HORIZONS: Journal of Education and Social Humaniora
E-ISSN: 3089-5537
Vol. 2 No. 1 (June 2026)
Link: https://jurnal.ahlalkamal.com/index.php/Horizons/article/view/33

The Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) in Education: Analysis of Problems and Challenges of Implementation

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ARTIKEL INFORMATION

Received:
2026-06-02

Accepted:
2026-06-07

Published:
2026-06-09

Keywords:
MBG, school implementation, operational challenges, education policy

Kata Kunci:
MBG, implementasi sekolah, tantangan operasional, kebijakan pendidikan

ABSTRACT

The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) is a national policy aimed at improving the nutritional status of students. However, its implementation at the school level faces significant operational obstacles. This study aims to identify and analyze the problems and challenges of implementing MBG in schools. The method used was a systematic literature review of scientific journals, research institute reports, and national media coverage for the 2025-2026 period. The study identified five main problems: (1) the MBG schedule being out of sync with learning hours, (2) limited school facilities and infrastructure, (3) the increased workload of non-pedagogical teachers, (4) the menu not matching the diverse needs of students, and (5) the school's unpreparedness in managing distribution and quality standardization. Each problem is explained based on its form, cause, and implementation challenges. The study concludes that the success of MBG depends heavily on the readiness of schools as the spearhead of implementation. Therefore, improvements in governance, provision of supporting facilities, and a clear division of roles between teachers and operational staff are needed.

INTRODUCTION

Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) was launched as a national priority program based on Presidential Regulation Number 83 of 2024 concerning the establishment of the National Nutrition Agency (BGN). This program targets all

students from early childhood education (PAUD) to secondary school, including madrasahs (Islamic schools) and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Its primary objective is to improve the nutritional status of school-age children, support their concentration in learning, and accelerate the reduction of stunting rates, which remain a national health problem. Conceptually, this program has a strong foundation. Children with good nutritional status tend to have higher attendance rates, better concentration in learning, and stronger immunity against disease. However, implementation in the field has presented significant obstacles.[1]

In her research on the effectiveness of MBG as an educational intervention, identified that this policy still faces serious challenges, including inconsistencies in nutritional standards, unequal distribution, and weak coordination among stakeholders. A 2025 study by the Social and Political Sciences Faculty of the University of Indonesia[2] involving 1,267 respondents from 30 schools in five regions of Indonesia found that the implementation of MBG disrupted teaching and learning activities, increased teachers' workloads, and faced operational challenges related to uncertain distribution times and a menu variety that was less appealing to students. These findings emphasize that MBG implementation issues need to be analyzed specifically at the school level, not just from a budgetary or macro-policy perspective,

[1] Ucu Agustini, "Efektivitas dan Tantangan Kebijakan Program Makan Bergizi Gratis sebagai Intervensi Pendidikan di Indonesia," *Jurnal Kiprah Pendidikan* 4, no. 3 (July 2025): 362–68, https://doi.org/10.33578/kpd.v4i3.p362-368.

[2] "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI," accessed April 21, 2026, https://labsosio.ui.ac.id/temuan-utama-penelitian-dari-dapur-ke-meja-belajar-evaluasi-program-makan-bergizi-gratis-di-lima-daerah-indonesia/.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively analyze the operational challenges of the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) in Indonesian schools. This method was selected because it enables the researchers to aggregate, evaluate, and synthesize findings from various existing studies, institutional reports, and factual news coverage to systematically answer the predetermined research questions regarding the forms, causes, and challenges of MBG implementation.[3]

Search Strategy and Data Sources

Data collection focused on secondary sources published during the 2025–2026 period to ensure the timeliness and relevance of the policy evaluation. Searches were conducted across academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, university repositories), research institute reports (e.g., LABSOSIO FISIP UI), and credible national media portals (e.g., Antara News, Kompas, Republika). The primary search keywords used in both English and Indonesian included "Free Nutritious Meal Program," "Program Makan Bergizi Gratis," "MBG implementation in schools," "MBG operational constraints," and "education policy challenges."

