

XVI GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION FORUM

NUTRITION IN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2014 GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION FORUM

Excitement Regarding Nutritious School Meals Sourced From Local Farmers

Some 250 people converged in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa from September 29 to October 3, 2014, excited by the opportunity to learn, share, observe, and celebrate experience with school feeding programs at the 16th annual Global Child Nutrition Forum, co-organized by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation and the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil.

The Forum organizers strongly support the expansion of programs that offer nutritious school meals, “home-grown” (sourced—where feasible—from local farmers to support agricultural development), and managed by national governments (for sustainability and to support national development priorities). Because most of the 250 Forum attendees enthusiastically embrace these concepts but struggle with how to successfully implement them, the 2014 Forum was designed for sharing and learning.

Nutritionally-focused, home-grown school feeding programs offer a smart investment opportunity for countries that will pay dividends well into the future. While challenging to implement, these programs provide a clear and popular avenue—building on existing infrastructure—for achieving improved education, health, economic, and social outcomes. School meal programs attract even the most vulnerable children to school and ensure that their learning is not impeded by hunger. In addition, thoughtful government investment in school feeding programs will create income, employment, and private sector development opportunities as well as community engagement and political support that will help to sustain the programs over time.

Governments are increasingly seizing this opportunity, clearly stating their desire to manage their own school feeding programs, investing in their own farmers and their nations’ schoolchildren. It is the Global Child Nutrition Foundation’s mission to support the efforts of governments to do so; the Brazil experience so ably represented by the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger attests to the power of government commitment in addressing the interrelated challenges of agricultural, human, and overall economic and social development.

The Global Child Nutrition Foundation and the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger express thanks to all the many generous, enthusiastic, and hard-working sponsors and exhibitors, on-site workers, presenters, and participants. Your efforts made the 2014 Forum a resounding success!

Some data points from the 2014 Forum:

- ~250 people attended. (This number includes those who attended for less than the full five-day period of the Forum.)
- 10 ministers attended, along with more than 60 other high-level officials of the governments represented.
- Also attending were experts from the school feeding community, and representatives from the United Nations, NGOs, and the private sector as well as some interested individuals.
- Approximately 60 delegates attended GCNF’s toolkit training conducted by Penny McConnell and Stan Garnett.
- 38 countries were officially represented; most were from Sub-Saharan Africa, but we were pleased to host participants from Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Jordan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Russia, Tunisia, and the United States as well.
- All 38 countries signed the Forum Communiqué, stressing that home-grown (locally-sourced) school feeding is an investment with tangible, multi-sector benefits.
- The presentations on the core topic, “Nutrition in School Feeding Programs” were very well received and drew excellent questions and discussion.
- A Forum “country questionnaire” allowed the organizers to pilot a new “Country Lightning Round” format for plenary presentations of key country-specific information. It also allowed the team to gather and report information about participating countries’ school feeding programs. (While most countries did not have data in answer to all the questions asked, we are pleased to report that we did get some new and significant data from those who could report on topics such as the number of jobs created through their school feeding programs and whether the country has explicit goals to purchase from smallholder farmers.) (Please see Appendix I.)

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IMPROVING NUTRITION THROUGH THE STRENGTHENING OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES



For decades, school feeding has been part of the vision of successful, healthy schools. In recent years that vision has expanded to include home-grown school feeding, which links agricultural development to school feeding by structuring the purchase of some portion of the school food as a market for smallholder farmers' products. This enhances the economic development aspects of the program, creating income and additional job opportunities along the value chain. While nutrition has always been a concern in school feeding programs due to the importance of nutrition throughout a child's life, a fresh emphasis on dietary diversity and local foodstuffs, have brought about a renewed emphasis on nutrition in school meal programs—and renewed excitement regarding the potential for these programs to involve interventions that address nutritional deficiencies on a large scale. School feeding is a national investment which can improve education, help address malnutrition and prevent obesity, improve health, boost economic development, aid in community development, help break the cycle of poverty, and reduce social inequities.

Much has been learned about approaches, practices, and tools that work best in creating the most far-reaching, effective, efficient, and sustainable school feeding programs. This Forum shared global insights on school feeding, as well as valuable lessons from countries across the world, equipping those who care deeply about school feeding to make even further progress in developing and expanding successful school meal programs.

2014 GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION FORUM—VANDERBIJLPARK, SOUTH AFRICA, SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 3

GCNF Board members Penny McConnell and Stan Garnett hosted 60 delegates for a half-day Toolkit session focused on policy and planning for national school feeding programs.

Launching the Forum, GCNF President Gene White noted that attendees represented a global community with a common purpose and a shared commitment: to help children through school feeding.

This Forum was co-hosted by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation and the World Food Programme Centre of Excellence against Hunger.

FORUM OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the 2014 Forum was to reaffirm 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.

“We should consider this Forum a bridge, to take the present into the future.”

– Gene White, President, GCNF



In particular, this 16th annual Forum focused on the **role of nutrition** as a core component of effective and sustainable school feeding programs linked to local agricultural production. The Forum agenda focused on:

1. Defining the interrelationship between school feeding programs, home-grown school feeding programs, and nutritious, food-based school meals programs linked to local agricultural production.
2. Identifying the benefits of countries investing in school feeding programs, and how those benefits can be enhanced if a focus on nutrition is included.
3. Examining the relevant elements of nutritious school meals.

4. Capturing and recording profiles of each participating country's school feeding program, and highlighting new achievements at the country level, using a new, dynamic process ("Lightning Rounds").
5. Introducing a "Hot Topics Clinic" for small, facilitated groups of participants to discuss significant challenges in three topic areas: i) Working with the private sector for nutritious school feeding programs; ii) Policy and advocacy for school feeding; and iii) Food and nutrition security in school menus.
6. Allowing time for interest groups of various types to meet.
7. Including organized visits to see school feeding activities in South Africa.
8. Encouraging exhibits by groups wishing to present their programs, products, and ideas.
9. Celebrating school feeding successes, opportunities, and fellowship.
10. Development of a communiqué or declaration regarding school feeding in the "Post-2015 Agenda."



Arlene Mitchell addresses a country lightning round presentation

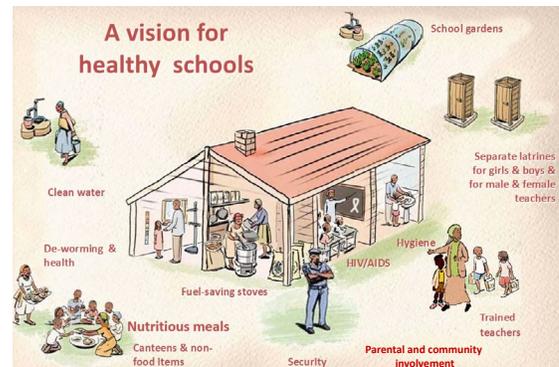
SETTING THE STAGE

Arlene Mitchell, Executive Director of the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, set the stage for this Forum by describing how the international development community's vision of school feeding has evolved over time and by offering a vision of nutritious, home-grown school feeding. This vision reflects an evolution in thinking regarding the schools and complimentary activities related to schools.

