

APPENDIX 4

Revisiting School Feeding Programs

Objectives of the Tool

The overall objective of this tool is to provide a framework to systematically assess the quality and potential for sustainability of school feeding programs. It introduces a new standard of good practice for quality and sustainability and introduces new benchmarks for current school feeding programs.

The specific objectives of the tool are to:

1. Provide a framework to assess school feeding programs and identify the factors that enhance or decrease their quality
2. Allow the identification of areas that require further attention from the government and stakeholders
3. Guide the design of strategies to tackle specific gaps
4. Provide baseline information that can be used to measure progress toward sustainability goals and serve as the basis for transition strategies
5. Facilitate dialogue between implementing partners and the government.

Description of the Tool

This tool is meant to be used in a participatory and government-led exercise. Ideally, it is an interdisciplinary exercise involving policy, program,

and procurement experts, among others. It is designed to guide in-country, multistakeholder discussions on school feeding and is divided into two main parts, a problem and status analysis and a sustainability assessment. The tool has been used as part of assessments to guide the redesign of existing school feeding programs; to provide a framework for national consultations and workshops among the government and stakeholders; and as a framework for case studies and evaluation exercises. One-, two-, or three-day workshop materials have been produced for this purpose.

The first part addresses the question of where the program is now and comprises a brief analysis of the context, including general poverty, hunger, education, and nutrition statistics, as well as an analysis of the current status of the school feeding program, including coverage, costs, and results. The second part is the main part of the tool and addresses the question of where the program is looking to go. This sustainability assessment is composed of a set of targets and guiding questions to assess the sustainability of the program. The analysis leads to a set of main findings corresponding to each target.

The Tool—Part 1: Where Are We Now? Problem and Status Analysis

Problem Analysis

This brief problem analysis is meant to give a general picture of the context but does not replace the detailed analytical exercise used to design a new school feeding program or to decide whether it is an appropriate intervention. This analysis is not exhaustive and should be geared toward capturing the main problems or issues that are relevant to school feeding from existing documents or analyses.

Guiding questions:

- What is the overall ranking of the country in measures of poverty and human development? How is the country doing in progress toward meeting Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1?
- Are there specific factors that make the country more or less vulnerable (conflict, postconflict, natural disasters, and so forth)?
- Has the country been affected by the food, fuel, or financial crises? If so, in what way has this affected the most vulnerable? How are households coping with the crisis? Is the government taking any measures to respond to the crisis (that is, through social protection programs)?
- What are the main problems of the education sector, particularly primary education? They may be related to increasing enrollment,

narrowing the gender gap, improving completion rates, enhancing the quality of education, and the like. Are there any regional, gender, or socioeconomic differences? How is the country doing in progress toward meeting MDGs 2 and 3?

- Is there a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies or parasite infections among schoolchildren?
- Are there factors that increase children's vulnerability (orphan status, child labor, HIV status, and so forth)?
- What are the main problems of the agriculture sector? They may be related to agricultural production, lack of access to markets, poor postharvest practices, lack of functioning markets, and the like.
- What are the main food crops produced in the country and which regions are the most productive? What is the food processing capacity in the country (especially for fortified foodstuffs that could be used in school feeding)? Are there functioning markets and where are they located?

Status of School Feeding

The aim of this section is to gain an overall understanding of the experience with school feeding to date, the coverage of the program, and its costs. The indicators below should be completed during the assessment.

- *General information on existing school feeding program(s).* Types of school feeding programs in the country and implementing partners. Objectives of the program, coverage of the program (absolute numbers and percentage of total school-age children in country), modalities of food delivered (on-site, take-home, snacks), cost of the program per child per year, funding sources for the current program.
- *Current food basket and nutritional standards.* Type of commodities provided, nutritional value of current rations, procurement arrangements for current rations.
- *Targeting.* Targeting criteria, geographical location of targeted schools (food-secure or food-insecure areas).
- *Current institutional arrangements.* Implementing partners, roles and responsibilities, capacities and challenges of implementing the program (especially from the government's side).
- *Current procurement arrangements.* Identification and description of any existing local production and local procurement arrangement for school feeding.
- *Lessons learned and challenges of current programs.* Analysis of evaluation documents or appraisal documents if available.

The following indicators should be collected:

- Education sector budget (in US\$ and in percentage of the national budget)
- Primary education budget (in US\$ and in percentage of the education sector budget)
- Primary education budget per child per year
- Cost of school feeding per child per year
- Number of children and number of schools covered under school feeding program
- Coverage of school feeding program, expressed as number of targeted children relative to the total number of primary schoolchildren, or the number of schools targeted relative to the total number of schools.
- Percentage of government contribution to the school feeding program.