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the gathered data aligned directly with the research objectives, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria required that the documents must: (1) specifically address the operational implementation of the MBG program at the elementary or secondary school

[3] Dela Riadi, *(SLR) untuk Peneliti Pemula* (Banyumas: Ganesha Kreasi Semesta, 2026).

level, and (2) provide evidence or descriptive analysis regarding the forms, causes, or challenges of the program. Conversely, documents that exclusively discussed the macro-economic budget, political rhetoric, or nutritional theory without empirical observation of school-level operations were excluded from the analysis.[4]

Data Analysis Procedure

The extracted data were analyzed using a qualitative thematic analysis technique. Information from the selected literature was read, coded, and subsequently categorized to match the five predefined research focuses: (1) The lack of synchronization of MBG implementation with formal learning time, (2) Limited school facilities and infrastructure to support the program, (3) The addition of non-pedagogical burdens to teachers' duties, (4) Inappropriate menus for the diverse needs and characteristics of students, (5) Schools' unpreparedness in managing food distribution and standardizing food quality.[5]

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Problems of Misalignment with Learning Time

1. Types of Problems

The implementation of the MBG program at the school level is often carried out during ongoing teaching and learning activities. Research by the Social and Political Sciences Laboratory, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, [6] explicitly stated that the implementation of MBG disrupts teaching and learning

[4] I. Gde Raka Widiana et al., *Systematic Review dan Meta Analysis* (Media Nusa Creative (MNC Publishing), 2025).

[5] Nurhayati Nurhayati et al., *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif : Teori dan Praktik* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024).

[6] "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI."

activities. Uncertainty about distribution times causes students to lose focus and teachers to struggle to regulate the learning rhythm.

This problem creates at least three disruptions. First, students' concentration is disrupted. When staff arrive with food, students' attention, previously focused on the lesson, immediately shifts to the food. The classroom atmosphere becomes noisy, and teachers must work hard to regain students' focus after the distribution process is complete.

Second, effective learning time is significantly reduced. The process of distributing food, queuing, eating together, and cleaning up can take 30-45 minutes. If this occurs during class time, a lesson can lose almost half its effective time.

Third, teachers experience difficulty in planning lessons. Teachers cannot plan materials effectively because they don't know exactly when the food will arrive and how long it will take to distribute it. This aligns with [7] findings, which state that weak coordination between policy designers and program implementers is a major factor disrupting the teaching and learning process.

2. Causes of the Problem

Based on an analysis of various sources, there are three main causes of this problem.

First, there is a lack of standard guidelines from the central government regarding the ideal timing for implementing the MBG, integrated with the learning schedule. The government only provides instructions that the program must be implemented, but does not provide technical specifications regarding

[7] Agustini, "Efektivitas dan Tantangan Kebijakan Program Makan Bergizi Gratis sebagai Intervensi Pendidikan di Indonesia."

the most appropriate timing. As a result, each school adjusts independently, often in ways that compromise learning effectiveness.

Second, there is weak coordination between policy designers at the National Nutrition Agency (BGN) and program implementers at the school level. [8] emphasized that ineffective coordination between stakeholders is one of the main challenges to implementing the MBG. Program design focuses too much on the nutritional aspects and logistics of food procurement, without seriously considering operational dynamics in the classroom.

Third, the break time available in most schools is only 15-30 minutes. This duration is inadequate for the distribution and consumption of MBG, which involves all students, especially in schools with large student populations. If forced into break time, students will not have enough time to eat peacefully.

3. Implementation Challenges

The main challenges in addressing this issue are threefold. First, finding an ideal schedule format without reducing the already dense teaching hours. The current curriculum already has a strict time allocation for each subject. Adding break time means reducing learning time, while maintaining existing break time is insufficient to accommodate MBG.

Second, adapting policies to the highly diverse needs of schools. A school with 100 students will have different needs than a school with 1,000. An overly rigid policy will not be suitable for all schools, while an overly flexible policy risks creating chaos.

Third, there is a need for re-coordination between the National Education Agency (BGN), the Education Office, and schools to develop a mutually

[8] Agustini, "Efektivitas dan Tantangan Kebijakan Program Makan Bergizi Gratis sebagai Intervensi Pendidikan di Indonesia."

beneficial schedule. This coordination requires a lot of time and energy, considering the large number of schools.