- **Vision for schools.** If we look back to the late 1980s and 1990s, a school was seen by donors, governments, and implementing partners primarily as a building, a physical structure, which took in children, with a narrow focus on academic education. Donated food for school meals was on the wane, after almost two decades of popularity.
- **Vision for schools with trained teachers and sanitation.** Around the year 2000 there was growing interest in expanding schools' resources to include clean water,

improved sanitation, and teacher training. Still, the school was mainly seen as infrastructure.

- **Vision for healthy schools.** In the early 2000s, the vision of schools changed to focus on creating a healthy environment. This vision included de-worming, teachers trained on hygiene, education about subjects such as HIV/AIDS, and concern for security, greater parental and community involvement, and even school gardens. The emphasis was on health.



- **A vision for home-grown school feeding.** With schools increasingly seen as potentially healthy environments, the Millennium Development Project, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and WFP began to ask, "What about economic development?" The concept of home-grown school feeding was born, to link school feeding programs to small-scale farmers. The idea was to create stable markets for these farmers and to create thriving local ecosystems including food processing, storage, and distribution through government commitment and involvement.
- **A vision for nutritious home-grown school feeding.** The vision for school feeding continues to evolve. The idea is to promote nutrition as part of the emphasis on the home-grown aspect of school feeding. This emphasis on nutrition affects what farmers plant and grow, opens the door to menu planning that promotes the use of diverse and nutritious local foods that may have been ignored, influences what products companies will be encouraged to develop, the way food is processed (including micronutrient fortification), the jobs the program creates, the tools that practitioners use, the policies set by the government, and even education about nutrition at the school.

"We are now transitioning. It is not just good enough to get food in children's mouths; we have to focus on nutritious food."

– Arlene Mitchell, Executive Director, GCNF

This framework positioned nutritious home-grown school feeding as the focus of the Forum.



WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger Director Daniel Balaban during a visit to a South African school

BENEFITS OF NUTRITIONALLY FOCUSED HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

Forum participants shared their thoughts on the many core benefits of school feeding programs, of school feeding programs that emphasize the idea of “home-grown,” and of programs that promote nutrition. These benefits include:

- **Improved education.** Participants noted that school feeding programs increase the access to education by increasing student enrollment and attendance, as children go to school who otherwise would not have attended and they stay in school. School feeding has been shown to produce better student behavior and improved academic results. It also is important in fostering greater gender equality, delaying the age of marriage, and reducing child labor. It makes it possible for some disabled children and some children of nomadic populations to attend school, promotes schools as hubs of knowledge, and contributes to literacy and capacity development.
- **Better health.** School feeding programs can reduce rates of malnutrition and serve as a platform for other interventions that improve students’ health, such as the provision of clean water and sanitation facilities, programs to encourage hand washing with soap, periodic de-worming treatments, and health education programs geared to specific risks (e.g. HIV/AIDS prevention). Better health lowers a nation’s long-term disease burden and health care costs.

In addition to the benefits that spring from basic, donation-driven school feeding programs, school meal programs that emphasize diverse and nutritious school menus based on locally produced (“home-grown”) foods accrue a host of additional benefits. Forum participants articulated many of these:

- **Nutrition.** Diet diversity can be encouraged both through the use of “traditional” foods and through

the introduction of new, nutritious foodstuffs (such as “orange-fleshed sweet potatoes” and other items that address specific vitamin or mineral deficiencies). Introduction of nutrition education alongside nutritious school meals promotes healthy eating for the whole population, beginning with its children. Although most significantly influenced from conception through age two, the cognitive, psychological, and physical development of children continues throughout their school-going years: Reducing hunger and providing the proper micronutrient interventions via school meals can have positive effects on all three areas of development. A focus on nutrition raises attention to food quality and safety issues, and opens opportunities for job creation related to quality control and fortification. Monitoring the nutrition status of school children also becomes an additional avenue for measuring progress.

“Governments must realize that nutrition for all children is smart economics; it is a smart investment.”

– Chris Nikoi, World Food Programme Regional Director



- **Economic development.** Especially in rural areas, home-grown school feeding programs create linkages between schools and small-scale farmers. This creates stable markets and income for farmers and creates jobs for cooks and others (such as transporters and processors) who touch the school feeding supply chain. The school food market spurs productivity, provides incentives for farmers to use improved techniques and inputs, and demands attention to food quality (including improved storage and handling capacity). This creates a positive economic cycle for a community and a country. Also, the infrastructure and ecosystem created to produce and supply to schools can be applied beyond schools for commercial purposes. The school food market can also help reduce post-harvest losses by absorbing overproduction and seasonal products that are hard to transport. The demand for diverse foods for school meals can result in farmers investing in more diverse products (examples were given of school feeding stimulating increased demand and production of dairy, fish, vegetable, poultry, and meat products). School feeding also stimulates jobs and creates profits (in addition to the benefits accrued for farmers)—especially for women (including needy widows) and unemployed youth.

- **Community development.** Investments in school feeding and linkages between schools and farmers benefit communities, resulting in greater prosperity and improvements in overall conditions in the communities. As one participant said, “Schools can become hubs for social inclusion.” Other participants said that home-grown school feeding promotes social cohesion, contributes to overall security, reduces dependence on donors, slows urbanization, strengthens cooperation across sectors, builds community ownership, brings other investments and partners into the communities, and promotes technology use. Through nutritious home-grown school feeding, schools can flourish as entire community resource centers.



Janey Thornton speaks with children during a visit to a South African school

- **Poverty reduction.** Providing nutritious, locally produced food for students helps break the cycle of poverty and reduce social inequalities in a country. It ensures at least one nutritious meal per day for poor schoolchildren and reduces short-term hunger. School feeding serves as an income transfer to families and aids food-insecure households; it also serves as an effective social safety net. Home-grown, nutritious school meal programs create jobs and are an investment in sustainability, given the long-term benefits and impact across multiple sectors (education, agriculture, health, and nutrition).

“I believe that investing in school feeding is one of the most important things a country can do.”

– Daniel Balaban, Director, World Food Programme
Centre of Excellence against Hunger

Arlene Mitchell noted that while political support is essential, in the discussion of the many benefits of nutritious home-grown school feeding there was no mention that these programs can help build and sustain their own political support. There are a number of constituencies—in addition to parents, students, and schools—who benefit from school feeding programs and stand to lose if a pro-

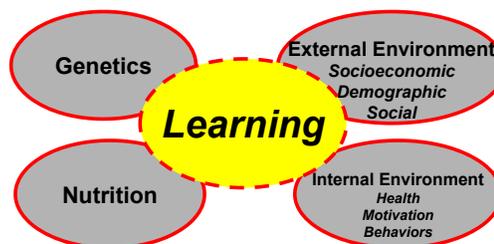
gram shrinks or is terminated. We have seen that those constituencies (e.g., farmers, transporters, cooks, private sector players, local officials, etc.) will speak up for the program if encouraged, and that their voices can have a powerful effect on even the highest layers of government.

NUTRITION AND LEARNING

Dr. Ronald Kleinman of Harvard Medical School explained that malnutrition and hunger—which are consequences of the vicious cycle of food insecurity and which affect 25% to 50% of children in resource-constrained countries—have a detrimental impact on children’s physical health, their mental health and development, and their education.

