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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

**Experiences, Subjectivities, and Perceptions of a Group of Public-School Teachers on
the School Feeding Policy in Argentina: A Qualitative Study**

**Experiencias, subjetividades y percepciones de un grupo de docentes de escuelas
públicas sobre la política de alimentación escolar en Argentina. Estudio cualitativo**

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Supplementary material 1.

Question's guide for teachers (Spanish version)

Sección 1. Características sociodemográficas.

Entrevista N°: _____

Fecha de realización de la entrevista: ____/____/____

Escuela N°: _____

Género auto-informado: _____

Edad: _____

Grado donde enseña: _____

Turno escolar: _____

Años de trayectoria dentro de la escuela: _____

Años de trayectoria dentro del sistema de escuelas municipales:

Sección 2. Prácticas de participación.

Bloque 2.1		SI	NO	
2.1.1	¿Conoce el comedor escolar dentro de la escuela?			
2.1.2	¿Es de asistir con frecuencia?			¿Asiste en algunos momentos particulares? ¿cuáles? ¿porqué?
2.1.3	¿Conoce cuál es la unidad responsable y ejecutora de los comedores escolares desde el Estado?			¿Cuál/s?
2.1.4	¿En el último año ha realizado visitas al Comedor Escolar?			Si es SI, ¿Con que frecuencia?
2.1.5	¿Forma parte del almuerzo que brinda el comedor escolar junto al grupo de estudiantes?			¿En algunos momentos particulares? ¿cuáles? ¿porqué?
2.1.6	¿Ha escuchado alguna vez sobre algún problema de salud del grupo de estudiantes vinculados al menú del comedor escolar?			Si es SI, ¿Cuál/es?
2.1.7	¿Ha escuchado algunos aportes positivos o beneficios del comedor escolar sobre algunos aspectos de salud del grupo de estudiantes?			Si es SI, ¿Cuál/es?
2.1.8	¿En los últimos años usted ha realizado alguna actividad en el comedor escolar?			Si es SI, ¿Cuál/es?
2.1.9	¿Ha participado en el último año en definir algún/s aspectos de las prestaciones alimentarias del servicio del comedor escolar?			Si es SI, ¿Cuál/es?
2.1.10	¿Alguna vez ha recaudado fondos por alguna causa en torno al comedor escolar?			Si es SI, ¿Por qué motivo?

Bloque 2.2		NO, NUNCA	SI, ALGUNAS VECES	SI, MUCHAS VECES	
2.2.1	¿Ha solicitado información sobre el comedor escolar en alguna oficina del Estado sobre presupuestos y gastos?				
2.2.2	¿Ha solicitado información a alguna oficina del Estado sobre cómo participar o ser parte de la toma de decisiones en aspectos del programa de comedores escolares?				
2.2.3	Para resolver un problema del comedor escolar que afectaba a usted y/o a otras personas ¿alguna vez ha solicitado apoyo a un partido político/ONG/otras instituciones?				Si es SI, ¿Cuál/es?
2.2.4	Para resolver algún problema del comedor escolar que afectaba a usted y a otras personas, ¿alguna vez junto a otras personas afectadas, se han organizado para hacer algún reclamo?				
2.2.5	¿Alguna vez ha formado parte de manifestaciones, protestas o paros por alguna causa en torno al comedor escolar?				Si es SI, ¿Por qué motivo?

2.2.6	Para dar su opinión, quejarse, denunciar o resolver algún problema relacionado al comedor escolar que afectaba a usted y a otras personas ¿ha realizado manifestaciones al Estado por escrito (a través de cartas) o visitas personales a la oficina responsable?				Si es SI, ¿Por qué motivo? ¿por qué medio se efectuó?
2.2.7	Para dar su opinión, quejarse, denunciar o resolver un problema sobre el comedor escolar que afectaba a usted y a otras personas ¿ha utilizado medios de comunicación como sitios Web, periódicos, correos electrónicos, medios audiovisuales, entre otros?				Si es SI, ¿Por qué motivo? ¿Por qué medio se efectuó?
Si respondió afirmativamente (SI) en la 2.2.5 a la 2.2.7 pasar a la 2.2.8					
2.2.8	¿Se consideraron sus quejas, opiniones o reclamos por parte de la entidad responsable?				

