



Executive Summary

School Feeding as a National Investment: How to Achieve It

May 20 – May 24, 2013 | Salvador, Brazil

2013 GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION FORUM

The Need for Sustainable School Feeding

According to the United Nations World Food Programme, one out of four children in developing countries are currently underweight; this presents at once an urgent need and a real challenge for countries everywhere to invest additional resources into creating and sustaining nutritious school feeding programs.

An increasingly common trend in school feeding is to transition from externally-owned and –operated school feeding programs to those that are country-owned and –operated. This is perhaps more necessary now than ever since donors from both the public and private sectors are experiencing drastic reductions in the amount of aid they are able to invest in other countries. In addition, when a country relies on their internal resources such as local smallholder farmers and civil society organizations to operate their unique school feeding programs, their economy is strengthened and thus a positive cycle of education and growth can be spurred. All of these factors work together to achieve the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals, the eight anti-poverty goals due for evaluation in 2015.

2013 Global Child Nutrition Forum

The 15th annual Global Child Nutrition Forum was held May 20-24, 2013 in Salvador, Brazil to explore the conference theme, “School Feeding as a National Investment: How to Achieve It.” More than 300 speakers, delegates—including twenty-two ministers from the Ministries of Education, Health, and Agriculture—and observers from national governments, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector and the research community attended the Forum. The Forum was co-hosted by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) and the World Food Program (WFP) Center of Excellence against Hunger, Brazil.

The Forum was launched with the School Feeding Toolkit workshop, in which African delegations shared current country issues spanning a variety of successes and challenges. Among the challenges identified throughout the Forum were, complexity, government support, community support, coordination, funding, technical expertise, and evidence. The workshop concluded with country teams working closely to create or modify existing country plans.

The proceedings from the plenary sessions during the remaining four days demonstrated that school feeding programs are in fact stimulating local economies, in addition to improving food security. Individual and panel presentations were supported by active dialogue from the audience, thus encouraging the open sharing of best practices. In addition, a daylong school feeding field trip to three different sites in the surrounding Salvador area, as well as an evening Market Place reception in which exhibitors showcased their goods and services in one of four areas within the school feeding supply chain, allowed attendees to better observe various school feeding models.

The Forum concluded with the presentation of individual Country Plans to advance school feeding in the upcoming school year and the presentation of a Communique.



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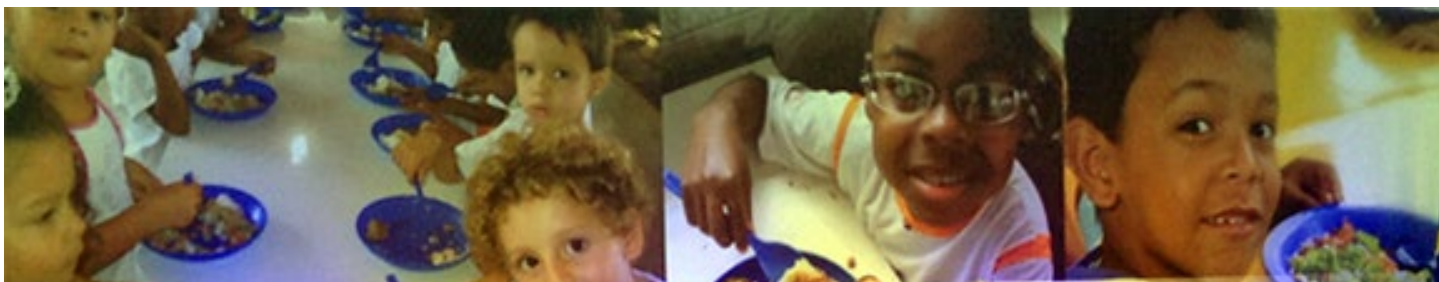
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School Feeding as a National Investment: How to Achieve It

Setting the Stage

The 2013 Global Child Nutrition Forum (“Forum”), held in Salvador, Brazil, on May 20–24, 2013, marked the 15th annual Forum and the first time it has been held in Latin America. The 2013 Forum was the largest Forum thus far, with representatives from 38 countries, including 22 ministers. There were also dozens of government officials, experts from the school feeding community, representatives from NGOs, and individuals and companies from the private sector. This Forum was co-hosted by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation and the World Food Programme Centre of Excellence against Hunger.

