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EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 7

For consideration

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SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OF THE IMPACT EVALUATION OF WFP SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN KENYA (1999–2008)

A Mixed-Methods Approach

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation provides the WFP country office and partners with evidence of past results as a basis for strengthening the programme in the future. It also provides lessons to inform the strategy and roll-out of the new school feeding policy.

Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the evaluation found that enrolment, attendance and completion rates were higher in primary schools where school meals were provided. A higher percentage of these children also moved on to secondary school and scored better on primary finishing exams. However, school meals do not reverse the significant attrition rate in primary school as students approach puberty, especially among girls in pastoralist communities. Gender parity objectives are being achieved on enrolment and attendance, but not in completion rates. Gender parity results cannot be solely attributed to school meals, because of the serious non-food constraints to girls' education. In general, educational outcomes and impacts are more positive in urban schools than rural ones.

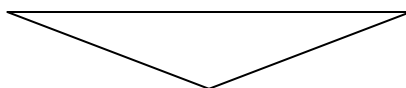
School feeding makes a significant, positive contribution to reducing hunger and enhancing nutritional intake. But it does not compensate for inadequate dietary intake at home, especially when households prepare less food because the child receives a school meal. School feeding also provides a variety of safety-net effects, including a direct benefit to household income, freeing up time that is used to expand income-earning activities. More indirectly, children who have graduated and established stable livelihoods provide assistance to their stem household.

Over the last ten years, WFP in partnership with the Government of Kenya and non-governmental organization counterparts, has implemented its school feeding programme with overall effectiveness and efficiency. It has targeted the most vulnerable populations, developed effective partnerships and systematically adjusted the scope of its operations to meet changing needs and circumstances in a timely fashion. The programme is coherent with government priorities in the education and health sectors.

School meals play a major role in attracting children to school and exposing them to learning. The evaluation calls this the "magnet effect". If the school environment is conducive, a "catalyst effect" can occur, motivating a child to stay in school. For many children, their increased value to the household and cultural pressures at puberty become greater than the direct value of school meals. Those who pursue education often do so because of some other basis of support, an "enabling effect": the quality of the school environment, parental involvement and relative costs of school attendance to households are crucial factors.

The evaluation concludes that the beneficial impacts of school feeding are limited if it is extracted from the larger context. The value of food in school meals can be significantly increased through inter-institutional, cross-sectoral cooperation to incorporate other interventions that mitigate the economic, social and cultural constraints to health and education. The evaluation team recommends that WFP build upon important steps taken by the Government of Kenya to reach this goal.

DRAFT DECISION*



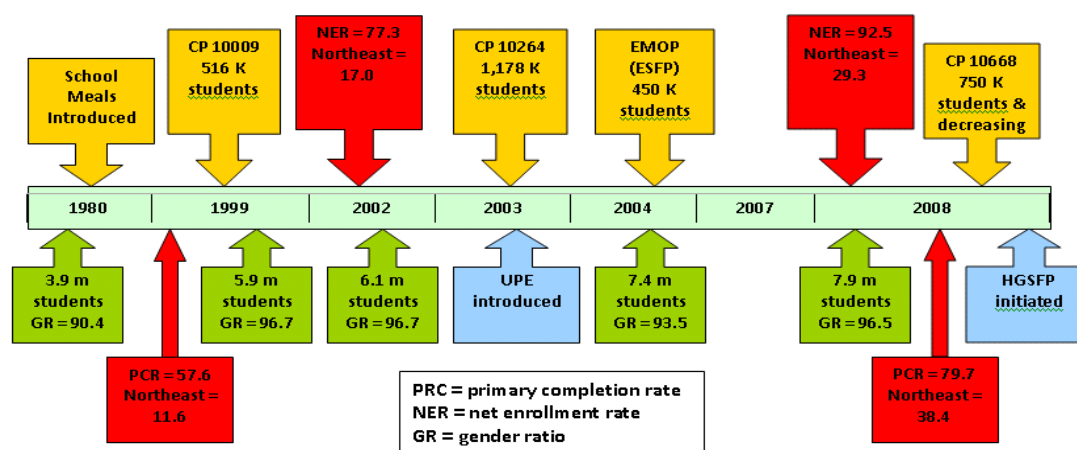
The Board takes note of “Summary Evaluation Report of the Impact Evaluation of WFP School Feeding Programmes in Kenya (1999–2008) – A Mixed-Methods Approach” (WFP/EB.A/2010/7-D) and the management response in WFP/EB.A/2010/7-D/Add.1 and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