Bloque 2.3		SI	NO
2.3.1	¿Conoce el derecho a la participación ciudadana dentro de los programas de protección del Estado?		
2.3.2	¿Conoce el derecho a participar en el control social y del acceso a la información pública?		
2.3.3	¿Usted tiene disposición a participar en el control social del programa de comedores escolares?		
			Si es SI, ¿en qué aspectos considera?

Sección 3. Percepciones, subjetividades y experiencias.

- ¿Qué importancia tiene para usted la alimentación dentro de la escuela? ¿Por qué?
- ¿Qué significa para usted el comedor escolar? ¿Qué sensaciones, sentimientos o ideas le genera?
- ¿Considera que el comedor escolar ha cambiado en los últimos años? ¿En qué aspectos? ¿A que considera que se deben éstos cambios?
- La concurrencia de niños/as al comedor escolar, ¿es siempre o de vez en cuando? ¿Por qué cree que se da tal situación?
- Alguna vez ¿usted tomó decisiones con respecto al comedor escolar? ¿Opinó sobre el tema? ¿Porque motivo? ¿Cuál es su rol dentro del mismo?
- ¿Quién se encarga de dirigir o supervisar el comedor escolar desde la escuela? ¿cómo fue elegida esa persona?
- ¿Usted se encargó o involucró en algún momento del comedor escolar? Si es así ¿Lo disfruta o disfrutó? ¿Por qué lo hizo/a?
- ¿Ha vivido alguna/s experiencia/s positiva/s en relación al comedor escolar? ¿Y negativas? ¿Cuáles? ¿Por qué?
- ¿Cómo ve o que opinión tiene con respecto a la calidad de los servicios alimentarios brindados y otros aspectos relacionados al comedor escolar? ¿Qué cambiaría? ¿Qué dejaría?
- Con respecto a los recursos asignados al comedor escolar ¿Usted los conoce? ¿Le parece suficiente? ¿Cree que podrían mejorarse?
- Dentro del funcionamiento diario del comedor escolar ¿Cómo ve éste funcionamiento? ¿Habría algo de mejorar?
- ¿Conoce cuáles son las condiciones para que niños/as accedan al programa del comedor escolar? ¿Ésta forma le parece adecuada? En el caso que no, ¿Cómo podría mejorarse?
- En cuanto a la permanencia de niños/as dentro del programa de comedores escolares, ¿En qué consiste?
- Para usted, ¿Qué aportes positivos y negativos tiene el comedor escolar en la vida del grupo de estudiantes?
- ¿Por qué motivos cree que el grupo de niños/as asisten al comedor escolar?
- ¿Cree que el comedor contribuye al acceso a los alimentos saludables por parte del grupo de niños/as? ¿Por qué?

- ¿Cuáles considera que son las preparaciones que más les gusta y menos les gusta al grupo de niños/as? ¿Por qué cree que es así?
- Pensando en algunos aspectos importantes en la edad escolar, como la alimentación, educación, desarrollo integral, familia, entre otros ¿puede establecer alguna relación con el comedor escolar? ¿Cuáles? ¿Por qué?

Supplementary material 2.