It was repeated throughout the Forum that 368 million children across the globe currently participate in school feeding, at a total investment of \$75 billion USD. These figures are astounding and indicate the prominent role that school feeding plays and the progress that has been made. Yet even with that progress, much more needs to be done.



Forum Objectives

The primary objective of the 2013 Forum was to affirm school feeding as a national investment, which strengthens the interaction between social and economic development with stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of sustainable school feeding programs. These stakeholders involve public and private actors, who play important roles in supporting these programs.

To achieve these objectives, the Forum agenda focused on:

- Identifying the five pillars of sustainable school feeding programs:
 1. The legal and policy framework
 2. Financial capacity
 3. Institutional capacity and coordination
 4. Strong design and effective implementation
 5. Community participation and ownership
- Identifying the benefits from investing in school feeding
- Assisting countries in developing their plans for establishing a sustainable school feeding program
- Providing experience-based guidance and models for the development of sustainable national school feeding programs
- Developing partnerships among the smallholders’ farmers, governments, the private sector and stakeholders in adding value across the supply chain
- Identifying the importance of linking social safety nets to economic development through the development of a national school feeding program

Changing the Conversation

Traditionally, school feeding has been viewed as a social expenditure or charity sponsored by donors to help vulnerable children. Dr. Francisco Espejo, Chief of the School Feeding Service at the United Nations World Food Programme, shared the OECD definition of “social expenditure,” which is the provision by public (and/or private) institutions of benefits to, and financial contributions targeted at, households and individuals in order to provide support during circumstances that adversely affect their welfare.

The idea of an “investment” is very different. The definition shared by Dr. Espejo of a national investment is the sacrifice of current benefits or rewards to pursue an activity with expectations of greater future benefits or rewards. The key distinction between an expenditure and an investment is that an investment has an expectation of a future return.

A major theme of this Forum was the need to change the conversation so that school feeding is viewed as an investment with a positive social return, not as an expenditure. This involves moving from a mindset of “food aid” to one of “food assistance.”

“My government sees school feeding not as a waste of money, but as an investment. We have proven that our children will do much better in their studies if they are well fed while in school.”

— Hon. Jacques Wagner, Governor of Bahia, Brazil

Several speakers cited data indicating that every \$1 invested in school feeding produces a social return of \$3 to \$8. However, other speakers argued that in order to attract more investors in school feeding, even further data is necessary to show that school feeding produces favorable and quantifiable social returns.



The Benefits of Investing in School Feeding

Throughout the Forum, the many benefits of school feeding were constantly reiterated. These benefits include:

- **Improved education.** School feeding programs have been shown to increase enrollment in schools, help produce lower dropout rates, help children concentrate better and produce better academic results, and lead to higher rates of school completion.
- **Improved health.** The nutrition provided through school feeding programs improves the health of children and reduces malnutrition.
- **Enhanced gender equality.** School feeding programs encourage girls to attend school and promote greater gender equality.
- **Catalyzing economic development among small-scale farmers.** School feeding programs, especially those that link local farms to schools, provide a predictable, stable market for farmers. This provides opportunities for farmers to grow their income, and helps create jobs throughout the entire school feeding supply chain. It brings investment to this supply chain and helps build infrastructure that benefits more than just schools.
- **Improved food security.** Countries with sustainable school feeding programs, where farmers are linked to schools, create an agricultural foundation that helps an entire country become more food secure.
- **Enhanced community development.** Communities that participate in school feeding programs (e.g., local PTA members) have a greater degree of community-wide collaboration, engagement, and social accountability. Community members also feel a greater responsibility for governance.
- **Greater national stability and growth.** All of the above benefits help an entire country become more stable and prosperous. Improved education, health, and economic development are beneficial to an entire nation.