INTRODUCTION

1. This evaluation covers a ten-year period of WFP-assisted school feeding in Kenya. Kenya has one of the largest and most long-standing of WFP's school feeding programmes. It ranks 147th out of 179 on the 2009 human development index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which places it toward the bottom of the middle-income class of countries. Kenya is an oil-importing, food-deficit country with an average per capita income of US\$680 according to the World Bank's 2009 estimate. The country imports 20 percent of its cereal needs. Although 80 percent of its almost 40 million people live in rural areas, most of the land is not suitable for rain-fed agriculture and is subject to severe drought. The largest pockets of vulnerability are concentrated in regions with arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), which account for two thirds of the total land mass.
2. Although WFP-assisted school feeding began in 1980, it has grown significantly over the last decade (see Figure 1 below). The expansion of school meals in Kenya is a result of the increased frequency of food crises resulting from drought and political violence, and the introduction of free compulsory primary education for all children in 2003. The three school feeding activities under review are: country programme (CP) 10009 for 1999–2003; CP 10264 for 2004–2008 and the school feeding components of emergency operation (EMOP) activities during 2004–2007. WFP-assisted school meals target all schools in arid lands, the most vulnerable schools in semi-arid lands and urban slums in Nairobi and Mombassa.
3. The goals of WFP's school feeding programme in Kenya are consistent with national priorities and policies that emphasize universal primary education and school health and nutrition.

Figure 1: Historical Timeline of School Feeding in Kenya



OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

4. The objectives of this evaluation were to:
 - i) evaluate the outcomes and impacts achieved so far in relation to stated educational, gender and nutritional objectives;
 - ii) evaluate outcomes and impacts achieved in relation to WFP's new social safety net objectives (although these were not explicitly included in the programme design), and assess the extent to which the programme already has the potential to meet government and WFP policy objectives concerning social safety nets and nutrition; and
 - iii) identify changes needed to meet government objectives and those of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2013) and proposed school feeding policy.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

5. The methods of this evaluation combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component is based on a survey conducted in ASAL districts and in Nairobi's slum areas. The survey sample was 68 schools selected randomly from all those in the programme, 1,352 households randomly selected from enrolment lists in these schools (approximately 20 per school) and 1,341 primary-school students (normally one from each household). Separate questionnaires were applied to each sample. Data was collected from each school on infrastructure, staff, enrolment and attendance, exam scores, school feeding activities and parental involvement in the school. From households, data was collected on livelihood profiles, health and consumption, income and educational patterns. Individual students provided data on diet and consumption using a 24-hour recall.
6. In the absence of baseline data prior to the introduction of school feeding, a control group was assembled from randomly selected schools in the semi-arid districts that had offered only occasional or no school meals over the previous two school terms. The outcome indicators were compared between the schools with mostly uninterrupted school feeding and those with intermittent or no school meals for the first two terms of 2009. The control schools, once assisted by WFP, had been handed over to the Government in 2008 to be included in its Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP). Government support did not begin in full, however, until July 2009.
7. The quantitative analysis draws comparisons across the intervention and control schools, across agro-ecological zones (urban schools, government-assisted semi-arid schools, WFP-assisted semi-arid schools and arid schools), and across three vulnerability groups created using principal component analysis. The vulnerability comparisons apply only to the household-level data and not to the school data.
8. The evaluation's qualitative component employed a participatory impact assessment method with 16 of the sampled schools. This was a purposive sample drawn from different arid, semi-arid and urban areas, including control-group schools. The evaluation team spent two days at each school conducting participatory sessions with students, parents (some of whom were school management committee (SMC) members), staff, community leaders and parents who did not send their children to school. In addition, past school feeding beneficiaries were interviewed at length to better understand the relationship

between school meals and success in later life. Their accounts of the impact of school meals on individual lives are referred to as “tracer studies”.

RESULTS: EDUCATIONAL AND LEARNING

9. Based on both the quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis shows that school meals have a significant positive effect on such indicators as attendance rates, primary completion rates, continuation to secondary school and exam scores. Enrolment and attendance rates were higher, particularly in the early grades, in those schools that offered school meals. The primary completion rate was also higher, especially for girls, in such schools. In addition, a higher percentage of children from primary schools that offered meals moved onto secondary school after graduating. With regard to learning indicators, the children in schools with regular meals scored higher on their last exams, and a greater share of eighth-grade students scored over 300 on their finishing exams. Educational outcomes were more positive in urban areas than in semi-arid and arid areas.
10. School meals do not reverse a major negative trend in educational outcomes, however. There is a significant attrition rate in primary school, which is more marked for girls in rural schools, as students approach puberty. In schools in arid and pastoralist semi-arid areas, most students do not finish primary school; among those who do finish, few move on to secondary school.