Problems of Limited School Facilities and Infrastructure

1. Type of Problem

Not all schools have adequate facilities to support the implementation of the MBG program. [9] in their research in Jayapura City revealed that distribution constraints and limited supporting infrastructure are the main obstacles to the effectiveness of the MBG program, especially in eastern Indonesia, which faces complex geographic and logistical challenges.

There are at least four types of facilities that often pose a barrier. First, the dining room. Many schools, especially in rural areas and dense urban areas, do not have a dedicated dining room. These schools typically only have classrooms and a ceremonial field. As a result, students are forced to eat in classrooms, in the courtyard, or in the corridors.

Second, hygienic food storage. MBG requires temporary storage before distribution to students. Ideally, schools have refrigerators or clean, airtight containers. However, many schools lack these facilities, so food that is not immediately distributed is at risk of contamination or spoilage.

Third, sinks or handwashing facilities. A basic principle of food safety is washing hands before eating. However, not all schools have enough sinks to accommodate all students. In many schools, there are only one or two sinks, and even these are often broken or lack running water.

[9] Petrus Yohanes Ismail Arwimbar and Ulfa Rahmadani, *ANALISIS IMPLEMENTASI DAN KENDALA DALAM PROGRAM MBG PADA PENDIDIKAN SD, SMP DAN SMA NEGERI DI KOTA JAYAPURA*, n.d.

Fourth, an organized internal distribution system. Research by the Social and Political Sciences Laboratory, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,[10] found that schools face operational challenges, particularly related to delays in food deliveries. Schools need a clear mechanism for collecting food from drop-off points, distributing it to each class, and managing leftovers. Without this system, the distribution process becomes chaotic.

Furthermore,[11] reported that in Jayapura Regency, obstacles to MBG distribution included food that was too hard for young children to consume, delays in distribution, and significant changes in food taste. This indicates that limited facilities and infrastructure directly impact the quality of food received by students.

2. Causes of the Problem

There are three main causes of this limited facility and infrastructure. First, the disparity in facilities between schools has existed for a long time, long before the MBG program was launched. Urban and popular schools tend to have more complete facilities due to better access to funding. Meanwhile, schools in underdeveloped areas, border areas, and schools with students from low-income families typically have very limited facilities. The MBG program was not designed to address these gaps, but instead exploits existing ones.

Second, the MBG program lacks an affirmative action scheme to provide adequate infrastructure in schools. The central government appears to assume all schools have equal facilities. The MBG budget is allocated almost entirely for

[10] "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI."

[11] Agustina Estevani Janggo, "Pemkab Jayapura Menekankan Perbaikan Distribusi Program MBG - ANTARA News Papua," accessed April 21, 2026, https://papua.antaranews.com/berita/750797/pemkab-jayapura-menekankan-perbaikan-distribusi-program-mbg.

food procurement, with no specific allocation for improving school infrastructure capacity.

Third, there is no mechanism for assessing school eligibility before the program is implemented. Before a school is designated as an MBG recipient, an assessment should first be conducted to determine whether it has the minimum facilities to support the program. However, in practice, school designations are often made without adequate assessments.

3. Implementation Challenges

The challenges in addressing this issue are significant.

First, significant additional investment is required to equalize facilities across schools. Improving a single school can cost hundreds of millions of rupiah. Meanwhile, the number of schools in need of facility assistance is enormous, especially in underdeveloped areas such as eastern Indonesia, as mentioned by [12] presents complex geographical challenges.

Second, it is difficult to prioritize schools that need infrastructure assistance most. On the one hand, schools with the worst facilities are the ones in greatest need. However, on the other hand, providing assistance only to certain schools risks creating social jealousy between schools.

Third, ensuring the sustainability of facility maintenance after the program is implemented. Simply building a dining room or a sink is not enough. These facilities must be maintained to keep them functioning. Schools already burdened with various operational tasks may not have the capacity to maintain additional facilities.

[12] Arwimbar and Rahmadani, *ANALISIS IMPLEMENTASI DAN KENDALA DALAM PROGRAM MBG PADA PENDIDIKAN SD, SMP DAN SMA NEGERI DI KOTA JAYAPURA*.