- **Physical health.** Chronic malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies increase the chances of stunting, a weakened immune system, and illness. Children who lack proper nutrition have higher rates of iron deficiency anemia, more frequent headaches and stomachaches, and increased odds of being hospitalized.
- **Mental health and development.** Children who lack proper nutrition have worse developmental outcomes, experience more frequent behavioral and psychosocial problems, and are more likely to be depressed and suicidal.
- **Education.** Children who are malnourished may be distracted and have an impaired ability to learn, impaired mental proficiency and functioning, lower math scores and more academic problems, and more tardiness and absences.

The conclusion of extensive research is that children’s ability to learn is affected by their nutritional status throughout childhood and adolescence, during the time when the central nervous system develops. Internal and external environmental factors, including behaviors, health, and socioeconomic factors, interact with nutritional status to affect cognitive and behavioral development and a child’s ability to learn and function.



The good news is that early issues can often be repaired with proper nutrition and support during childhood and adolescent years, allowing children to reach their ultimate potential. Interventions such as school feeding programs

can be extremely valuable and beneficial in decreasing risks and improving the chances that children can reach their potential.

“School feeding programs offer the opportunity to reduce the risk of adverse external environmental factors, support good nutrition, and encourage a healthy lifestyle.”

– Ronald Kleinman, MD



ENSURING A NUTRITIONAL FOCUS ON SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS

Albaneide Peixinho, who coordinates the national school feeding program in Brazil, and Alice Martin-Dahirou, the WFP Country Director for Uganda, shared their thoughts on key considerations to ensure a focus on nutrition in school feeding programs. These considerations include:

- **Engaging national and local leaders.** A theme throughout the Forum was the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders in school feeding. This includes ministers of education, health, agriculture, and more, as well as leaders of school districts, parents, and private-sector partners.



- **Understanding the current context.** In each country it is important to conduct a diagnostic assessment to evaluate the context, including the culture, nutritional conditions, food access and production, local tastes and practices, and more.
- **Establishing policies and legal frameworks.** The foundation of a successful school nutrition program,

especially one that emphasizes nutrition and includes home-grown school feeding, is national policies and laws. These policies and laws show national commitment.

- **Establishing guidelines.** These guidelines should be based on what is healthy and appropriate, and adapted to local realities. Nutritional guidelines can complement what students already get at home, can take into consideration what students need from a nutritional perspective, and may include fortification.
- **Designing the program.** With the support of leaders, an understanding of the local context, and development of guidelines, it is then appropriate to develop the specific school nutrition program. This will include determining goals, targets, timelines, and other objectives. These goals may be based on a country’s level of food security and insecurity, and on current levels of malnutrition. The program should address specific nutrition needs and take into account local habits and traditions.
- **Embedding the program.** After policies, guidelines, and the program are developed, the school nutrition program needs to be embedded into schools across the country. This is where the support of all stakeholders is essential.
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** Once programs are in place, those programs must be monitored, evaluated, and held accountable.

It is this sort of a systematic approach that is required to establish and sustain a successful school feeding program, and to ensure that school feeding emphasizes nutrition.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COUNTRY PROGRAMS

Through a series of four “lightning rounds,” about 25 countries shared highlights of their school feeding programs. Each participant provided information about when their school feeding program was founded, how many children are served, and the cost per student. Participants also summarized significant achievements and notable challenges. Arlene Mitchell moderated these presentations and asked each presenter a few questions about the unique aspects of their country’s school feeding program. Some of the common themes from the presentations include:

Program Structure

Most of the school feeding programs that were described were started in the 1980s, 1990s, or early 2000s, with initial ownership and support from WFP. Increasingly,

countries have assumed national responsibility for their own school feeding programs, having gone through a process of transition from a WFP program to a national program; some countries have multiple programs taking place. In most instances, the school feeding program is either part of the ministry of education or the ministry of health.

A common theme is evolving to home-grown school feeding (often since 2010 or 2012), which usually begins with a pilot and involves collaboration with the ministry of agriculture. Also mentioned by several countries is evolving to a decentralized structure and a “cash-to-schools model,” where the national government disburses (often electronically) funds to districts, which use the cash to procure food locally. The amount of funds is determined on a per-student basis. After funds are disbursed there is typically a role in monitoring the usage of the funds.



Bibi Giyose reacts to Dr. Kleinman’s speech on nutrition

Goals

Common goals include increasing the number of students receiving meals as part of the school food program, with many countries aiming for 100% participation. Countries that have not yet fully transitioned to a national program stated the goal of becoming entirely funded and operated by their national government. Other common goals include purchasing from local farmers and creating jobs for cooks, with some countries having already created thousands of jobs.

Strengths

Programs that are working well typically have strong support from the national government, which is often grounded in policies and laws. They also use an institutional framework to organize the program and ensure collaboration among stakeholders. There is also support at the local/community level, and good coordination and communication between national officials and local leaders. A consistent strength is also an interest in and willingness to pilot new program ideas, with most countries mentioning some form of pilots underway in their country.

Challenges

In countries that are struggling, key issues often include lack of funding, often because school feeding is not built into the national budget. The underlying issue may be lack of policies and a legal framework; while several countries mentioned having good government support, it remains a struggle elsewhere. Also mentioned were staffing and capacity challenges.

Where countries are working to transition from WFP-led programs to national programs, the major issues in the transition often relate to ownership and oversight of procurement and logistics.

Unique Elements

A handful of countries mentioned that their school feeding programs also provided meals to preschools. A few mentioned having a community or parental volunteer requirement to support school feeding. Also unique were mention of the use of cell phones and biometrics as part of the procurement and monitoring process.



Her Excellency Mariama El-Hadji Ibrahim, Minister of Education, Niger (right)

SOUTH AFRICA'S SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM

Officials of the host country presented details about South Africa's National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Many aspects of the NSNP are similar to programs in countries that participated in the lightning rounds.

Background & Policy Mandate

This program, introduced in 1994, was initially administered by the Department of Health. In 2002, responsibility was transferred to the Department of Education. NSNP is supported by South Africa's constitution, by a 2002 cabinet resolution, by a national development plan, by a conditional grant framework (which provides funding and is reviewed annually), and by a legal framework.

NSNP Purpose & Key Pillars

The purposes of the NSNP are to:

- Address learners' ability to learn by providing them with nutritious meals.
- Enhance the educational experience of the most needy learners through promotion of punctual attendance, improving concentration and general health development.

NSNP's key pillars are:

- **School feeding.** Learners are provided nutritious meals on all school days consisting of protein, starch, and fruit and/or vegetable. The meals should be culturally acceptable and provinces have the flexibility to develop their own menus, with guidance from the national office. The cost is \$0.24 USD per student per day in primary schools and \$0.31 per student per day in secondary schools.
- **Nutrition education.** To build the skills of learners to take more personal responsibility for their health and physical development, education health and nutrition is integrated into each school.

- **Food gardens.** Gardens are incorporated into schools to develop farming knowledge and skills.