Challenges

While there are enormous benefits provided by sustainable school feeding programs, there are tremendous challenges in creating, implementing, and sustaining such programs. Among the challenges mentioned throughout the Forum were:

- **Complexity.** While the concept of school feeding is relatively simple, creating a sustainable school feeding program has multiple elements, and is extremely complex.
- **Government support.** While the majority of political leaders are in favor of school feeding, that is not the same as creating laws and policies, making and sustaining strong commitments, making school feeding a national priority, and committing the resources (both human and financial) that are needed to sustain school feeding.
- **Community support.** Having national policies and supportive NGOs is not enough. For a school feeding program to be effective, resources and commitment need to be demonstrated at the local level, which is often lacking.
- **Coordination.** Depending on the circumstances, the resources to deliver school feeding are fragmented and uncoordinated. This lack of coordination limits the effectiveness of efforts to establish and implement school feeding programs.
- **Funding.** Until school feeding programs are fully sustainable, funding is always an issue. There are rarely enough funds to operate school feeding programs at the scale that is desired and to feed all of the children in need.
- **Technical expertise.** Many countries desire but lack the technical assistance necessary to help get their programs up and running.
- **Evidence.** While the body of evidence is growing (see below), there still needs to be further evidence on the social and financial returns of school feeding, additional research, and greater sharing of success stories and best practices.



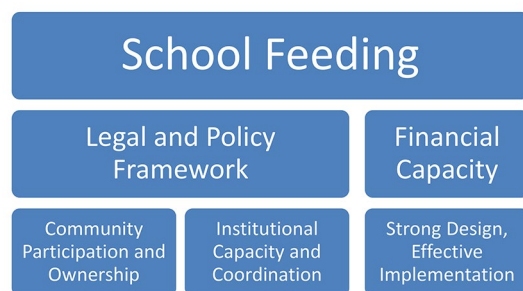
The Five Pillars of Sustainable School Feeding Programs

The concept of school feeding is simple: the provision of food to school children. But in reality, school feeding programs are actually quite complex and difficult to implement. School feeding is multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral, and has dozens of interrelated yet separate dimensions, such as modality, scale, logistics, monitoring and quality control, and much more.

Despite the challenges, the complexity, and the many opportunities for improvement, in general, school feeding programs are working well and are delivering on many important objectives. Analysis of the key elements of successful school feeding programs has identified five pillars, all of which work together.



The five pillars:



GCNF Forum, Salvador, Brazil 2013

1

The Forum involved separate in-depth discussions of each of these pillars. Highlights of the main ideas are provided below.

Pillar 1: The legal and policy framework.

Throughout the Forum, representatives from multiple countries described how school feeding programs began in their country in the 1950s or 60s or 70s or 80s. But the support for these programs experienced ebbs and flows based on the constantly changing priorities of government officials.

Where school feeding programs have been successful and sustainable, countries have adopted comprehensive legal and policy frameworks. Having a legal framework provides clarity and consistency, and makes school feeding programs less vulnerable to changes in political leadership. Such frameworks can also help countries deal with a crisis (as was the case in Mali) and return to normalcy.

Increasingly, supporters of school feeding recognize the importance of a legal and policy framework. Representatives from several countries described work that is underway to secure broad stakeholder support of adoption of

a legal and policy framework, with this being the number one priority in many countries. Brazil was cited repeatedly as the model for a strong legal and policy framework that is built into the country's constitution. And, Mozambique, after a long process and after extensive social consultation, has passed a law focused on food and nutritional security that includes a national school feeding program.

The Brazilian Experience

Brazil was the ideal host for this Forum as Brazil's school feeding experience provides a model for the rest of the world. Albaneide Peixinho, the National Coordinator of Brazil's School Feeding Program, explained that the school feeding program in Brazil is not only granted by law, but is mentioned as a right in the national constitution. Ms. Peixinho feels strongly that having a school feeding program based in the constitution provides an important foundation for implementation.

With Brazil's legal and policy framework making school feeding universal in the country, 130 million meals are served in schools every day to the 49 million children attending public schools. Brazil has also mandated that at least 30% of purchases for school feeding must be made from local suppliers, leveraging school feeding as a way to benefit small-scale farmers and help lift the country out of poverty.

