AND SCHOOL MEALS



ATIVITIES FOR ELDER PEOPLE

- Communal lunches for older people who still live at home and have a certain degree of mobility
- Low-threshold services: help for self-help and affordable meals
- 'Neighbourhood tables' can further break down barriers
- Maintaining a needs-based infrastructure: transport services, shopping trolleys for groceries, mobile banking services and mobile medical care



Mittagstisch-Angebote für ältere Menschen erfolgreich organisieren

IN FORM Leitfaden-Mittagstisch



Auf Rädern zum Essen!

CONCLUSION

- Poverty also exists in Germany. Measures to combat it are being taken at national and state level.
- The individual effects vary and can have, if they are not undertaken, a serious impact on people's lives.
- Free childcare and school meals could lay the foundation for equal opportunities, but so far this has only been implemented in the state of Hamburg for childcare and in the state of Berlin for primary schools.
- Reducing bureaucracy could promote take-up of the education and participation programme.
- This requires the implementation of a balanced, healthy and sustainable diet as enshrined in the DGE quality standards for catering. For this reason alone, there are now calls for these standards to be made binding.



**Thank you for
your attention**

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