RESULTS: NUTRITION

11. Based on qualitative interviews and analysis of 24-hour diet recall, the evaluation found a significant and positive contribution of school meals to reducing hunger and improving nutritional intake. The nutritional analysis assessed the value of school meals in meeting the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of energy, protein, Vitamin A, iron and iodine. Less than 10 percent of children had consumed the RDA of the target nutrients (except Vitamin A) during the previous day. School lunches accounted for more than half of the RDA attained by 40 percent of students. Qualitative studies reinforced the finding that school lunches provide the largest meal of the day for many children, and in frequent cases the only meal. School staff and parents also noted that regular school meals improved children’s health, reduced the incidence of illness, and increased the attentiveness and interest of students in the classroom. While school meals provide important access to nutritious food, they do not compensate for inadequate dietary intake at home, especially among poor rural children. This finding is further supported by evidence that many households prepare less food at home when a child receives a meal at school.

RESULTS: SAFETY NETS

12. The evaluation analysis determined that school meals provide multiple safety nets. One of their most direct benefits to households is economic: in terms of cash savings through reduced food purchase, school feeding represents between 4 percent and 9 percent of annual household income. School lunches also encourage parents to leave their children in school for the entire day, which frees up time that almost 30 percent of households (or even more in urban areas) use for income-earning activities. The tracer studies demonstrate that when children graduate from school and obtain stable livelihoods, there is a strong pattern of reverse assistance to the stem households, a deeply rooted commitment widely

acknowledged by household members. In addition, to the extent that school feeding improves completion rates, there is an important – albeit hard-to-measure – impact on well-being.

HOW DOES SCHOOL FEEDING CREATE RESULTS?

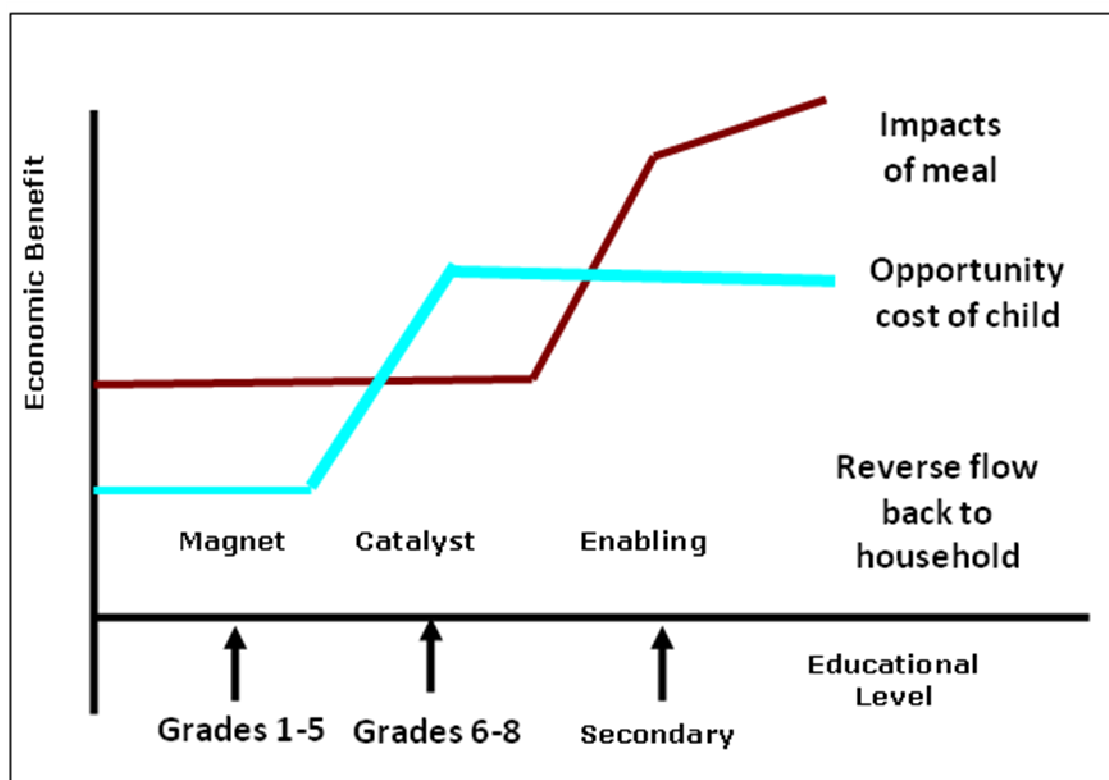
13. In the context of the overall success of the school feeding programme over the study period, there are areas where implementation might be improved.
14. The absence of some elements of the essential package impedes the expected results. This evaluation found that the physical and learning environments of the school are critical complements to the school meal. Where these environments are deficient, the health and learning outcomes of school meals are reduced. Elements of the essential package that require urgent attention include water and sanitation infrastructure in the schools. There is a widespread lack of potable water, washing facilities and adequate latrines. Water is particularly critical since sometimes food is not prepared because of insufficient water, and the provision of water has fallen to students and parents. More permanent solutions to the water crisis are urgently needed.
15. Another priority element of the essential package is the use of fuel-efficient cooking facilities in sheltered structures. Currently, parents are responsible for providing firewood and, as in the case of water, this task is often relegated to the children. In addition, more attention is needed to general nutrition and health. Although present in some school syllabi, health education is not adequately or systematically delivered to students or parents. The integration of these essential package elements requires a much greater level of institutional collaboration than WFP has been able to mobilize in the past.
16. Two other factors constraining the success of school feeding in primary schools are the quality of the learning environment and the support of parents and communities to education. In those schools with meals, the overall student population is higher, as is classroom size and the student–teacher ratio. However, the lack of teacher time, study spaces and school materials diminishes the likelihood that students will gain an appreciation of learning and achieve higher educational outcomes.
17. In addition, the level of parental involvement in schools and in the education of their children is not adequate. The Ministry of Education’s current policy gives SMCs the responsibility of, among other things, supervising several aspects of school feeding. But SMCs in the schools visited do not systematically promote community participation other than exacting support such as financial contributions, firewood, water or labour from parents. In most of the schools visited, the school is perceived as government (or church) property and not as a community asset. Experience elsewhere indicates that schools can become platforms for broader community development, which helps to overcome the separation of school from home and decrease cultural tensions. For example, schools can be centres of learning for all community members, providing adult education and technical training for farmers and pastoralists.
18. Interventions such as the essential package and HGSFP represent a step towards making schools become community assets. The gradual expansion of the Government’s HGSFP is also the key to WFP’s sustainability strategy for school feeding. The success of the HGSFP, however, depends upon an increased level of intersectoral collaboration. The required cooperation among government ministries necessary for this programme to generate community development is still poorly defined, and WFP’s support is needed for this.