The Tool—Part 2: Where Do We Want to Go?

Setting the Standards

In general terms, a quality school feeding program has the following in place: (1) a national policy framework, (2) sufficient institutional capacity for implementation and coordination, (3) stable funding, (4) sound design and implementation, and (5) community participation. Each of these quality standards is described below.

National policy frameworks. The degree to which school feeding is articulated in national policy frameworks varies from country to country, but in general, a policy basis for the program helps strengthen its potential for sustainability and the quality of implementation. In all the cases where countries are implementing their own national programs, school feeding is included in national policy frameworks. Indeed, the largest programs have the highest level of politicization, for example, in India where the program is supported by a Supreme Court ruling and in Brazil where it is included in the Constitution.

In many developing countries, school feeding is mentioned in the countries' poverty reduction strategies, often linked to the education, nutrition, or social protection sectors, or in sectoral policies or plans. National planning for school feeding should ensure that the government has identified the most appropriate role for school feeding in its development agenda. With donor harmonization efforts underway, it is increasingly important

that, if made a priority, school feeding is included in sector plans, which form the basis for basket funding or sectorwide approaches that determine the allocation of donor resources.

Institutional framework and coordination. The implementation of a school feeding program is generally the responsibility of a specific government institution or ministry. Best practice suggests that school feeding programs are better implemented if there is an institution that is mandated and accountable for the implementation of such a program. It also has to have adequate resources, managerial skills, staff, knowledge, and technology at the central and subnational levels to correctly implement the program.

Stable funding and planning. Governments plan and budget for their priorities typically on an annual basis based on a national planning process. With a general move toward decentralization, the planning process starts with village-level priority setting, which gets translated into local government (district) development plans. These plans form the basis for budgeting at the national level, making sure there is compliance with the national poverty reduction strategy and sectoral plans. The degree to which school feeding is included in this planning and budgeting process will determine whether the program gets resources from the national budget and whether it benefits from general budget support allocations.

In most countries supported by WFP, funding for the program comes from food assistance channeled through WFP and from government in-kind or cash contributions. As the program becomes a national program, it needs to have a stable funding source independent of WFP. This may be through government core resources or through development funding (sectorwide approaches, basket funds, Fast Track Initiative funding). Stable funding is a prerequisite for sustainability.

Sound design and implementation. School feeding programs should be designed based on a correct assessment of the situation in a particular country. It is important that the program clearly identify the problems, the objectives, and the expected outcomes in a manner that corresponds to the country's specific context. It is also important that the program target the right beneficiaries and choose the right modalities of food delivery and a food basket of the right quality. Complementary actions such as food fortification and deworming should be a standard part of any school feeding program.

School feeding requires a robust implementation arrangement that can procure and deliver large quantities of food to targeted schools, ensure the quality of the food, and manage resources in a transparent way. Countries and partners should carefully balance international, national, and local procurement of food to support local economies without jeopardizing the quality and stability of the food pipeline.

Community participation and ownership. School feeding programs that respond to community needs, are locally owned, and that incorporate some form of parental or community contribution, whether cash payment or in-kind, for example, through donated food or labor, tend to be the strongest programs and the ones most likely to make a successful transition from donor assistance. Programs that build this component in from the beginning and consistently maintain it have the most success.

Assessing the Standards

The following section sets out targets for an effective and sustainable school feeding program and suggests some guiding questions to assess whether the targets are being met.

Standard: Sound policy framework

1. The national-level poverty reduction strategy or equivalent national strategy identifies school feeding as an education or social protection intervention, or both.

Guiding questions:

- Does the country have a national-level poverty reduction strategy or similar policy or document?
- Is school feeding mentioned in the poverty reduction strategy? If so, under which of the sectors is it mentioned? Are there targets to be achieved? Milestones set by the government?

2. Sectoral policies and strategies identify school feeding as an education or social protection intervention (education sector plan, nutrition policy, social protection policy).

Guiding questions:

- Is there an education sector plan? If yes, what are the main goals of the plan?

- Is school feeding mentioned in the education sector plan? What goals does it have? How specific is the education sector plan on school feeding? Does it have targets, time frames, and specifics on the implementation of the program?
- Is there any other macro-level policy that mentions school feeding? Examples may be the national nutrition policy, the social protection policy, or other standards and guidelines for education and training.
- If school feeding is mentioned in any of these, what are the objectives stated for school feeding? Do they differ from those in the poverty reduction strategy or in the education sector plan?