Problems of Increasing Teachers' Non-Pedagogical Workload

1. Type of Problem

In the implementation of the MBG program, teachers are often directly involved in the distribution and supervision of food. Research by the Social and Political Sciences Laboratory, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, [13] explicitly stated that teachers and other educational staff face an additional workload in organizing food distribution and assisting students during mealtimes.

There are at least five types of non-pedagogical tasks assigned to teachers. First, ensuring that the number of food portions corresponds to the number of students present that day. Teachers must recount the portions received, compare them with the student attendance list, and report any shortages or excesses.

Second, managing student queues during meal collection. In schools with hundreds of students, managing queues to prevent pushing and shoving requires extra effort and patience. Teachers must be physically present at the distribution location to maintain order.

Third, checking the condition of food before distribution. Teachers must check whether the food is still warm, whether the packaging is leaking, whether there are any unusual odors, or whether there are any foreign objects in the food. This task requires knowledge of food safety, which not all teachers possess.

Fourth, report extraordinary incidents such as students refusing to eat, food that is unfit for consumption, or students experiencing symptoms of food

[13] "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI."

poisoning. This report must be submitted to the school and then forwarded to the relevant agencies.

Fifth, supervise students during the meal process, especially students in lower grades (elementary and early childhood education) who still require assistance while eating.

In response to this problem, the government issued Circular Letter of the Head of the National Nutrition Agency Number 5 of 2025 concerning the Provision of Incentives for Teachers Responsible for MBG. This policy requires each school to appoint 1-3 teachers to be responsible for distribution, with an incentive of IDR 100,000 per working day. [14] and [15] reported that this policy is a form of appreciation for the additional workload of teachers.

2. Causes of the Problem

There are three main causes of this problem. First, there is a lack of dedicated operational personnel assigned to manage MBG distribution at the school level. This program is designed as if the distribution process can run automatically without requiring human labor. However, distributing food to hundreds or thousands of students every day clearly requires significant coordination and effort.

Second, there is a mistaken assumption that teachers can take on additional tasks without disrupting their primary function as educators. This assumption is unrealistic given the already high workload of teachers. Teachers not only teach in class but also prepare lessons, check assignments, grade

[14] Reyhan Fernanda Fajarihza, "BGN Sebut Insentif Guru Penanggung Jawab MBG Tak Bebani APBN," Bisnis.com, October 1, 2025, https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20251001/12/1916613/bgn-sebut-insentif-guru-penanggung-jawab-mbg-tak-bebani-apbn.

[15] Erik purnama putra, "Guru Penanggung Jawab MBG Di Sekolah Bakal Dapat Insentif Rp 100 Ribu per Hari | Republika Online," accessed April 21, 2026, https://news.republika.co.id/berita/t3dlev484/.

exams, guide extracurricular activities, and attend various meetings and training sessions.

Third, the incentive policy issued by the government has not addressed the root of the problem. The Rp100,000 per day incentive is financial compensation, not a structural solution. Furthermore, a report by [16] stated that the National Agency for National Education (BGN) ensures that incentives will not burden the state budget, yet in the field there are numerous reports that incentives are often disbursed late or not at all.

3. Implementation Challenges

The challenges in addressing this issue are also significant. First, providing funding to recruit dedicated operational staff for tens of thousands of schools. If each school requires at least one operational staff member, the government would have to recruit tens of thousands of people. This requires a significant additional budget beyond the food procurement budget.

Second, ensure the quality and integrity of the operational staff recruited. Operational staff will interact directly with the food that students will consume. They must have basic knowledge of food hygiene and safety. Furthermore, they must be trustworthy not to take or reduce food portions.

Third, establish a clear division of responsibilities between operational staff and teachers. If operational staff are recruited, there must be clear rules about who does what. Once recruited, operational staff should not become mere assistants to teachers while teachers continue to do the majority of the work.

[16] Indra kusuma, "BGN Bentuk Tim Khusus, Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Kini Lebih Selektif," accessed April 21, 2026, https://www.kompas.tv/nasional/664147/bgn-bentuk-tim-khusus-program-makan-bergizi-gratis-kini-lebih-selektif.

Problems of Unaccommodated Diversity in Student Needs

1. Type of Problem

The MBG program uses a uniform menu approach (one-size-fits-all). Research by the Social and Political Sciences Laboratory, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, [17] found that students' lack of menu variety was one of the main complaints in the implementation of MBG. This uniform approach fails to consider the diverse characteristics of students.