There are currently more than 21,000 schools in South Africa participating in NSNP, serving nutritious school meals to over 9 million learners each day.

Procurement Model

Two different procurement models are at work in South Africa:

- **Centralized model.** In this model, the province and district procure food on behalf of the school and contract with service providers to distribute the food.
- **Decentralized model.** In this model, NSNP transfers funds directly to schools and the schools are then responsible for all procurement processes, including the selection and contracting with service providers. Schools place orders and receive deliveries.

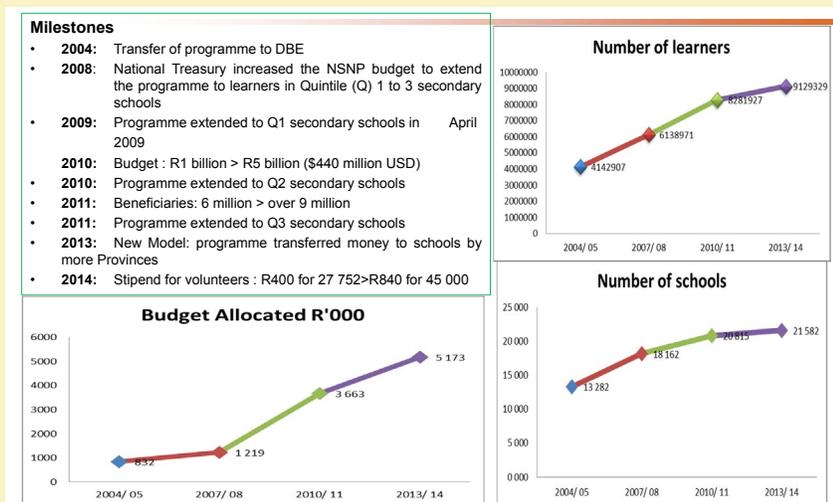
Challenges & Interventions

Among the most significant challenges faced are lack of adequate facilities in schools for preparation and storage of food, lack of adequate equipment, insufficient capacity, and consistent adherence to standards.

Successful interventions to address these challenges and to continue to advance NSNP include a set-aside funding allocation to improve the infrastructure, internships and training, and in particular, partnerships with the private sector. These partnerships with businesses help address schools' needs related to meals, infrastructure and equipment, safety, and technology.

Future Plans

South Africa is focused on achieving universal access to education, as a fundamental right. Educational leaders want to achieve greater quality and efficiencies, and want to expand school breakfast and de-worming. There is focus on building upon strong partnerships, and documenting and leveraging best practices.



HOT TOPIC CLINICS

At this Forum, three hot topics were identified and multiple sessions were conducted on each. These involved presentations, questions, and discussions. Brief recaps of each are provided below.

Hot Topic Clinic: Policy and Advocacy for School Feeding

The sessions on policy and advocacy emphasized the need to raise awareness of the many benefits of school feeding programs to all key decision makers within the government. Important remarks from these discussions include:

- **Raise awareness among all stakeholders.** School feeding must be viewed as a multi-sectoral effort and there must be awareness and advocacy directed at NGOs, the private sector, parents, government officials at the national and local levels, and anyone else who touches school feeding.
- **Work to increase coordination among various ministries.** It is important to engage all relevant ministries, including education, health, agriculture, finance, and planning. It can also be beneficial to create awareness for school feeding in the office of the prime minister.
- **Use public relations.** An effective way to increase awareness and advocate for policy is by using PR. Ideas mentioned include enlisting the support of a national celebrity and directing support to the grassroots level to generate support among local populations.
- **Use the tools and resources that are available.** Several good tools exist that can be used to gather data, build a case, and advocate for school feeding. This includes WFP policy tools that include a needs analysis, tools to assess costs, and tools to make a case for the investment in school feeding. Other useful tools include SABER, International School Meals Day, and tools and information from the Partnership for Child Development (PCD).
- **Share best practices.** Those advocating for school feeding should share their best practices with others and those interested in learning about advocacy activities that have worked well should look into best practices. Examples of areas where sharing of best practices can be valuable include effective policy frameworks and coordination mechanisms.
- **Policy and advocacy must be ongoing.** Advocacy is not a one-time event and it shouldn't stop even after a policy is adopted or success is achieved. To sustain and grow support for school feeding, advocacy efforts must be ongoing and continuous.

Hot Topic Clinic: Working with the Private Sector for Nutritious School Feeding Programs

The private sector can play a key role in nutritious school feeding programs by providing funding, donation of in-kind products and services, investment, and products. The general consensus is that the private sector should support the goals and aspirations of the government. It is the government's role to establish nutrition standards and specifications; it is then the role of the private sector to comply with these standards in the products that are produced. Ideally there is a continuous dialogue between the government and businesses about nutritious school feeding products.

Other topics mentioned include:

- **Technical expertise.** The private sector can offer technical expertise related to nutrition and related to safety and quality control.
- **Infrastructure.** The private sector can help provide the necessary infrastructure and equipment for nutritious school feeding programs. This may come through donation.
- **Logistics.** The private sector can be involved in providing and overseeing the logistics of nutritious school feeding programs, including food processing, storage, and transportation.
- **Monitoring.** A role that the private sector can play is monitoring the entire school feeding program, particularly related to quality control throughout the system.
- **Fortification.** The private sector can support the desire of governments to improve nutrition through fortified foods that address nutritional deficiencies.
- **Awareness.** The private sector can sponsor and participate in advocacy and awareness campaigns.

Overall, the private sector can help bridge gaps that exist in national school feeding programs.

Common challenges for the private sector include accessing remote rural areas and working in markets where there is a lack of a partnership with the government. Participants described governments with different attitudes and approaches toward the private sector. Too much structure can inhibit private sector participation and partnerships. Representatives from the private sector encouraged governments to create environments that are "private sector friendly."

Hot Topic Clinic: Food and Nutrition Security in School Menus

A case study was shared by SESI Cozinha Brasil, which is a project in Brazil to promote healthy eating habits and decrease kitchen waste. More than 1,000 people (community leaders, parents, and cooks) in Brazil have already participated in training and capacity-building sessions. The program is composed of 13 sections totaling 30 hours. It has three areas of focus:

1. **Teaching new recipes.** This involves avoiding waste by using everything possible, including leaves, canes, branches, and seeds.
2. **Focusing on food preparation.** Cooks learn about local laws as well as about hygiene and conservation.
3. **Learning about common mistakes and solutions.** This learning involves a funny character who makes mistakes in the kitchen which participants must correct.

Results show that investments in this program produce a very attractive return, with savings of 7 to 19 times what was invested. This program is available and can be adapted in countries outside of Brazil. All education will follow local guidelines and policies, with local governments being responsible for managing the project.

EXAMPLES OF TOOLS AND INITIATIVES

Another important part of the 2014 Forum was sharing of important tools and initiatives that can support and advance school feeding. Three particular tools and initiatives that were described in depth were School Meals Planner (menu planning software), International School Meals Day, and SABER.