Table 1. Qualitative results from the perspective of teacher's

Dimension	Category	Descriptive results and verbatims
Perceiving the context of the SFP and participation	Organization	<p>It was indicated that the function of the canteen space is to provide food services, although it can also be used for other purposes, such as school events, parents' meetings, school support, etc. Some teachers stated that a designated person is responsible for supervising the canteen services at the school. This person could be a teacher or school director or a designated secretary.</p> <p>The dining rooms are operated with a pre-established and rotating menu. Teachers also remarked that the food offered in the canteens is similar to what the children consume at home. Students registered in the canteen program also receive boxes and food products during school breaks, such as vacations. It was observed that there do not appear to be specific criteria for access to the canteen as it is considered universally available to all students enrolled at the beginning of the academic.</p> <p><i>"What I believe is that any mom, dad, or adult in charge of the child can say, 'I want my child to attend'. I don't know if there is space, but I do believe that every year they are asked..."</i> Female teacher, afternoon and morning shift, first year in municipal schools).</p> <p>Overall, there was no significant concerns raised about the organization managed by the private company. It was highlighting that the food always arrives on time, issues are resolved promptly if there are delays, and, on some occasions, gifts are provided.</p> <p><i>"It is always on time and on schedule, there was never a delay by any stretch.... Everything was always on time..."</i> (Female teacher, of afternoon and morning shift, first year in municipal schools).</p>
	Participation	<p>Their role was limited to supervising lunchtime and reporting any issues related to the quality of food services, the behaviour of the waitstaff, or making specific proposals to the principal or the school's canteen manager.</p> <p><i>"Therefore, as the person in charge of that group and attentive to the group in general, if something comes up, I am involved., However, it is not based on order, minutes, or a specific role description that I have something assigned. It applies to me and to any teacher, depending on the teacher's role."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift teacher, 10 years in municipal schools).</p> <p>No initiatives such as fundraising or other cooperative activities aimed at the SFP, were observed.</p> <p>There appeared to be limited awareness of the right to citizen participation within the context of the SFP, as well as the right to access information about it. Among those who expressed an understanding about these rights, the focus was primarily on the teacher's "obligations" or personal sense of responsibility.</p> <p><i>"If it is mandatory, it is not that we cannot be in the school canteen because the children are our responsibility until they leave the cafeteria... It is part of our day to be in the school canteen. It is not that we have the chance to say that we are not..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift teacher, 4 years in municipal schools).</p> <p>Other findings highlighted communication between the school and the company providing the services. Teachers recognized the importance of raising concerns to the company particularly when supplies were missing, issues arouse with the kitchen staff, or there was problem with quality of the services. Some participants noted that there are administrative channels for addressing these complaints, however, they typically rely on the person in charge at the school.</p> <p><i>"...Our system is a very close done, we don't really have much participation"</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 10 years in the municipal schools).</p>
Experiences and responsibilities of care	Obligation and roles	<p>Some teachers report using negotiation, persuasion, or reflection strategies to encourage children to accept the food offered by the dining canteen.</p> <p><i>"One tries to negotiate with the children, showing the benefits ..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 18 years in the municipal schools).</p>