19. Although WFP is not responsible for the design or management of the HGSFP, it is committed to building government capacity and can play an active role in a school-based development approach. For example, many ASAL districts have not yet developed the productive capacity to supply food for school meals, and therefore cannot take full advantage of the programme. WFP could support the Ministry of Education during the transition period by compensating for food shortages (or potential market distortions) with a food-bank option until the districts develop an adequate procurement infrastructure.
20. There is great variability among schools of factors that affect the programme's effectiveness. For example, the team found discrepancies in the number of meal days programmed by schools and the number reported, particularly in semi-arid districts assisted by WFP. Portion sizes were also considered inadequate at certain schools – perhaps because of limited food supplies – and children were often obliged to provide water and firewood.
21. Such challenges are to be expected in complex programmes in difficult environments, and WFP field staff were found to be in general highly skilled and dedicated. However, the current focus of monitoring is on food management, including delivery, storage, preparation, and distribution. When problems are encountered, they are identified after they occur and reported to Nairobi. Factors constraining the effectiveness of school feeding could be monitored more systematically and in a more timely fashion.

THE IMPACT CHAIN

22. An impact chain is used to describe the dynamic relationship between school meals and improved livelihoods (see Figure 2 below). School meals alone are not sufficient to result in healthy, educated children which is WFP's overall objective; household decision-making is also fundamental. In the analysis, it was clear that school meals play a major role in attracting children to school where they are exposed to learning. Children come to school because food is available, especially at an early age. The evaluation calls this the “magnet effect”. If the school environment is conducive, then a “catalyst effect” can occur: students acquire a love of learning and begin to perceive optional pathways in life. School meals are not sufficient to trigger the catalyst effect: adequate infrastructure and a nurturing learning environment must also be present. As a child approaches puberty, his or her value to the household becomes significantly greater than the direct value of school meals, and there are economic and cultural pressures for a child to abandon education. Children who pursue secondary education often do so because of a supportive family or community environment, or because of the intercession of a “well-wisher” such as an educated sibling, non-governmental organization (NGO) or other basis of support. This “enabling effect” involves school feeding only to the extent that a school feeding programme can be designed to overcome economic and cultural constraints.

