

Food insecurity among students

1) How widespread is it?

- Surveys of Peruvian university students indicate **high rates of food insecurity**: one study in Metropolitan Lima found **41.3%** of university students experienced food insecurity.
- Other Peruvian university studies (different samples) report substantial shares of students with mild, moderate, or severe food insecurity. For example, San Marcos findings showing meaningful proportions across severity levels. These university results are consistent with international literature showing food insecurity is common in higher education populations.

2) What barriers prevent students from accessing fresh, healthy food?

1. **Economic constraints**: Fresh foods (fruits, vegetables, protein) and prepared healthy meals are more expensive than cheap processed snacks; students on tight budgets substitute cheaper, less nutritious foods.
2. **Time and logistics**: long commutes, heavy study loads, and limited time to cook push students toward convenient but unhealthy options. (Common finding in higher-ed food-security literature.)
3. **Limited affordable campus options**: campus cafeterias or kiosks sometimes emphasize low-cost processed meals rather than affordable, fresh FLOSN options. (Observed in local and global higher-education settings.)
4. **Program design and procurement barriers**: school feeding systems that are centrally procured can make it harder for small local producers to supply fresh seasonal food; lack of cold-storage or kitchen infrastructure at institutions also restricts use of fresh produce. FAO and national initiatives stress that linking schools with family agriculture and creating school gardens can address these logistical gaps.

3) How does food insecurity affect academic performance, mental health, and well-being?

- **Academic performance**: Food insecurity is associated with worse concentration, lower classroom performance, and higher absenteeism.
- **Mental health**: Food insecurity increases stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (both from nutrient deficits and the psychosocial stress of not having enough food).
- **Physical health/well-being**: Inadequate diets raise the risk of nutrient deficiencies, fatigue, weakened immunity, and poorer sleep, all of which reduce daily functioning and learning capacity.

4) Have funding cuts further limited access to nutritious meals?

- Peru's national school feeding system (historically Qali Warma; now part of the national school feeding architecture / PNAE) has undergone reforms and shifts in program design as authorities and partners adapt. FAO and government materials

emphasize both continued service to millions of schoolchildren and efforts to strengthen school gardens and local purchases, but the programmatic changes and broader fiscal pressures have created uncertainty in some places.

- **For universities (including PUCP):** public funding pressures and inflation have raised the price of campus food and reduced the real purchasing power of some student aid; detailed campus budgets vary by institution, so the effect on meal access should be measured locally (student survey and cafeteria price tracking).

5) Local organization addressing student hunger that aligns with FLOSN principles

Banco de Alimentos del Perú (Food Bank Peru) — national food bank that rescues surplus food and redistributes it to vulnerable populations, including students and community kitchens. Their model prioritizes redirecting fresh and nutritious food (where possible) and partners with companies, markets, and civil society to increase access. Banco de Alimentos is accredited by global food-banking networks and runs distribution projects in Lima and other regions. This makes it a practical partner for universities seeking immediate food relief while longer-term FLOSN systems are built.

6) Example local projects that show FLOSN in action

- **“Escuelas Sostenibles” (FAO & Qali Warma):** National initiatives encourage school gardens and purchases from family agriculture, a policy pathway university can adapt by forming local procurement agreements with family farms and integrating hands-on learning.

7) Concrete ways PUCP can adopt FLOSN-aligned initiatives

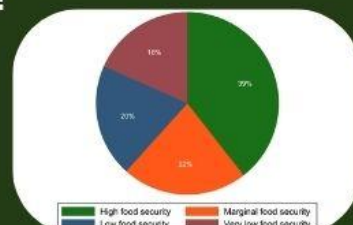
- **Pilot student garden** — convert a small campus plot, rooftop, or containers into a student garden (lettuce, herbs, fast-growing seasonal vegetables). Use composting of campus organic waste where possible.
- **Monitoring & evaluation:** measure changes in self-reported food security, cafeteria purchase patterns, student attendance, and simple academic indicators before and after interventions. Use short follow-up surveys and usage logs for food assistance programs.

FOOD INSECURITY AMONG STUDENTS: THE PERUVIAN REALITY

Building a fair, healthy, and sustainable food system 🌱

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN UNIVERSITIES?

- The frequency of food insecurity among university students in Metropolitan Lima was 41.33%, higher than the average (38.7%)
- The factors associated with a higher probability were living alone and belonging to a public university



BARRIERS THAT KEEP STUDENTS FROM EATING WELL



High food prices



Limited time



Few affordable campus options



Insufficient financial aid

"When students don't eat well, their potential goes hungry too."

BUDGET CUTS, BIGGER GAPS

- Since 2020, public university programs and meal subsidies have faced funding cuts.
- Even private universities like PUCP have seen rising cafeteria prices.
- Vulnerable students are most affected, many skip meals daily.

CALL TO ACTION

FLOSIN foods promote sustainability and justice by supporting local farmers, reducing environmental impact, and ensuring fair access to healthy food.

THE HIDDEN COST OF HUNGER



Mental Health

Increases stress, anxiety, and depression



Academic Performance

Concentration drops, attendance decreases



Physical Health

Nutrient deficiencies, lower energy, weakened immunity



LOCAL ACTION: BANCO DE ALIMENTOS DEL PERÚ

- Rescues surplus food from companies, markets, and restaurants.
- Distributes to low-income communities, including students.
- Promotes FLOSIN values by prioritizing fresh and local products.

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