		<p>Other roles included ensuring that the food served is in good condition, were, maintaining order within the school canteen and addressing any issues that arise. Teachers emphasized that their primary role is to accompany their assigned group of students during mealtime and ensure that they receive their meal.</p> <p><i>"We... are in charge in the dining room only of the children, of trying to see that they eat, of trying to see that they maintain order, the cleanliness of the place as much as possible and in that aspect yes, in other aspects; serve, distribute..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 6 years in the municipal schools).</p> <p>Some teachers also described experiences related to "being attentive" and making complaints when the food quality was substandard.</p> <p><i>"Yes and no, because you are also tied to the fact that... this is an agreement that education signs with the company. The school is like you can present your complaints, talk directly to the company. They will, will comply with you as long as it does not affect their profit, their budget. I understand that this is the case. It is like the school that complains a lot is the school that achieves better quality. If you stay silent, you realize that the quality of the food begins to go down..."</i> (Male teacher, morning shift, 10 years in the municipal schools).</p>
<p>Intersubjectivity when interacting with others in everyday life</p>	<p>Interactions and feelings</p>	<p>Some teachers expressed feelings of "pity" for children attending the school canteen, particularly those with special diets (e.g., overweight children). These diets were often described as bland, unattractive and monotonous. Teachers also reported experiencing "tiredness" when they had to mediate with parents whose children refuse to eat the food provided.</p> <p>For instance, some children assigned a special diet do not accept it. In such cases teachers intervene with the parents, though these efforts are often unsuccessful.</p> <p><i>"At the beginning it was marked, but you also get tired because if you talk to an adult -, the parents -, and you tell them, for example: I have a child who is on a diet and I get tired of telling the mother 'Mom, your child does not eat, he does not eat the diet.', Soo what happens?, if the adult does not understand ,or I tell them," Look, mom, if he is not going to eat the diet, he should eat the food that everyone eats' and the mother tells me that she wants the child to continue eating the diet; but the child does not eat the diet. He eats everyone's food..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 4 years old in municipal schools).</p> <p>Teachers also indicated that their role extends beyond students, acting as mediators between the school and families regarding school feeding issues.</p> <p><i>"Yes, then what we control is whether the children eat or not... we talk about it with the parents. It's more to the parents because the children don't eat what is served to them..."</i> (Female teacher morning shift, 4 years in the municipal schools).</p>
	<p>Worlds of their students</p>	<p>Informants stated that even when there are no classes, some students still attend the canteen. Similarly, when a child is sick, the adult in charge often seeks to secure the child's food ratio. In some accounts, differences in school attendance were highlighted based on school shifts. For instance, children in the afternoon shift were reported to have a greater need for access to food and visited the canteen much more than those in the morning shift. However, other interviewees did not observe such differences.</p> <p>An emerging and interesting finding is that, although informants recognized the positive contributions of the SFP to schoolchildren, some indicated the importance of not losing sight of the idea that the best place for children to eat is home.</p> <p>Some informants also referred to certain habits of children related to the acceptability of school meals. For example, children unaccustomed to drinking milk at home due to limited resources often refuse to consume milk provided by the canteen.</p> <p>One teacher mentioned the lack of coordination between education and health. In many cases, children attending the canteen suffer from food-related pathologies beyond underweight or overweight, yet these conditions often go unnoticed.</p> <p><i>"The healthy child control is conducted, that is why I say that we only know about overweight or underweight cases. Beyond that, other food-related pathologies are seldom detected because general blood test or similar checks are not included in the healthy child control..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 4 years old within municipal schools).</p> <p>Two well-defined scenarios emerged from the accounts, In the first, some children rely on food assistance as a critical supplement to family resources. For these children, the nutritional</p>