School Meals Planner

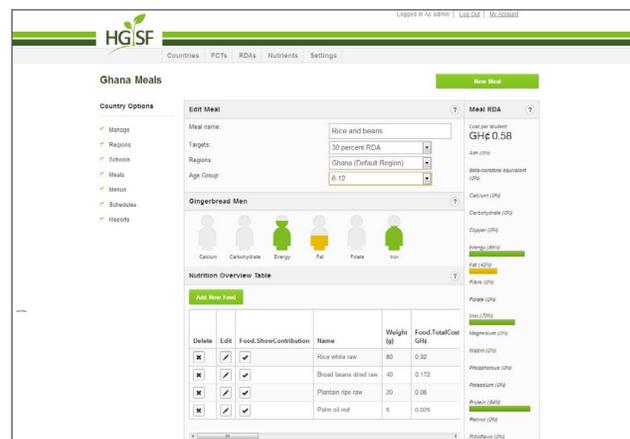
Josephine Kiamba, of NEPAD, and Daniel Mumuni, of The Partnership for Child Development (PCD), described the importance of planning a school meal and showed how meal planning software can assist in this process.

Planning a school meal is part of the strategy for improving school-based nutrition; it links the local food basket to nutrition. It is possible to diversify the ration and food basket provided to children, thereby ensuring that children eat healthily and helping modify their behavior.

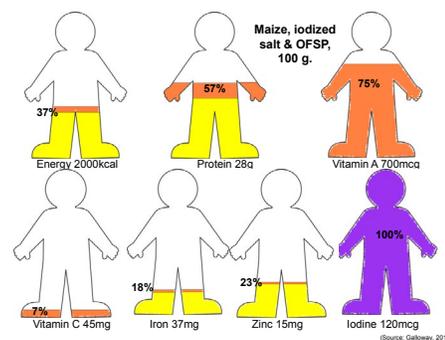
The School Meals Planner (www.hgsf-global.org) is meal planning software that puts evidence into action. Key elements are:

- **Menu planning.** By inputting the ingredients/commodities used in preparing meals, the tool calculates

the costs per meal. This helps in the budgeting and in the advocacy process, providing actual cost data. The screen shot below shows an example of the cost of a meal in Ghana.



- **Nutrition education.** The meal planning software also provides a visual which shows how well a particular meal is at meeting nutritional values. The example below shows the nutritional value of a 100G portion of maize, iodized salt, and sweet potato. Other examples were shared in the session showing the nutritional value of many different meals. This visual tool can encourage participatory planning and learning.



This tool helps develop nutritious meals, while knowing the costs of these meals. The information provided is valuable to governments, development partners, and the private sector.

“There is a big need for a tool such as this where skills and tools for menu planning are limited.”

– Josephine Kiamba, PCD

SABER

SABER is the System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results. It is a data collection instrument for school feeding developed by the World Bank. It aims to benchmark educational sub-systems and covers 13 “domains.” It provides data which lays the groundwork for policy, and provides a tool to bring together all stakeholders. Important aspects of SABER are:

- It provides a common tool for all countries to use.
- It requires government commitment and ownership, as using SABER is a government-led process.
- It provides a roadmap for a country, with clarity of roles and a clear action plan.
- It helps solidify partnerships.

Becoming comfortable with SABER can take a bit of time, but once there is comfort and familiarity, SABER provides clear information about goals and several levels of indicators. It is a systematic tool now being used by more than 20 countries. It provides the ability to look at progress and results across domains. It provides comparison data and is a helpful tool for explaining success and identifying opportunities.

International School Meals Day

This day (www.internationalschoolmealsday.com) helps raise the awareness of hunger and poverty around the globe, raise the awareness of the importance of nutritional quality in school meals worldwide, and emphasize the connection between healthy eating, education, and better learning.

In conjunction with International School Meals Day, there is extensive awareness created online and via social media, including Twitter and Tumblr. Also, part of International School Meals Day is connecting classrooms, via Skype and other means. Students learn that geographic differences may be large, but differences between students are small.

The next International School Meals Day is planned for March 5, 2015. The theme is “Celebrate Food and Culture.”

CALL TO ACTION

In addition to sharing information and best practices, participants in this Forum were encouraged to provide a call to action to influence leaders to take more action to improve and expand home-grown school feeding programs. The participants themselves identified representatives who drafted the call to action in the form of a Communiqué and brought it to the full assembly, where it was adopted by all (with some modifications). The Communiqué reads as follows.



Local South African school children perform for the opening plenary (top and above)

COMMUNIQUÉ

Since 1997, the annual Global Child Nutrition Forum has united leaders from developing countries for five days of intensive training, technical assistance, and planning, all directed toward establishing country-operated sustainable school feeding programmes. It has become the largest annual forum on school feeding.

By sharing their insights, experiences, and challenges, an informal alliance of leaders dedicated to advancing school feeding has evolved. As a result, the Forum has become a catalyst for school feeding development. The Forum is implemented by the non-profit Global Child Nutrition Foundation in conjunction with partners including experts from governments, other organisations, and the private sector also support the Forum.

With the support of the Governments of South Africa and Brazil, the sixteenth annual Forum took place in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa, from September 29 through October 3, 2014 and focused on the role of Nutrition as a core component of effective and sustainable school feeding programmes linked to local agricultural programmes.

The delegates from 38 countries agreed to this declaration and recommendations:

Considerations

1. The Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF), the outcomes of Rio +20, the Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge, the Post-2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are geared to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection, the Forum concluded that both nutrition and multi-sector approaches will play central roles in the realisation of the SDGs, and that sustainable school feeding linked to local agriculture and child nutrition is multi-sector programme which can deliver across several SDG goals and targets.
2. The decision 66/222 of the United Nations General Assembly to declare 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming in recognition of the role of family farming in school feeding and its contribution in the fight against hunger and poverty eradication in the world, the Forum recognizes the opportunity for the creation and deepening of policies linking nutrition, agriculture and education that target family farmers through school feeding.
3. The Rights of the Child, specifically Article 4 on the Protection of rights: Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled by ensuring social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as adequate funding which creates an environment where children can grow and reach their potential, in this context, the Forum recognizes the role that school feeding can play to ensure the protection of children.
4. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly specifically article 14 (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment; and 14 (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;
5. The Forum recognizes the role of the national school feeding programmes in attaining education goals such as high rates of enrolment, retention, gender parity and improved learning outcomes and cognition in children.
6. The Forum applauded the efforts being made by the respective governments and development partners, private sector as well as non-government and civil society organizations towards improving the nutritional status of children in the world.
7. The Forum expressed satisfaction over the commitments of the international community for school feeding programmes for improving the nutritional status of children worldwide.
8. The Forum clearly recognised that Government-led National school feeding programmes based on local purchase and diet diversity has a series of benefits in education, health, gender, food security, nutrition, social protection, local agriculture and rural economic development.
9. The Forum recognised the benefits of school feeding in improving nutritional status of children particularly when linked to diet diversity, local agriculture production and small-holder farmers often referred to as home-grown school feeding.
10. The Forum ascertained that providing nutritious meals respecting specific needs of children in school and particularly the girl child can break the intergenerational cycle of hunger and poverty.
11. The Forum recognised recent research that provides evidence that school feeding can address some of the challenges of malnutrition and inappropriate food habits, and lead to improve cognitive capacities beyond the first 1000 days.