3. There is a specific policy related to school feeding or school health and nutrition that specifies the objectives, rationale, scope, design, and funding of the program.

Guiding questions:

- Is there a school health and nutrition policy? If yes, does it mention school feeding? What are the objectives of the program under the policy? Does this policy state who is responsible for its implementation and the scope of the program?
- Is there a specific national school feeding policy? Do the objectives of school feeding correspond to those stated in the policy frameworks analyzed above? Does the policy specify the design of the program, targeted beneficiaries, scope, implementation requirements, and responsibilities and funding arrangements?

Standard: Strong institutional structure and coordination

1. There is a national institution mandated with the implementation of school feeding.

Guiding questions:

- Is there a specific ministry or institution with the mandate of managing and implementing school feeding?
- If it is not the Ministry of Education, does that institution have appropriate contact and communication with the Ministry of Education?

2. There is a specific unit in charge of the overall management of school feeding within the lead institution at the central level and that unit has sufficient staff, resources, and knowledge.

Guiding questions:

- Does the responsible unit in charge of implementing school feeding have a sufficient amount of staff? Are they working full time or part time on school feeding?
- Does the unit have enough resources to manage the program and to travel periodically on monitoring visits and the like?
- Is the unit's role proactive, in the sense that staff actively plan and make decisions for the program, or reactive in the sense that they mostly follow partners in planning for the program?
- How often does the unit meet with partners? Are meetings convened by the national implementation unit or by partners?
- Does the unit have staff that are trained and knowledgeable on school feeding issues?
- How is information about the program stored, analyzed, and managed? Is there a proper information management system in place for school feeding at the central level?
- How good is communication between the central and the local level for the implementation of the program? Does the unit in charge of implementation have direct information on the program or does it rely on external support?

3. There is an operational intersectoral coordination mechanism in place that involves all stakeholders and partners of the institution.

Guiding questions:

- Is school feeding discussed in any national-level coordination body (technical working group, task force, or the like) that deals with school, health, agriculture, and nutrition issues, or quality issues, or special cross-cutting issues? If so, how often does this body meet? Do partners participate in this group?
- Does this group have a work plan or a regular list of tasks that it reports on? Is school feeding included in this work plan?
- Is there a national-level coordination body specifically for school feeding, led by the institution in charge of school feeding, that is operational and brings all stakeholders together regularly? Does it have a work plan or a set of targets or objectives?
- How often does it meet? Are meetings convened by the implementation unit or by partners?
- Is this coordination mechanism effective in making decisions for the program?

4. There are adequate staff and resources for oversight at the regional level.

Guiding questions:

- What is the responsibility of the regions related to school feeding?
- Do regional offices have sufficient staff and resources to fulfill their responsibilities?

5. There are adequate staff and resources for design and implementation at the district level.

Guiding questions:

- At the district or subnational level, who is involved in the implementation of the school feeding program? Are there specific staff assigned to the implementation of the program? What are their responsibilities and roles?
- Is there adequate infrastructure at the district level to perform the assigned tasks and responsibilities (computers, office space, cars, fuel, and so forth)?
- How is information about the program being captured at the district or subnational level? Is there an information management system in place at the district or subnational level?
- Do staff have sufficient skills and knowledge about the implementation of a school feeding program? What specific skills should be strengthened? Which ones could be further utilized?

6. There are adequate staff, resources, and infrastructure for implementation at the school level.

Guiding questions:

- Are there clear implementation arrangements at the school level? Do these rely mostly on the teachers or do they also include parents and the community?
- Are the people responsible for implementation trained on the management of the program (management and storage of food, entitlements, and reporting requirements)?
- Is there adequate storage capacity at the school level?

Standard: Stable funding and planning

1. School feeding is institutionalized within the national planning and budgeting process.

Guiding questions:

- How do yearly priorities and resources within the government get decided and budgeted for? How does the national planning cycle work? Is school feeding included in the national planning process?
- How advanced is the decentralization process in the country? Do districts have the capacity to plan and budget their needs and request resources from the central level?
- If so, is school feeding included in district-level development plans? Do districts have a budget for school feeding?
- If the decentralization process goes down to the village level (where villages set their yearly priorities and plans), is school feeding included as one of the priorities at the village level?
- Overall, how embedded is school feeding in national- and local-level planning and budgeting processes?