There are at least four types of diversity that are often overlooked. First, special health conditions. Some students have allergies to certain foods, such as seafood, nuts, or eggs. Others have chronic health conditions such as diabetes or digestive disorders that require special diets. With a uniform menu, these students have no choice but to skip meals or risk their health.

Second, eating preferences and habits are influenced by culture and religion. Students from certain families may not be accustomed to consuming certain types of food. Muslim students certainly require assurance of halal food. Meanwhile, students from certain regions may dislike menus originating from other regions.

Third, dietary restrictions based on religious beliefs. In Islamic schools (madrasas) and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the halal quality of food is an absolute requirement. However, not all MBG kitchens are halal-certified, and not all staff understand the importance of maintaining a halal supply chain.

Fourth, differences in age and ability to consume food. [18] reported that in Jayapura Regency, distributed MBG food was often too strong for early

[17] "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI."

[18] Estevani Janggo, "Pemkab Jayapura Menekankan Perbaikan Distribusi Program MBG - ANTARA News Papua."

childhood (PAUD) children. This indicates that the program does not consider differences in consumption capacity across educational levels.

As a result, not all students are able to consume the provided food. Some choose not to eat, throw away food, or consume only small portions. This certainly reduces the program's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

2. Causes of the Problem

There are three main causes of this problem. First, an overly standardized approach to simplify logistics and procurement on a large scale. The central government chose to simplify the program by creating the same standard menu for all schools. This did facilitate the procurement of raw materials and the cooking process in the central kitchen. However, this logistical convenience came at the expense of reduced responsiveness to individual needs. Second, there is no mechanism for identifying students' special needs before the program is implemented. Schools are not required to report data on students with allergies, chronic illnesses, or dietary restrictions. As a result, the catering kitchen is never aware that a student cannot consume the menu they provide.

Third, the limited menu flexibility resulting from a centralized procurement system. In a centralized procurement system, catering kitchens already purchase raw materials in large quantities for predetermined menus. Providing menu variations for specific schools or students disrupts the existing procurement system.

3. Implementation Challenges

The challenges in addressing this issue are quite complex. First, balancing logistical efficiency with the diverse individual needs of students. On the one hand, the MBG program serves tens of millions of students, so efficiency is

essential. On the other hand, ignoring individual needs will render the program ineffective. Finding a balance between these two is very difficult.

Second, developing a system that can accommodate menu variations without overburdening the catering kitchen. For example, should each school be given the authority to choose a menu from several options? Or should the catering kitchen provide alternative menus for students with special needs? Such a system will add to the operational complexity of the catering kitchen.

Third, accurately identify student needs without violating privacy. To identify student allergies or illnesses, schools need to collect sensitive health data. This data must be carefully managed to prevent misuse.

Problems of Unpreparedness in Distribution Governance and Quality Standardization

1. Types of Problems

Distribution governance at the school level faces various serious operational challenges. [19], in their study of unfit food at SDN 2 Sandubaya, East Lombok, found that the MBG program still lacked aspects of kitchen hygiene, quality control, and distribution. The study revealed the discovery of maggots in MBG food, indicating weak implementation of food safety standards.

Furthermore, [20] revealed a dispute over distribution areas and the blocking of the MBG program in Subang, which allegedly harmed thousands of students. This case demonstrates that distribution governance is not only problematic in technical aspects, but also in coordination between service providers.

[19] Danu Irawan et al., "Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meals Program Viewed from the Case of Unfit-for-Consumption Food in East Lombok.," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan* 42, no. 2 (October 2025): 501–6, https://doi.org/10.15294/jpp.v42i2.38934.

[20] "Perebutan Wilayah Distribusi Dan Pemblokiran Program Gizi Diduga Rugikan Ribuan Siswa - Mediahumaspolri.Com," accessed April 21, 2026, https://www.mediahumaspolri.com/perebutan-wilayah-distribusi-dan-pemblokiran-program-gizi-diduga-rugikan-ribuan-siswa.html.

There are at least five types of problems that frequently arise in distribution governance and quality standardization.

