

**April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**Global Child Nutrition Foundation's Annual Spring Seminar**

**Global Survey of School Meal Programs: Implications and Perspectives**

**NOTES: Break-Out Group Session**

**Thematic topics** facilitated by small groups were: **Agriculture and Food Sources; Policy and Research; Implementation; Advocacy; Private Sector; and Health, Nutrition, and Sanitation.**

Participants from the Annual Spring Seminar were invited to remain at the venue following the conclusion of the panelist portion to separate into small breakout groups to respond to the information shared about the Global Survey of School Meal Programs in a facilitated discussion responding to the following three questions:

1. What specific implications do you see for this topic for the survey?
2. Which audiences should we reach with survey data and which reports would be particularly helpful as an outcome of this survey?
3. **(Optional question if time permits)** For the 2021 survey, are there specific questions or approaches that would be particularly helpful to this topic?

Following the facilitated discussions, the break out groups came back together and a designated lead from each group shared out to the plenary



their group's main discussion points. The feedback has been compiled below and shared to seminar participants.

## Main points, **Agriculture and Food Sources** Group: Participants from USDA, commodity groups, and implementers

- The group discussed the implications of this survey in how it could lead to more effective communication and build more resilient markets for the farmers that provide food to school feeding programs
- Key focus of the group is that the end goal of commodity groups is good school feeding and school feeding is all about good nutrition
- One major challenge to homegrown school feeding for farmers is interrupted funding to school feeding programs. This survey's ability to further demonstrate the efficacy of school feeding programs (increase enrollment, increase retention, improved performance, etc.) can encourage more private sector engagement with the market and to provide a market for local farmers during periods of time when school is not in session.
- The audience that should be receiving this information are the farmers and the different branches of government that weren't involved in the first round of the survey
- Suggestions for the future
  - Engage with more ministries in government. I.e. if the focal point for the 2019 survey was the Ministry of Education, future surveys should have sub-sections that go to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, etc. to better capture all of the data and acknowledge that school feeding is an intersection of a lot of different sectors and all of their perspectives are important to capture.
  - As information is disseminated, we should challenge the stigma of processed food. (e.g. processed Pringles are very different than processed millet)

- There needs to be a comprehensive strategy on how to disseminate the data and information to farmers
  - Do the farmers understand the nutritional make up of the food?
- Stakeholders/Implementers need to ensure the data is being used to enhance programs
- Need to create a value add for countries that filled out the survey

Main points, **Policy and Research** Group: Participants from the research field, IFPRI, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, etc.

- This survey provides potential for more research to either further the findings of this survey, fill in the data gaps, or create more focused research on implementation.
  - Group flagged the survey's gap in measuring impact on agriculture
- Data is key for policy. We don't want to oversell data, but we do need evidence to justify claims while advocating for policy changes.
- Potential implementation research
  - How do programs that have policies and programs on paper turn into implementation into realities on the ground?
  - Use a variety of different surveys and studies to verify data and potentially fill the research gap
  - Use data to highlight high and low-income country national school feeding programs. Once we know what programs are thriving, there is an opportunity to transfer and share knowledge. E.g Brazil, the Brazil school meals program has been a model to other programs. Brazil created standards and over time all the schools had to adapt to them.
- The research community should be a focal audience of this survey to build a research agenda.
  - What is important to prioritize from the data and also what should be prioritized research wise for future impact.

- How can National Governments, NGOs, and the Private Sector help to close the gap between policy and implementation?
- Future surveys should focus on whatever data gaps are found to be the most important as a result of further implementation research

Main points, **Implementation** Group: Participants include direct implementers from McGovern-Dole countries and USDA reps

- A key audience of the survey will be advocacy groups. As implementers our goal is to make projects sustainable past the project life and to create sustainable projects advocacy is essential.
- Survey data will enable implementers to compare policies from different countries and can increase peer-to-peer engagement to enact legislation and policy change
- Historically it has been hard to get governments to fund/implement monitoring and evaluation programs, but this survey will pressure them to keep the data so that they can report it every 2-3 years.
- Suggestions for the future include:
  - Engaging further with governments to get their perspective on what research is still needed
  - Creating a wider range of reports that report by region to creating peer to peer accountability, create portfolios by larger regions (i.e. Latin American portfolio), and more de-segregated reports.
  - Spending time to create an advocacy plan that is clear and consumable and contains a specific ask on what is needed from governments

Main points, **Advocacy** Group: Participants include representatives from Share our Strength and GCNF

- Moving forward the execution of this survey could lead to the adoption of a lot of new ideas by participating countries. The process of disseminating the global

survey to ‘focal points’ has helped contacts consider aspects of existing programs that they may not have been previously accounting for (i.e. gardening) and has highlighted opportunities for future growth. It can also help bring attention to disparities between mandatory/non-mandatory fields in the survey

- It is important to think globally around investments at schools: built environment, hygiene, nutrition, etc. Survey data can support a concrete analysis supporting needs assessment and prioritization: where things currently stand and where they need to be
  - Information can be leveraged to engage relevant stakeholders
  - More specific information supports more specific actions
- Key audiences to engage with will be local communities, private sector stakeholders, and other countries
  - Use the data from this survey as a starting point to engage directly with local communities to enact new programs/investment and demonstrate the success of projects over time
  - Survey data can be leveraged to help articulate specific ‘asks’ of the private sector
  - Important to explore opportunities to facilitate the sharing of survey data across countries with similar operating contexts
- For future surveys it could be helpful to gather more information at national state, and/or local levels in order to more fully engage decision makers at all levels

Main points, **Private Sector** Group: Participants include representatives from General Mills, Tetra Laval, and NGOs

- Historically, school feeding programs have been seen as a public sector responsibility, but this survey’s questions around private sector engagement can help establish the idea that the private sector should be engaged with this need
- The survey will help expand knowledge around food waste and pre-package made waste in school feeding programs.

- This can be a key value add from the private sector as it can assist with costs throughout the supply chain as well as increase overall food safety
- Moving forward it will be important to more specifically define what the private sector is as it is a very broad term and can be interpreted in a variety of different ways
- A key audience for this survey will be both private and public sector stakeholders as a challenge historically and moving forward is private to private sector and private to public sector partnerships to enhance school meal programs

Main points, **Health, Nutrition, and Sanitation** Group: Participants include representatives from Ghana, GCNF, private sector, and practitioners

- This survey could leave to a new paradigm in how we address health, nutrition, and sanitation by creating a new structure for collaboration. School feeding addresses all three pillars of development (Health and Nutrition, Agriculture, and Economic Development). No one organization can carry all three of these pillars, but the data that will be generated by this survey will help us identify how best to collaborate and will help other actors understand how their work can improve health, nutrition, and sanitation.
- The primary audience that this data needs to reach is governments and donors. Women already know what we are talking about, but it will be important to move this to governments and donors and allow implementers to direct necessary policy change
- Moving forward it will be important to use this and future surveys to highlight how school feeding programs with a high focus on health, nutrition, and sanitation are linked to improved outcomes and higher return on investment