2. There is a budget line for school feeding and national funds from the government or from donors that cover the needs of the program.

Guiding questions:

- Does the government have provisions in the national budget to allocate resources to school feeding at the moment? If the government allocates resources, how much are they as a percentage of the total program requirement? What are these funds for (food, monitoring and evaluation, management, and so forth)?
- Is the government allocating a significant amount of resources to the program, or is it mostly funded by partners?
- Has the government progressively increased the amount of resources allocated to school feeding or has it been static in its contributions?
- Have there been conversations with partners on a possible government increase in financial responsibility?
- Is school feeding part of a sectorwide approach or a basket fund of the education, social protection, or agriculture sectors? Are there any donors financing the program through one of these mechanisms (for example, the World Bank)? If so, how much of the program is covered under these funding arrangements?
- Has the government received funds from the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative for school feeding?
- Overall, what is the capacity of the government to finance the program? Are there any potential donors that could be approached?
- How is the government planning to finance the program in the future?

Standard: Sound design and implementation

1. The program has appropriate objectives corresponding to the context and the policy framework.

Guiding questions:

- Are the objectives of the school feeding program coherent with the problem analysis? Are these objectives realistic taking into consideration the situation of the country?
- Do the objectives of the school feeding program match with the problem analysis and with the policy framework of the country? Are they the same as those stated in the poverty reduction strategy, in the education sector plan, and the social protection policy?

2. Program design identifies appropriate target groups and targeting criteria corresponding to the objectives of the program and the context.

Guiding questions:

- Are there explicit geographical targeting criteria and a proper targeting methodology that is consistent with the programs' objectives?
- Where are the schools located (food-secure or food-insecure areas)?

3. Program has appropriate food modalities and food basket corresponding to the context, the objectives, the local habits and tastes, the availability of local food, and the nutritional content requirements (demand-side considerations).

Guiding questions:

- Have the food modalities (on-site meals, snacks, take-home rations) been chosen based on the objectives of the program, the duration of the school day, and the feasibility of implementation?
- Are the commodities in the food basket locally or internationally purchased? Could more of the commodities be purchased locally?
- Are elements of the food basket not available in the country (for example, corn-soya blend in some countries)? If so, why were they chosen?
- What are foods currently produced in the country (and normally used by the population) that would be appropriate for school feeding? Are there locally processed foods or local businesses that might be able to supply food for the program?

- Could the food basket be modified to include more local food without sacrificing the nutritional content? Food basket should be compliant with national nutritional standards and food safety standards.
- How can local processing and fortification be included in the food supply chain? Is there capacity in the country?
- Would food basket modifications require extensive cooking or processing at the school or local level? Would this lead to environmental damage (fuel, fire wood, or the like)? Identify possible strategies to mitigate the environmental effects.
- What is the approximate demand of the school feeding program for local and regional foodstuffs (in total for the year, for the month, and per child per month)?

4. Procurement and logistics arrangements are based on procuring as locally as possible, as often as possible, taking into account the costs, the capacities of implementing parties, the production capacity in the country, the quality of the food, and the stability of the pipeline (supply and procurement considerations).

Procuring as locally as possible depends on whether the program relies on in-kind or cash contributions, whether the elements in the food basket are available locally, and whether production and markets in the country are sufficient to guarantee the supply and the quality.

Guiding questions:

- What are the main food crops and seasons, and where are the food-producing areas, including historic levels of production, and areas of regular food deficit?
- What are the major risks associated with crop failure (weather, economic shocks, and so forth) and existing risk mitigation mechanisms?
- If the school feeding program could be sourced locally, what type of risk management activities could be put in place to avoid jeopardizing the stability of the food pipeline?
- What are the main constraints in the country for agricultural productivity and how can these be tackled?
- Has there been an attempt at procuring more food locally? If so, what were the advantages, challenges, and constraints in procuring locally? Could these problems be solved by putting in place specific strategies to tackle them so that more food can be purchased locally?
- Have there been discussions with the government on possible procurement modalities for school feeding that can be more locally

appropriate, including the possibility of linking procurement with agriculture-related activities (that is, local-level support to small-scale farmers)?