12. The Forum praised South-South cooperation as an effective means to improve sustainable school feeding programmes with its linkages to nutrition and local agriculture production through the sharing of experiences and recognises the contribution made by the Governments of South Africa, Brazil and others who have supported the 16th annual Forum.
13. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, Niger's Minister of Education convened on the margins of the Forum, a high level meeting with the Ministries of Education in Western and Central Africa present, and have agreed to work together on the following commitments: to initiate High Level discussions focussing on improvement of sustainable and nationally-run school feeding programme; and to advocate within their respective governments for a gradual increase in budgetary allocations for national school feeding linked to local agriculture and supply by small-holder farmers.

Recommendations and Commitments

Recognising the significance of the Zero Hunger Challenge, the Post-2015 agenda, and the SDG process, and the potential of school feeding to contribute both directly and indirectly to achieving multiple SDGs, the participants of 16th GCNF have the following recommendation and commitments:

1. Sustainable school feeding programmes that incorporate nutritious and diet diverse meals linked to small-holder farmer production be recognized as a key strategy for the achievement of the Zero Hunger Challenge, and the SDGs.
2. That governments recognise school feeding programmes as an investment and not an expenditure, as such governments adopt and include sustainable school feeding strategies into national investment, economic, agriculture, health and social development plans including social protection programmes as a way to contribute the achievement of the SDGs at the national level
3. That the political commitment must be garnered at national levels for all governments to take full ownership of the school feeding programmes in their public school system, fully supported by the necessary policies, legal instruments and commitments of adequate levels of financial resources.

4. Recognizing the limitations of national governments facing multiple and competing demands to their limited resources, the need for firm commitments from national governments and international aid agencies and development partners, multilateral institutions such as international and regional development banks for investing more in school feeding, working towards a nutrition-focused sustainable nationally owned and managed programmes.
5. That local and global level leadership needs to adopt a multi-sector approach to advance home-grown school feeding while engaging in greater levels of partnerships, collaboration and collective efforts to respond to the development of school age children including those of adolescent girls.
6. That multi-sectoral coordination at the global, national and regional levels is required among the line agencies including government institutions, research institutions, civil society organisation and private sector.
7. The conference further reiterated the importance of home grown school feeding practices as a means of empowering local communities and promoting nutritional education to achieve sustainable school feeding programmes across the country.

Next Steps

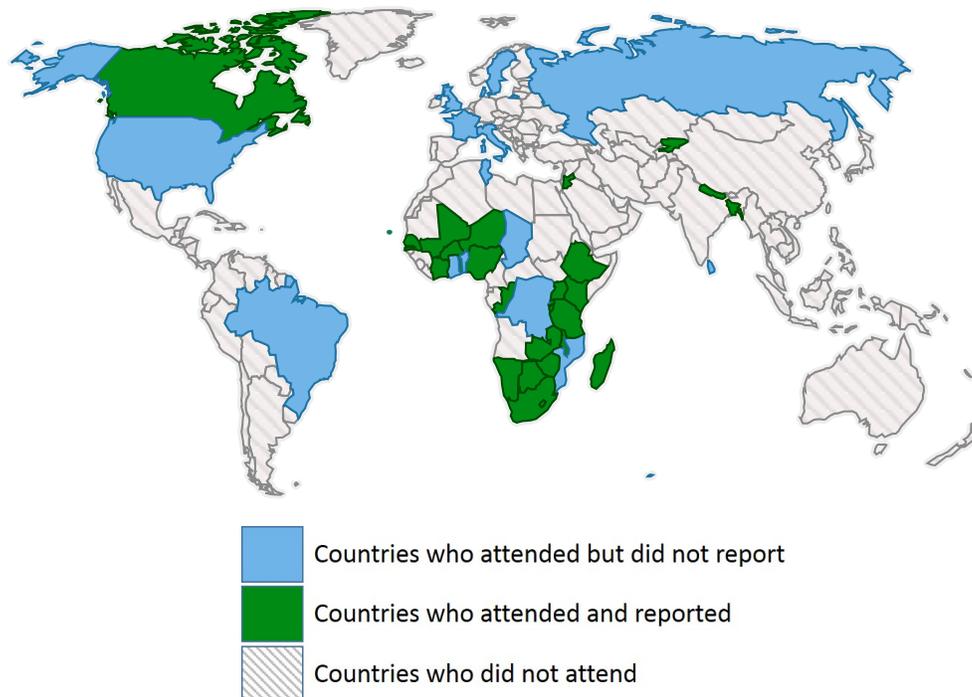
1. The participants shall disseminate and advocate the outcomes of the XVI GCNF among the main stakeholders responsible including members of UN Open Working group on Sustainable Development Goals and the other key international forums such as the upcoming International Nutrition Forum in November 2014 in Rome.
2. Use media, social media and other channels to advocate for school feeding as a nutrition intervention.
3. Establishment of a mechanism of follow up to facilitate communication and further elaborate and clarify how school feeding underpins and contributes to the achievement of SDG included the Zero Hunger Challenge.
4. Development of National Action Plans to implement the recommendations of the GCNF.

Johannesburg, South Africa. 3 October 2014

APPENDIX I—Country Reports Data Compilation

This year, the Forum organizers asked participating countries to fill out a basic questionnaire about their respective school feeding programs. 36 programs were described for the 29 countries that submitted reports. Most of the reports were completed by the national government while some were completed by staff of the country’s WFP office, the state government (as was the case for Osun State of Nigeria), or by a private NGO (as was the case for the Breakfast Club of Canada).

2014 GCN Forum: Countries Attending and Reporting



Entity Reporting	Country or Organization
National Government	Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nepal (both cash and food-based programs), Niger, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal (two programs), South Africa, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
State Government	Osun State, Nigeria
WFP Program	Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Mali, Senegal (two programs)
Private NGO	Breakfast Club of Canada, Counterpart International (CPI) of Senegal

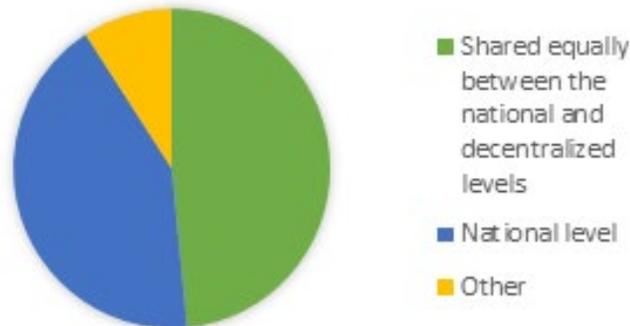
Children fed: Of the total programs reporting, 32 provided data regarding children fed in 2013-2014, stating that they fed 15,321,964 children that school year; these same programs plan to feed 17,212,488 children in 2014-2015, an increase of 12.3%.