First, delays in food delivery from the provider's kitchen to the school. The food's arrival time is often inaccurate. As a result, students and teachers have to wait, or the distribution process is rushed after the food arrives.

Second, the numberbn of portions does not match the number of students present that day. Sometimes the portions sent are fewer than the number of students, resulting in some students missing out. Conversely, sometimes the portions sent are larger, resulting in excess food that risks being wasted.

Third, there is a lack of standard procedures for inspecting food for safety before distribution. [21] found that schools typically lack written protocols detailing what should be inspected, how to inspect it, and who is authorized to decide whether food is fit or not.

Fourth, there is inconsistency in the quality of raw materials. Research by the Social and Political Sciences Laboratory, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, [22]reported that the temperature of the food received by students was often inconsistent, and there were minor health complaints after consumption. Food quality can vary significantly from day to day.

Fifth, there is a lack of a quick reporting channel for problems. When schools encounter problems such as spoiled food or the presence of foreign objects, they are often unsure who to report to. Should they go to the kitchen? To the National Education Agency (BGN)? To the Education Office? To the Health Office? (Ironi Sekolah Rusak di Majalengka di Samping Dapur MBG, t.t.)

[21] Irawan et al., "Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meals Program Viewed from the Case of Unfit-for-Consumption Food in East Lombok."

[22] "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI."

reported an ironic contrast in Majalengka. There, a public elementary school building was in dire condition, severely damaged, right next to the kitchen of the Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit (SPPG), which looked grand and new. This contrast indicates that development priorities remain unbalanced.

2. Causes of the Problem

There are three main causes of this problem. First, the lack of a national Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that is practical and easy for schools to follow. Each school determines its own method for receiving, storing, distributing, and reporting the implementation of MBG. As a result, the quality of governance varies widely between schools. Schools with good management can run relatively smoothly, while those with weak management experience numerous obstacles.

Second, schools are not provided with training on procedures for receiving, quality inspection, and reporting problems. Teachers and school staff lack the basic competencies to assess food safety. [23]emphasized that incidents of food poisoning and the discovery of maggots in food indicate weak implementation of food safety principles throughout the processing and distribution chain.

Third, there is a lack of an effective feedback mechanism between schools and food pantries. Schools, as beneficiaries, lack the power to reject unsuitable food or sanction food pantries that repeatedly violate standards. [24], in their research at Gadjah Mada University, recommended improvements to the MBG governance design, including establishing clear nutritional standards and increasing community participation in oversight.

[23] Irawan et al., "Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meals Program Viewed from the Case of Unfit-for-Consumption Food in East Lombok."

[24] pudji_w, *Agar Tak Sekadar Komoditas Politik, Peneliti SPs UGM Tawarkan Strategi Baru Kelola Program MBG – Sekolah Pascasarjana*, n.d., accessed April 21, 2026, https://pasca.ugm.ac.id/agar-tak-sekadar-komoditas-politik-peneliti-sps-ugm-tawarkan-strategi-baru-kelola-program-mbg/.

3. Implementation Challenges

The challenges in addressing this issue are equally significant. First, developing SOPs that are detailed enough to provide clear guidance, yet practical and not administratively burdensome for schools. SOPs that are too thick and complex will never be read by already busy teachers. SOPs that are too short and general will not provide sufficient guidance.

Second, conducting training that reaches tens of thousands of schools across Indonesia. Training just one representative from each school would mean training hundreds of thousands of people. This is a national-scale training project that requires significant time, money, and training personnel.

Third, establishing a reporting system that is fast, simple, and accountable, and capable of effective follow-up on reports. The reporting system should be easily accessible to schools, for example through a simple application.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of five issues with the implementation of the MBG in schools, this study concludes as follows:

First, the problem of the MBG schedule being misaligned with learning time is caused by the lack of standard guidelines from the central government, weak coordination between the National Education Agency (BGN) and schools, and inadequate break times. Research by the Social and Educational Research Institute "Temuan Utama Penelitian 'Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI," accessed April 21, 2026, https://labsosio.ui.ac.id/temuan-utama-penelitian-dari-dapur-ke-meja-belajar-evaluasi-program-makan-bergizi-gratis-di-lima-

daerah-indonesia/. confirms that the implementation of the MBG disrupts teaching and learning activities. The main challenges are developing an integrated schedule without reducing class hours, adapting to diverse school conditions, and building better coordination.