		<p>assistance provided by the school canteen is an essential mechanism to alleviate hunger, often representing their most substantial meal of the day. These children frequently request additional portions of lunch or attend the canteen for breakfast, which they do not receive at home. In contrast, the second scenario reflects the perspective that some families view school meals as a way to offload responsibilities onto the school (family organization). Many families depend on the school canteen to ensure their children have at least one substantial meal daily. For some, it provides the first meal their child receives each day.</p> <p><i>"There are children for whom the largest of portion of their daily food comes from the school canteen. Breakfasts are in the dining room – milk at 9 am, for the morning shift. Some children come to school without breakfast and rely on that meal. (Female teacher, morning shift 4 years within municipal schools).</i></p> <p>Several teachers highlighted that the school canteen serves as an essential contingency mechanism for families in crisis, especially when parents are unemployed, or caregivers spend long hours working outside the home.</p> <p><i>"For example, I have a child who shares a classroom with his little brother. Their mother works at noon or leaves in the morning, so this child and he always eats because when he gets home his mother is not at home. Then you realize that sometimes he repeats the tray twice because he only comes back to eat in the afternoon or at night..." (Female teacher, morning shift, 4 years in municipal schools).</i></p> <p><i>"Even if sometimes they do not eat or do not finish everything, you know they are asked to eat at home because later they do not eat at home until the afternoon snack or even dinner. Dinner is managed by each family according to their daily budget, as some work part-time basis and they do not have fixed income. On the days they eat certain meals, you'll hear things like, 'Today they had wings,' or 'Today they had mate cocido.'" (Female teacher, morning shift, 4 years in municipal schools).</i></p> <p>The teachers express that for some families, school provided food plays a crucial role, emphasizing that this food is a necessity before considerations of its quality can even arise.</p> <p><i>"I believe that -, let's assume the most serious case, where food is tasteless or poorly prepared - there are families for whom that it is the only meal, their children will receive in the day. At the same time, there is a significant number of families that who send their children to eat even though they have resources at home. But I know that for some families, this is truly the only meal they have all day. In that sense, I think the program is, so it seems to be beneficial, even though we later discuss whether the food is tasty or nutritious. (Female teacher, morning shift, first year in municipal schools).</i></p>
	<p>Negative and positive experiences</p>	<p>When children enjoy a particular meal, they "often ask for seconds." The least accepted dishes preparations are those based on rice, stews, "polenta" and "locro" while the most popular are mashed potatoes, chicken, and "beef milanese", although according to some informants the latter is served once or twice a month.</p> <p>Teachers frequently encounter instances where food is undervalued wasted or rejected by students leading to negative experiences. They noted which meals are most and least favoured, which affects students' acceptance the food and relates to the teachers roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The main criticism from teachers focused on the nutritional and organoleptic quality of the foods provided. Some teachers even mentioned that they were unsure of the ingredients used in certain dishes. Teachers in this group expressed concerns about a loss of family mealtime traditions due to reliance on school-provided food.</p> <p><i>"Well, sometimes the food is not so tasty or attractive. Sometimes they do not like it and do not want to eat it... but it is not because they do not like rice – it is because sometimes it is does not look good, you know what I mean?." (Female teacher, afternoon shift, 3 years in municipal schools).</i></p> <p><i>"I have had bad experiences in the dining rooms... The child wants to cry because he doesn't want to eat and the parent comes to say, "Why are you making my child cry if he doesn't want to eat", negative situations like that" (Female teacher, morning shift, first year in municipal schools).</i></p> <p>Teachers highlighted several issues with the meals, including excess of carbohydrates, low vitamin content, organoleptic issues, and monotony in the meals. Some teachers observed that</p>