**15 MILLION CHILDREN
FED IN 2013-2014**

**17 MILLION CHILDREN
PLANNED FOR 2014-2015**

12.3% INCREASE

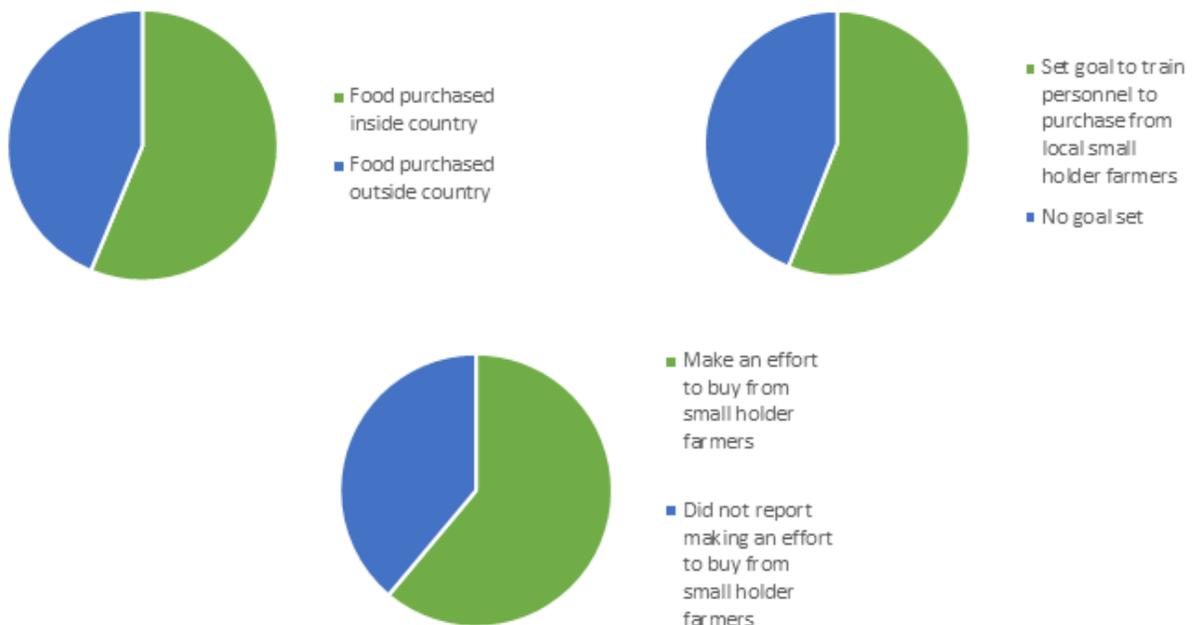
Decision-making and management: Of 33 programs that responded to this question, 16 reported that decision-making and management is shared equally between the national and decentralized levels; 14 reported that decision-making happens at the national level; and 3 programs reported other decision-making arrangements.



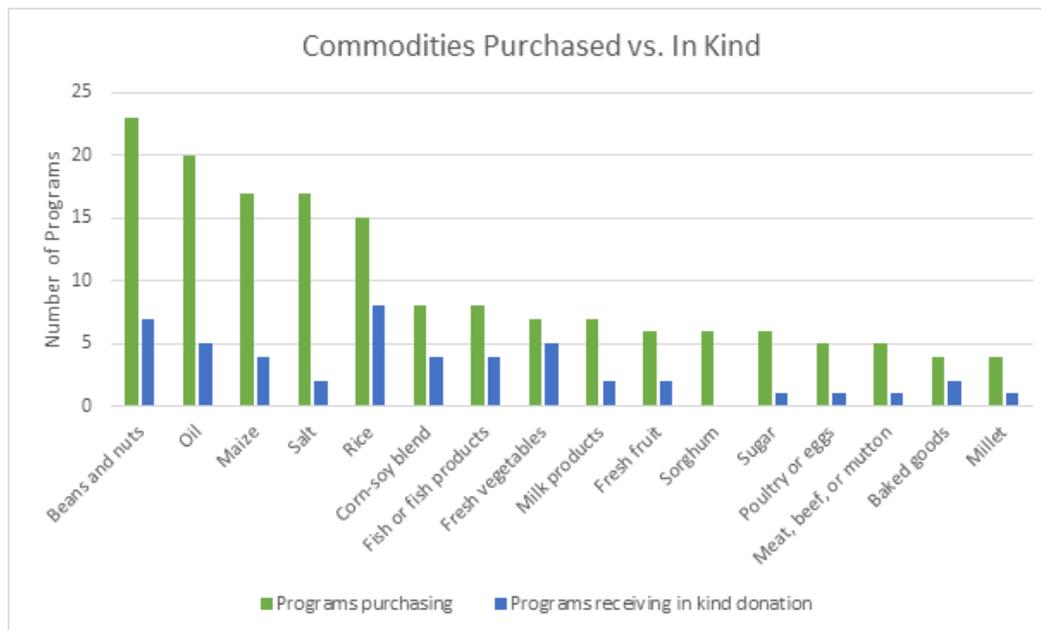
Budgets and spending: 25 programs reported their annual national budgets for school meals, which ranged from \$45,000 (USD) for the 2012-2013 school year in Tanzania to \$440 million for school year 2013-2014 in South Africa. Per student, costs ranged from \$5 per student per year in Zambia to \$74.50 per student per year in Cabo Verde (2012).

	Minimum	Maximum
Total Annual Budget	\$45,000	\$440,000,000
Cost per Student/year	\$5	\$74.50

Local production: Of 32 programs that responded regarding the source of the food for their school meal programs, 18 indicated that the majority of their food comes from inside their own country while the rest source from outside the country. 22 programs reported that they make an effort to buy from smallholder farmers in-country. 14 out of 25 programs that responded support local purchases through specific goals to train personnel involved in their program to buy from local farmers. Examples of goals include encouraging local cowpea production in Burkina Faso, training cooperative unions to sell to school feeding in Ethiopia, and training on school gardens in the Kyrgyz Republic.

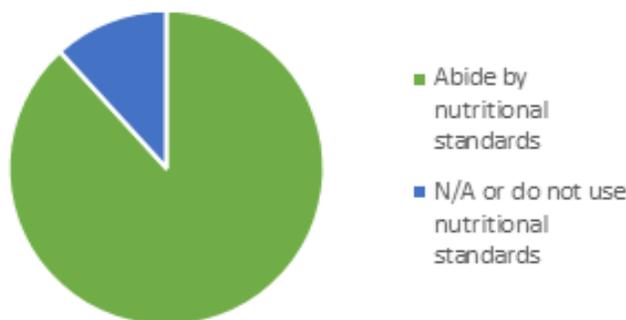


Commodities purchased vs. in-kind donations: 32 programs reported purchasing essential commodities locally; 17 reported receiving essential commodities as in-kind donations. The top 15 commodities purchased and donated are represented below. Please note the below numbers do not represent quantity of the commodity purchased or donated- rather they represent the number of programs reporting purchasing or receiving a donation of the specific commodity. Please also note that some donations were made by the local community or others within the country.



Commodity	Programs purchasing	Programs receiving in kind donation
Beans and nuts	23	7
Oil	20	5
Maize	17	4
Salt	17	2
Rice	15	8
Corn-soy blend	8	4
Fish or fish products	8	4
Fresh vegetables	7	5
Milk products	7	2
Fresh fruit	6	2
Sorghum	6	0
Sugar	6	1
Poultry or eggs	5	1
Meat, beef, or mutton	5	1
Baked goods	4	2
Millet	4	1

Nutritional standards: of 34 countries that responded, 30 abide by a set of nutritional standards. Of these 30, 19 programs reported using the nutritional standards set by WFP.