The goals of Brazil's school feeding program include access to healthy and adequate food at school, high levels of school attendance, prioritization of local purchasing, sustainable development, food and nutritional security, and much more. Key program activities include monitoring, evaluation, training, and strategic partnerships. Key partners (shown below) include many government ministries as well as civil society, the private sector, and academia.

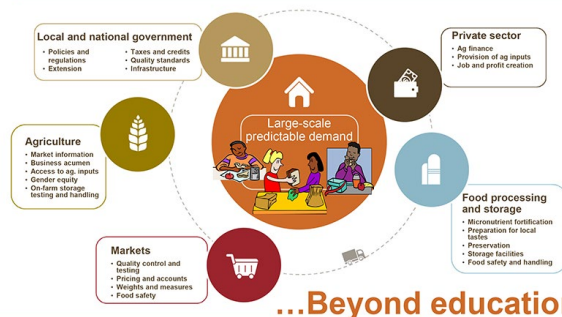


Pillar 2: Financial capacity.

To evolve from school feeding being viewed as a charitable donation, to school feeding being seen as a social investment, requires committed governments that are willing to lead this investment and make it "nationally owned." For example, Gambia's government, which currently funds just 5% of the country's school feeding program, envisions funding 25% of the program by 2016 and 100% by 2020.

Arlene Mitchell, of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, believes that school feeding has the potential to be financially sustainable over the long term, and should be looked at as an investment for economic growth and transformation. Home-grown school feeding can help countries achieve educational, agricultural, and economic outcomes. Experience from countries such as India and China shows that agricultural growth has a significant impact in reducing poverty. When there are commitments to school feeding, it provides a large-scale predictable market. This market attracts private sector players, leads to investment in infrastructure, and produces jobs, profits, policy changes, and tax revenue.

Economic transformation potential of the school feeding investment...



However, while investments in school feeding have transformative potential, the economic growth from school feeding has not yet been realized or quantified. As a result of a lack of compelling evidence, potential investors have not yet made school feeding an investment priority. When the investment returns in school feeding can be proven, investors will become more interested.

Also, a way to achieve financial sustainability is to use those funds that are provided far more efficiently through greater focus on cost controls.

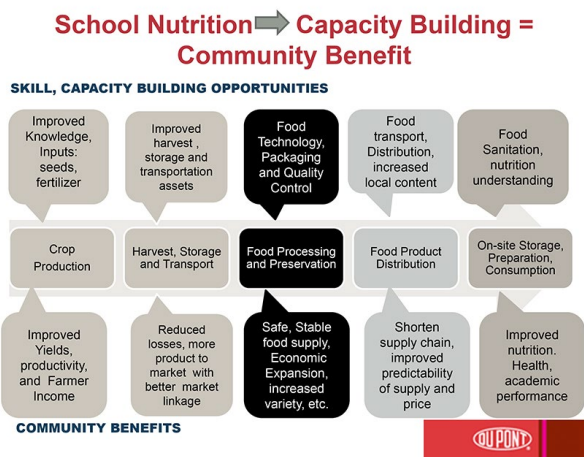
Pillar 3: Institutional capacity and coordination.

Dr. Lesley Drake of the Partnership for Child Development noted that there is no one-size-fits-all school feeding program. Each country needs to understand its own situation and challenges, and then create the appropriate institutional capacity for that situation.

Regardless of the specific solution, keys in building institutional capacity are strong governmental support and multi-sectoral collaboration. There must be high-level political support and cooperation across the ministries of education, health, and agriculture. There must be sub-national coordination among regional and local governments, NGOs, and the private sector. Also, there must be coordination and collaboration at the local level involving the school and the community.

In countries that have had success in building institutional capacity and creating sustainable school feeding programs, there has typically been a committee or task force composed of multiple stakeholders that guides the process. This committee brings stakeholders together, links all parties through communication, and creates a system for accountability. Such a committee makes a school feeding program “owned” by the country instead of owned by donors or NGOs.