		<p>food service quality varied depending on the provider, noting differences between dishes like fresh "beef milanese" versus processed "milanese" or variations in desserts such as bananas versus oranges</p> <p><i>"The negative is when you see that they don't eat the food and it is thrown away... just as you see that they receive the tray, they go and throw it away. That's the saddest thing about this situation. And what fills your soul the most is when you see kids repeating that you know they need to eat..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, first year in municipal schools).</p> <p><i>"Sometimes, for instance yesterday, they served noodles, but I found them overcooked, they have completely fallen apart. I understand that the quality of the food is average, and I don't expect it to be excellent, but I do notice a focus on cost-saving. Regarding the menus, the diets are not varied. There is little diversity and not enough vegetables. For example, I do not recall seeing a salad so far. What I have seen mashed potatoes, stew, mash potatoes with "milanese," meatloaf, noodles, and recently polenta. It seems to me that carbohydrates dominate the meal"</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 4 years in municipal schools).</p> <p>It was also pointed out that in recent years, the quality of the service provided has changed. For example, chicken which used to be served more frequently, has become scarce. Instead, meals now often include processed meat mixes with high fat content.</p> <p>The speeches highlighted the limited proteins content in the meals, identified as the most deficient nutrient, along with fresh foods like vegetables, fruits, and legumes. The meals are largely based on staples such as rice, noodles and potatoes.</p> <p>Despite these concerns, teachers acknowledge the provision of special diet for children with specific conditions such as celiac disease, diabetes, obesity, and underweight which were seen as positive aspects of the program.</p> <p><i>One teacher remarked that "Sometimes we chat about some problems. I complain about reinforcement, "it's no good" it's too small. We need something more substantial"</i> (Female teacher, afternoon shift, 4 years in municipal schools).</p> <p>Furthermore, the speeches the quality revealed variations in the quality of food services, depending on the company providing the menus. For instance, some providers served, "meat milanese", while others offered preformed, "processed milanese." Similarly, fruits options varied between banana and oranges, and there were differences in the type of desserts offered. Also, teachers found it difficult to mediate situations when children refused to eat. These situations often required conversations with parents, which could be "complex." Interactions with kitchen staff also surfaced as a challenging aspect.</p> <p>The school canteen was highlighted as a positive space for fostering cultural and social capital. It serves as a setting for socialization, and the development of important habits, values and practices such as sharing, dialogue, learning, and reflecting on different topics. Students and, and teachers alike benefit from an environment, where they learn to use cutlery, sit together and share meals peacefully.</p> <p>Additionally, the canteen serves as a space for building friendship across genders; with teacher noting that it often compensates for lessons that might traditionally be learned in a family setting. By fostering a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere, teachers strive to ensure that the canteen is not just a place for eating but also for meaningful social interactions and personal development.</p> <p>Teachers emphasized their broader role in the school canteen context. They noted the importance of their contributions beyond food supervision, such as fostering socialization, promoting habits and values, and enhancing students' learning experiences. For example, children learn to use cutlery, share meals, and interact with peers during mealtimes.</p> <p><i>"We try to encourage group eating and conversation, making to the canteen a meeting point, - a time to talk about topics beyond school. It is the only time outside the classroom that they are together, because at recess, they separate. Here they eat together, and we try to mix boys and girls, although they usually separate by age. The bench also makes it possible to talk more directly, since it is the right size for 2 trays, you are closer to each other and to the one next to you, in other words, the canteen is a meeting point beyond the school, it is a strategic point because it is a sum apart from the canteen and as a canteen it works creating other things..."</i> (Woman, afternoon shift teacher, 5 years in municipal schools).</p>
Expectations	Quality of nutritional services	The informants suggested several ideas for improving food services, such as incorporating more vegetables, particularly fresh and green vegetables, increasing variety adding salad

		<p>preparations, and including more proteins, and vitamins. They also emphasized the importance of food presentation.</p> <p><i>One teacher remarked "I would add more green vegetables, salads, for example. If we are going to talk about educational quality, it is not just about providing food so that the child gains weight, so to speak, but also offering variety on the menu, more salad options, like tomatoes, grated carrots, boiled eggs – could be included,"</i> (Female teacher, afternoon shift, 6 years within municipal schools).</p> <p>Among most of the interviewees, no significant expectations of improvements were identified in terms of logistics. However, some isolated suggestions were made regarding specific aspects, such as building upgrades in the school canteen, the utensils available, and the variety in menus.</p> <p>Some teachers highlighted the suboptimal condition of certain resources, including utensils, curtains, tablecloths, benches, etc. Additionally, some recommended installing a hand-washing station within the canteen to enhance hygiene.</p> <p><i>"Of course, there's a different menu there. For example, on the same day, which I don't see as so complicated, prepare two menus, on one side, rice with chicken, and on the other side, "Milanesa" with mashed potatoes --so that they have the option to choose which of the two they like. This way we could avoid wasting food because sometimes a lot of food is wasted. No matter how much you try to make them eat, they cry, they feel bad, and they just don't like it</i> (Female teacher, afternoon shift, 5 years in municipal schools).</p>
	<p>Comprehensive learning space</p>	<p>Expectations were also expressed by teachers' for the school cafeteria to evolve into a comprehensive space for multifaceted learning, engaging both students and teachers, with the vision of an integrated pedagogical project. This aim is not just for students to sit and eat but to create a space that fosters habits, in still values, and promotes the holistic development of students, However, some teachers emphasized the continued importance of family mealtime.</p> <p><i>"I believe that each child has to eat with their family... and I think the canteen serves as a contingency in measure the face of the crisis, which has worsened even more in recent years ... it is positive that they share another experience here. But I still believe that children should eat with their families..."</i> (Female teacher, morning shift, 10 years in municipal schools).</p>