Private sector and jobs: of 26 programs that responded, 17 indicated they have set a specific goal to create jobs or business opportunities linked to their school feeding program. The 8 programs that provided data about the number of jobs created report creating 45,142 jobs over the course of their school feeding program. Some programs, such as South Africa and those cited in this chart, have made extraordinary efforts and progress in this area.

Examples of employment numbers include:

Osun State, Nigeria (“O-Meals”)

Women employed as food vendors or cooks	3,007
Youth employed in fish farming and processing	501
Farmers employed to produce cocoyams	10,000+
Farmers employed to produce poultry	8,000+
Youth employed as egg sorters/packers	1,000+

Botswana

Small farmers employed	3,793
‘Hand stampers’ for processing grains	3,863

Cabo Verde

Cooks	1,000
Farmers and their families	300

APPENDIX II—REPORT ON PARTICIPANTS’ EVALUATION

HIGHLIGHTS

- High praise of event organization, networking opportunities and high-level attendance (58)*.
- Suggestions for enforcing strict time observance and better communication of agenda revisions (7).
- High acclamation and excellent evaluation of school feeding field visit (6).
- Praise for GCNF teamwork and kindness (5).
- Complaints about hotel and logistics (See “Market Place, Logistics and Reception” and “Hotel” sections).

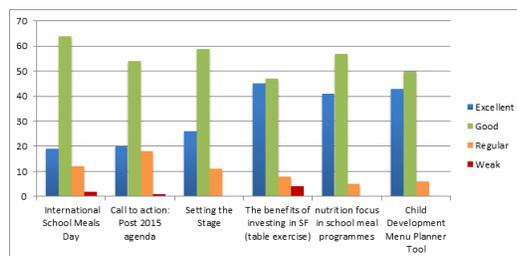
RELEVANT SUGGESTIONS

- The event should be shorter, covering no more than three days (4).
- Participants’ contact details should be shared (2).
- Expanding media coverage in print, television, and internet (1).

MEETINGS AND ROUNDTABLES

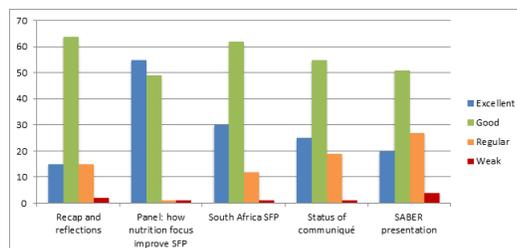
1. Themes

- Welcome and Launch of the Forum (Monday)
- Benefits of school feeding, home grown school feeding, and focusing on nutrition (Tuesday)



2. Themes

- Resource Day (Wednesday)
- Closure (Friday)



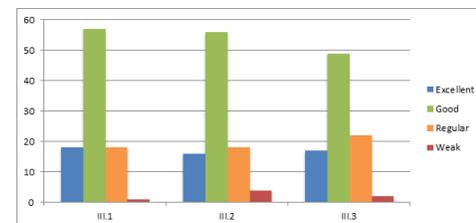
General Comments:

- Suggestion for more research / technical content in the sessions (4).
- Suggestion for participating countries to make posters of their programmes to optimize sharing (3).
- Specific praise on South Africa side event (2).
- Suggestion for expanding high-level discussions taking advantage of Ministers’ participation (1).
- Suggestion to use flipchart to optimize drafting of the communiqué (1).

HOT CLINIC SESSIONS

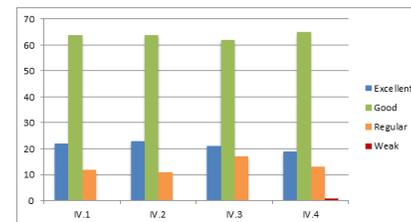
Hot Topic Clinic Sessions

1. Working with the private sector for nutritious SF programmes
2. Policy and Advocacy for SF
3. Food and nutrition security in school menus



LIGHTNING ROUND SESSIONS

- Country Programme Lightning Round #1
- Country Programme Lightning Round #2
- Country Programme Lightning Round #3
- Country Programme Lightning Round #4

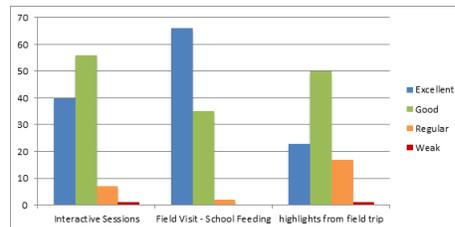


- Praise on the lightning rounds format (5).
- Suggestion for organizing countries by areas of interest rather than region (3).
- Suggestion for expanding exchange between countries in smaller groups (3).

* The numbers in brackets indicate how many participants’ comments were registered on the topic.

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS AND FIELD VISIT

- Interactive Sessions
- Field Visit
- Highlights from Thursday field trip



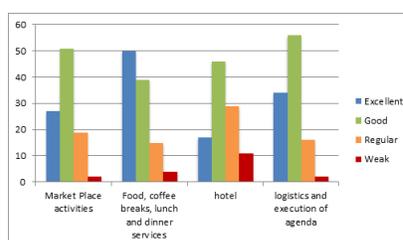
- High acclamation and praise of field visit, considered to be inspiring and well organized (4).
- Suggestion for expansion of school visits and better guidance on visit outcomes (2).
- Suggestion for expanding field visit to school surroundings / village (4).
- Praise on cultural events (1).

SUGGESTIONS FOR INNOVATION

- Suggestion for renewal of the organizing staff / more young people in the conference management (1).
- Suggestion for serving food made by school cooks (1).
- Suggestion for donation of percentage of the registration fee to SFP in host country (1).
- Suggestion to invite donor /high income countries (1).

MARKET PLACE, LOGISTICS, AND RECEPTION

- Market Place general activities
- Food, coffee, breaks, lunch and dinner services
- Hotel
- Logistics and execution of the GCNF agenda



LOGISTICS

- Complaints about arrival logistics and pre-conference information (9).
- Complaints about free Wi-Fi availability at conference venue (6).
- Complaints about the event venue and comfort (3).
- Problems with event registration (2).
- Praise on shuttle /transport service (2).
- Isolated complaints about food and drink service (2).
- Complaint about lack of space for Muslims to pray (1).

TRANSLATIONS

- Complaints about quality of translation services, particularly to Portuguese (6).
- Suggestion for providing translated versions of documents in Portuguese and French (1).
- Suggestion for introducing translation to Arabic language (1).

HOTEL

- Complaints about chalets: long distance, absence of telephones, of internet, of electric adapters and of drinking water; problems with management team (23).
- Suggestion that all participants stay in the same hotel (3).

PARTICIPANTS

(Listed by country; countries in alphabetical order)

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Rabeson Rolland Justet, General Secretary, Ministry of Education, Madagascar

Ramahazosa Irrish Parker, Director of Basic Education, Ministry of National Education, Madagascar

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