Kent Holt from DuPont Nutrition and Health described capacity- and skill-building opportunities that provide benefits to communities. This includes building improved knowledge related to crop production, improving storage and transportation assets, strengthening the food distribution system, and developing knowledge about food safety.



Pillar 4: Strong design and effective implementation.

Built on the foundation of the first three pillars—a legal and policy framework, financial capacity, and institutional capacity and coordination—is the need for strong program design and effective implementation. Bibi Giyose, NEPAD Senior Advisor for Food and Nutrition Security, offered several lessons related to design and implementation:

- Political will and real commitment through the provision of resources

- National policy—not government of the day
- A strong multi-sectoral coordination, with clarity of roles, contribution, and accountability; whoever coordinates must get all on board
- Clarity of objectives about what the program can deliver, along with prioritization
- Multi-initiative/multi-program approach—leverage synergies and resources
- Agenda setting by locals/countries as opposed to having an agenda imposed
- Have drivers and champions
- Human and technical capacity
- Strong monitoring and evaluation—corrective measures along the way
- Creating and accessing platforms for sharing lessons and learning
- Strong advocacy for school feeding

Other important aspects of a strong, sustainable design include linking school feeding to agricultural production by small-scale local farmers through home-grown school feeding, and having consistent nutritional standards. Dr. Janey Thorton of the U.S. Department of Agriculture cited multiple reasons for national nutritional standards: they should be based on evidence and deal with health-related issues such as malnutrition and obesity; they ensure that children have access to healthy food; they provide credibility and consistency; they help farmers know what to grow; and they save time since different regions and communities don’t need to investigate and develop their own standards.

Pillar 5: Community participation and ownership.

Successful implementation of school feeding programs requires local ownership and community participation. Several speakers stressed the need for engagement of the community and ownership of implementation at the local level.

In Brazil, the National Food and Nutrition Security Council ensures that civil society is actively involved in formulating school feeding policies and program implementation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, LA-RAE helps community organizations by providing training in health, nutrition, and program management.

In summarizing the remarks of several speakers, Dr. Espejo observed that success is not the result of a single program. Success is the product of a broad umbrella of interventions that are tailored to a particular country’s unique situation.

Partnerships

A major theme from the Forum was the importance of partnerships. There need to be partnership between different parts of the government (for example, ministries of education, health, and agriculture); between national, provincial, and local governments; and between the public and private sectors. Representatives from several countries described long-term relationships with organizations like the World Food Programme.

An example of an organization that has focused on building public/private partnerships is Tetra Pak. The company has worked closely with governments around the world and has actively supported the development of the entire value chain. This has included linking dairy farmers to local dairy processors to schools, with school feeding providing the catalyst for developing parts of the food infrastructure.

Evidence and Resources

A recurring theme throughout this Forum was the need for greater evidence that demonstrates the benefits of school feeding. At the same time, several speakers described relevant evidence and mentioned information sources and resources. Examples of evidence and resources include:

- **Rethinking School Feeding.** This book by Donald Bundy and others was prepared in 2009 jointly by the World Bank Group and the World Food Programme. It examines the evidence base for school feeding programs with the objective of better understanding how to develop and implement effective school feeding programs.
- **State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013.** Produced by WFP, this is the first worldwide report on the state of school feeding. (The full report is available at no cost on the WFP website.) This report finds that 368 million children worldwide receive school feeding, with a total investment of \$75 billion per year. Key findings include:
 - The provision of school feeding is lowest in low-income countries where it is needed most. The more vulnerable the children, the lower the percent of children participating in school feeding.
 - Cost/benefit analysis finds that every \$1 invested in school feeding produces returns of \$3 to \$8.
 - There are big opportunities to improve the efficiency of school feeding programs. This resource provides data enabling countries to compare their costs against worldwide averages.