Second, the problem of limited facilities and infrastructure is caused by disparities in existing facilities between schools, the absence of an affirmative action scheme within the program, and the absence of a school eligibility assessment mechanism. [25] Revealed that infrastructure constraints are a major obstacle in eastern Indonesia. The challenges include the need for significant investment to equalize facilities, the difficulty of prioritizing schools receiving assistance, and ensuring the sustainability of facility maintenance.

Third, the problem of increasing teachers' non-pedagogical workload is caused by the lack of dedicated operational staff schools, the mistaken assumption that teachers can absorb additional tasks, and incentive policies that fail to address the root of the problem.“Temuan Utama Penelitian ‘Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia’ - LABSOSIO FISIP UI.” found that teachers face a significant additional workload. The challenges are providing funding for the recruitment of operational staff, ensuring in the quality of those recruited, and establishing a clear division of roles.

Fourth, the problem of menu inconsistencies with the diversity of student needs is caused by an overly standardized approach, the absence of a mechanism for identifying special needs, and a rigid centralized procurement system. “Temuan Utama Penelitian ‘Dari Dapur Ke Meja Belajar: Evaluasi

[25] Arwimbar and Rahmadani, *ANALISIS IMPLEMENTASI DAN KENDALA DALAM PROGRAM MBG PADA PENDIDIKAN SD, SMP DAN SMA NEGERI DI KOTA JAYAPURA*.

Program Makan Bergizi Gratis Di Lima Daerah Indonesia' - LABSOSIO FISIP UI." reported that students' lack of attractive menu variations was a major complaint. The challenge is balancing logistical efficiency with individual needs, developing a menu variation system that does not burden kitchens, and identifying student needs without violating privacy.

Fifth, the problem of unpreparedness in distribution governance and quality standardization is caused by the absence of practical national SOPs, the lack of training for schools, and the absence of effective feedback mechanisms. Danu Irawan et al., "Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Free Nutritious Meals Program Viewed from the Case of Unfit-for-Consumption Food in East Lombok.," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan* 42, no. 2 (October 2025): 501–6, https://doi.org/10.15294/jpp.v42i2.38934.found cases of maggots in MBG food as evidence of weak food safety implementation. The challenge is to develop detailed yet practical SOPs, conduct national-scale training, and establish a rapid and accountable reporting system.

Policy Implications

The success of the MBG program does not depend solely on budget size or food availability. The readiness of schools, as the spearhead of implementation, is the most crucial factor.[26] Recommend improving the MBG governance design, including establishing clear nutritional standards and increasing community participation in oversight. Without school readiness, even the best program will fail in practice.

Based on the findings of this study, three urgent steps are needed:

[26] pudji_w, *Agar Tak Sekadar Komoditas Politik, Peneliti SPs UGM Tawarkan Strategi Baru Kelola Program MBG – Sekolah Pascasarjana*.

Develop a national SOP that details the implementation schedule integrated with learning, food quality inspection procedures, problem reporting mechanisms, and the division of roles between teachers and operational staff.

Allocate affirmative funds to improve infrastructure in underdeveloped schools, including the construction of simple dining rooms, the provision of sinks, and hygienic food storage areas. Particular attention needs to be paid to eastern Indonesia, which faces complex geographical challenges[27]

Appoint independent operational staff at each MBG recipient school, rather than burdening teachers with distribution and supervision duties. The budget for this could be allocated from the currently long and wasteful distribution chain.

Without these steps, the MBG program risks becoming an operational burden for schools rather than a solution for improving nutrition and education quality. A program that is conceptually sound will be wasted if its implementation at the school level is not managed seriously.

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[27] Arwimbar and Rahmadani, *ANALISIS IMPLEMENTASI DAN KENDALA DALAM PROGRAM MBG PADA PENDIDIKAN SD, SMP DAN SMA NEGERI DI KOTA JAYAPURA*.

Arwimbar, Petrus Yohanes Ismail, and Ulfa Rahmadani. *Analisis Implementasi Dan Kendala Dalam Program Mbg Pada Pendidikan Sd, Smp Dan Sma Negeri Di Kota Jayapura*. n.d.

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