- Has the Ministry of Agriculture been involved or contacted to make the connection between school feeding and national agricultural production? How can the agriculture sector be more involved in procurement for school feeding?
- Has the private sector been involved or could it be involved in making the connection between the farmers and market mechanisms (warehouses, associations, co-ops, and so forth)?
- At the local level, are the requirements for the school feeding program communicated to the agriculture sector so that more crops are grown for the program?
- What type of community structures, businesses, or efforts could be tapped into for processing or sourcing the food for the program?
- What would it take to buy the bulk of food requirements for the program? What type of systems or arrangements would be necessary to buy locally?
- Have there been any discussions on linking WFP's recent Purchase for Progress activities with the school feeding program? Purchase for Progress assessments could be used as the basis for school feeding procurement, or measures could be taken to support local markets, local processing capacity, or small-scale farmer associations.
- If the school feeding program could be sourced locally, how would the quality of the food be affected?
- If the school feeding program could be sourced locally, how would the costs of the program be affected?

5. There is appropriate calibration of demand and supply, establishing what percentage of food demanded by the program can be sourced locally.

In developing home-grown school feeding programs, especially in the early stages, it is important to sustain and protect the existing food pipeline by maintaining current procurement practices (including food aid or purchases at the international, regional, or national levels), while beginning to test new procurement schemes that favor or support locally produced food. Thus, the bulk of the requirements of the school feeding program should still be sourced by traditional mechanisms, while a proportion of the current total demand of food for the program can be sourced locally. This is important to make sure the

program is not jeopardized, to allow time to learn and manage a complex activity such as procuring locally, and to avoid excessive market interferences that could generate problems for the program and for local capacity (small farmers, local businesses, and others). Local procurement can then progressively increase as the program evolves and mechanisms are put in place to guarantee the stability, nutritional content, and safety of the food.

Guiding questions:

- What percentage of the total food requirements of the program can be sourced from small-scale farmer associations, community groups, or local businesses?
- What percentage of the total food requirements can be sourced from food aid in-kind, or international or regional procurement?
- What type of procurement and supply interventions or initiatives will be started to test a more local approach?
- What are the main risks of shifting to locally produced food and how will they be mitigated during the initial stages?

6. There is a functioning monitoring and evaluation system in place that forms part of the structure of the lead institution and is used for implementation and feedback.

Guiding questions:

- Is there a monitoring and evaluation plan for the school feeding program? Does the plan include data collection, analysis, reporting, feedback, indicators, guidelines, and tools?
- Who is involved in monitoring the program? Does the government at national and local levels have the capacity to monitor or does it rely on external support? Where do the periodic monitoring reports originate, at the government side and then get shared with external partners, or at the external partner side and then get shared with the government?
- Is the monitoring plan integrated into national education sector monitoring systems or information management systems and in subnational systems?
- Is there a budget for the monitoring and evaluation plan?
- Are there any problems monitoring outputs (food, nonfood items, and so forth)?
- Are there any problems monitoring outcomes (enrollment, attendance, and other measures)?

- How frequently are reports produced for the program?
- Is there a baseline for the program? Mid-term or end-of-term evaluation?
- How is information from the evaluations disseminated and translated into action or decisions?
- Is the information on the program reported at any national or local-level coordination mechanism (working group, task force, or other organization)?

***Standard: Strong community participation and ownership
(parents, children)***

1. The community has been involved in the design of the program.

Guiding questions:

- Has the community been consulted in the design of the program?
- Has the community included school feeding as one of the priorities in village development plans?
- Are there any community-level structures that are used to establish communication (village councils, traditional authority structures, village elders, and the like)?
- Has the community been consulted on possible challenges to meeting the minimum requirements for school feeding and supported with strategies to overcome the challenges?
- Has the community been involved in deciding which products are provided in the food basket? If the community was more involved, would there be the possibility of mapping local-level businesses, processing capacity, and food production capacity to analyze the food basket of the program and the possibility of sourcing it locally?

2. The community is involved in the implementation of the program.

Guiding questions:

- Is there a canteen or food management committee comprising representatives of parents, teachers, and students?
- Does this committee act as an interface between the community and the school, manage and monitor the school feeding program, and ensure good utilization of the food in the school?
- Do implementation arrangements avoid putting too much pressure and burden on teachers?
- Are community implementation arrangements efficient enough to not take up teaching or class time during school hours?

- Do implementation arrangements explicitly avoid involving children in the cooking or management of the food (especially girls)?

3. The community contributes (to the extent possible) resources (cash, in-kind) to the program.

Guiding questions:

- Does the community contribute to pay the cooks or provide the firewood used in cooking?
- Does the community contribute food in-kind for the program to be given to children?
- Does the community contribute cash resources for the program?
- Overall, how significant is the community's contribution? Is it within households' means or is it burdening them excessively? What other contributions could they make that do not burden them?