- The benefits of school feeding are significant. There is strong evidence showing educational benefits; there is currently a lack of evidence showing the benefits to local farmers; and evidence is being gathered about the overall societal benefits.
- This report shows that governments are starting to take greater ownership for school feeding, even in some low-income countries.
- The average cost of school feeding per child per year is \$370 in high-income countries and \$56 in medium- and low-income countries. The big difference is in the food basket provided.
- In high-income countries, school feeding represents 11% of the total educational budget; in low-income countries it accounts for 24% of the education budget.
- School feeding programs are stronger when they are institutionalized. About 80% of high-income countries have institutionalized school feeding through laws, standards, and frameworks compared to only about 30% of low-income countries.
- Donors remain critical. While worldwide they fund only about 2% of all school feeding programs, in low-income countries funding from donors represents 18% of funding.
- **Global Food Security Index (GFSI).** DuPont Nutrition and Health has worked with the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to develop the GFSI. The GFSI is a unique tool for measuring the many aspects of food security, generating insights to inform decision making, promoting collaboration, and stimulating action. This index measures the risks and factors that drive food insecurity using 25 indicators in three categories: affordability, availability, and quality and safety. Currently about 110 countries are included and more will be added when data becomes available. Initial insights include:
 - The most food-secure countries have an ample food supply, high income, low spending on food relative to other outlays, and significant investment in agricultural R&D.

- In wealthy nations, there is enough food for each person to eat 1,100 more calories than they need; in low-income countries national food supplies fall 100 calories per person short of what is needed.
- The populations of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are the most vulnerable to food price shocks. Also, sub-Saharan Africa lags behind in providing financing for farmers.

- **National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI).** This Institute, funded by the U.S. government, provides technical assistance for child nutrition programs. In particular, NFSMI works with cooks in schools to provide training in preparing safe, healthy meals. NFSMI provides videos, webinars, materials, on-line tools, and even face-to-face training sessions. Topics that are focused on include preparation of healthy, nutritious meals; food safety; purchasing; inventory management; and financial management. NFSMI gathers and shares best practices, has a help desk, and has archives about the history of child nutrition. NFSMI's resources are available online at no cost.

There was strong agreement that even more evidence, information, research, and resources are needed focused on school feeding. Also, there needs to be even more sharing of knowledge and best practices so that countries can learn from one another.



School Feeding Toolkit

The School Feeding Toolkit, developed by GCNF and now in its third edition, is an instrument developed to help countries assess their situation and develop their plans to create a sustainable school feeding program. This toolkit is pliable and flexible, suitable for use at the national, regional, provincial, or local level. It is adaptable by any country, gives countries ownership over their school

feeding program, has been translated from English into multiple languages (Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Mandarin Chinese), and has been used by numerous countries across the globe to advance their school feeding programs. The toolkit can be used by national, regional, provincial, or local leaders, and is designed to involve all key stakeholders.

GCNF's Penny McConnell and Stan Garnett explained the five steps of the School Feeding Toolkit.

- **Step 1: Country Goals and Objectives.** The first step is to define the specific goals and objectives in a country or a given geography. A good idea can be to establish targets for specific regions or schools. An important step in laying out goals and objectives is to define the key stakeholders, such as various ministries, teachers, and parents.
- **Step 2: Diagnostic Information.** This involves taking a hard and honest look at a school feeding program's current state. This includes looking at school enrollment and participation in school feeding, assessing the infrastructure and institutional capacity, assessing how school feeding is funded, and other important measures of the current status of school feeding.
- **Step 3: Needs Assessment.** This involves assessing a country's commitment to school feeding and its capacity in terms of institutional, organizational, and societal capacity. Penny McConnell described this as a country's "will" and its "ability."
- **Step 4: Country Plan.** Once a country has established goals, looked at its current situation, and assessed its needs, the next step is to develop a specific plan. It was repeatedly emphasized that there is no one-size-fits-all plan. The appropriate plan for a country will be based on its specific situation. This plan includes identifying the major actions that are necessary, what stakeholders need to be involved, what resources are necessary, and who is responsible, as well as timeliness and indicators of progress.
- **Step 5: Country Plan Revision and Feedback.** Country plans are never complete; they are in a constant state of evaluation, feedback, and revision.



Key Themes from Country Reports

As part of the Forum, countries made brief presentations highlighting the key aspects of their country plan, indicating their most immediate priority upon returning home, and laying out where they could use assistance from GCNF and other NGOs. While each country's situation and plan is different, common themes from these presentations are provided here.

Situation

Many countries originally initiated some type of school feeding program at some point during the 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s. These programs focused on the most vulnerable students, served only a small portion of the student population, may have been a pilot, and were usually funded and run by the WFP or other NGOs. These programs typically lacked government support and struggled to secure adequate funding to achieve greater scale.

Focus

In general, countries are interested in developing nationally owned school feeding programs that have government support as opposed to having to rely on organizations such as the WFP. Countries also want to boost economic development by linking school feeding to local farmers.

Most of the countries presenting are still early in developing sustainable school feeding programs. They are focused on creating policies and laws, securing government support for these policies, and gaining strong ongoing government commitment—which is often a slow, difficult process. In addition, countries are focused on conducting needs assessments, developing institutional capacity and infrastructure, and securing adequate funding.



Immediate Action

For many countries, the most immediate action upon returning home focused on forming some type of committee composed of multiple stakeholders. The purpose of such committees is to build strong support for school feeding among stakeholders and to work with the government in developing commitment to policies, laws, and financial support.

Also, country representatives plan to form partnership with public and private stakeholders across the education, health, and agricultural sectors.

Assistance

The most frequently mentioned assistance desired from GCNF and other NGOs is technical assistance in conducting a needs assessment and in developing and implementing a home-grown school feeding program. In addition to technical assistance, country representatives would like ongoing sharing of information and best practices.

Communiqué

At the conclusion of the 2013 Global Child Nutrition Forum, attendees reviewed, voted on, and approved the following Communiqué:

Considering:

1. That the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right to food, education and health to everyone,
2. That—above everything else—children need to grow, learn and develop in the best possible conditions,
3. The high demand for learning from other countries' experiences that have developed successful national school feeding programs and other social safety net systems,
4. That National School Feeding Programs are instrumental in promoting and supporting:
 - 4.1. The right to food
 - 4.2. The right to education
 - 4.3. Food and nutrition security
 - 4.4. Local development and economic growth
 - 4.5. Inter-sectoral cooperation and co-responsibility
 - 4.6. Job generation
 - 4.7. Gender enhancement and participation
 - 4.8. Parent, teacher and community participation
5. That National School Feeding is a program that fosters investment in human capital and social development—at least—through:
 - 5.1. Increasing participation in school
 - 5.2. Increasing school enrollment
 - 5.3. Improving learning capacity
 - 5.4. Decreasing drop out from schools
 - 5.5. Improving gender parity
 - 5.6. Preventing micronutrient deficiencies
 - 5.7. Transferring income to the family
 - 5.8. Improving the quality of life of the family
 - 5.9. Promoting access of small-scale farmers to formal markets

The participants of the 2013 Global Child Nutrition Forum make the following recommendations and commitments:

Recommendations

To promote School Feeding Programs as one of the key national investments that complement early child interventions to promote full child development.

Commitments

- 1) To promote sustainable and efficient school feeding programs, at the national level, through strengthening the following five pillars:
 - a) Legal and Policy Framework
 - b) Financial Capacity
 - c) Institutional Capacity and Coordination
 - d) Evidence-Informed Design and Implementation
 - e) Community Ownership and Participation
- 2) To respond to the demand of countries for learning exchanges, fostering a global network for technical assistance and knowledge sharing with particular focus on South-South Cooperation and capacity development,
- 3) To promote the production of evidence of the outcomes of School Feeding Program as a national investment,
- 4) To promote the integration of School Feeding Programs with effective complementary interventions including sanitation, hygiene, deworming, micronutrient supplementation or fortification, and nutrition education,
- 5) To promote local production and procurement of nutritious, safe, diversified foods respecting local eating habits, so that small-scale farmers can access School Feeding markets,
- 6) To ensure the implementation of quality management of the whole food chain of School Feeding Programs,
- 7) To promote active community participation, encouraging social control and ownership of the program,
- 8) To collaborate with the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, the World Food Programme Centre of Excellence, and other partners to facilitate the realization of the above commitments.

Salvador, Bahia. 24th May, 2013

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