Figure 2: The Benefits of School Feeding along the Impact Chain



CONCLUSIONS

23. Over the last ten years, WFP in partnership with the Government of Kenya and NGO counterparts, has implemented its school feeding programme with overall effectiveness and efficiency. It has targeted the most vulnerable populations, developed effective partnerships with the Government at both the national and local levels, and systematically adjusted the scope of its operations to meet changing needs and circumstances in a timely fashion. The programme is coherent with government priorities in the education and health sectors.
24. Overall, the gender-parity objectives of the WFP country programmes are being achieved in terms of enrolment and attendance, but not in terms of completion rates. This result cannot be solely attributed to the presence of school feeding because of the many constraints to girls' education.
25. The evaluation concluded that the benefits of school feeding are limited if separated from the larger context of learning, health and livelihoods. School feeding without an appropriate learning environment and family or community support is a weak intervention, and its impacts are restricted. In order to justify investments and meet objectives, the school feeding programme must incorporate other interventions to reduce the economic, social and cultural constraints to education and health. Inter-institutional cooperation can greatly increase the value of food in school meals.
26. A comprehensive approach involving cross-sector, inter-agency collaboration is necessary to maximize the gains of school feeding. The Government of Kenya has made an important step in this direction by integrating improved health practices into the school context and by introducing the HGSFP. These early successes should encourage even more

ambitious institutional dialogue and creative programming to maximize the impacts of school meals. Because of its extensive experience in Kenya, WFP is well positioned to contribute significantly to this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommendations within the Purview of WFP

27. **Recommendation 1:** The country office should re-orient the monitoring role of its field staff. The evaluation team recommends reorienting to a system that monitors indicators that limit school meal effectiveness, such as lack of firewood and water or the burden of providing them, student–teacher ratios, student–classroom ratios, sudden changes in enrolment (for example due to violence) and deterioration of physical infrastructure. The country office should analyse these indicators to anticipate when problems are likely to occur, and in which schools, in order to develop proper response strategies and share information with other development actors.
28. **Recommendation 2:** The country office should consider piloting a fortified biscuit intervention in the morning in the particularly vulnerable ASAL schools. Qualitative evidence suggests that half the children surveyed come to school hungry; children need energy at the beginning of the day in order to learn. While many parents are not able to provide breakfast, a fortified snack could provide the needed energy. This intervention could be implemented on a pilot basis, targeting a limited number of the most vulnerable ASAL schools. The results of this initiative should be rigorously evaluated with a control and baseline
29. **Recommendation 3:** The country office and partners should initiate an advocacy campaign in which graduates from participating communities support scholarships in recognized secondary schools for girls with high potential. One of the major constraints to girls' education is the cultural dissonance between a traditional pathway and an education pathway. WFP and its partners could address this constraint through a province-wide scholarship programme that builds upon private individual and community contributions. Scholarships (and winners) would be widely promoted through the media as a source of community pride. Such programmes not only create the enabling effect discussed in this evaluation, but also help to involve communities in education.
30. **Recommendation 4:** The country office should introduce mentoring programmes to increase the effectiveness of school meals. Currently, there appears to be little opportunity for school administrators, teachers and SMCs to interact. Under this initiative, better-performing schools would share their best practices with poorer-performing schools and create mechanisms of mutual support. An award such as resources to invest in school meals could be presented to a mentor school. Such incentives could stimulate community pride in schools and facilitate the sharing of best practices.
31. **Recommendation 5:** The country office and cooperating partners should integrate food-based activities to improve the school environment and encourage community participation. WFP has a range of food-based activities, which have been used to improve the physical infrastructure of 500 schools. Expanded monitoring of non-food indicators (Recommendation 1) will provide the information needed to develop needs-based activities to improve the school environment (such as fence-building to keep animals out, protection of water sources and construction of dining halls). These activities will also attract community members to schools for training sessions on health and hygiene, animal

husbandry and income-generating activities. NGOs can be engaged to help implement this recommendation.

B. Recommendations that Require Collaboration between Institutions and Partnerships

32. The team acknowledges that WFP has a food mandate and recognizes that institutional cooperation is challenging. But health and education needs cannot be met with food alone and the recommendations below cannot be implemented by WFP alone. The recommendations require an integrated approach involving government agencies and others and are offered as programming options in the light of the Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and the new school feeding policy.
33. **Recommendation 6:** As a priority within the Essential Package, develop a school water strategy in collaboration with the Government, other United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors. The lack of potable water is a major constraint for most schools in ASAL districts, and a major deterrent to achieving results from school feeding. Water scarcity is often seasonal and related to droughts. Based on field-monitoring information (Recommendation 1), WFP can identify the water constraints in each school. In collaboration with the Government and other development partners (such as the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme and the Child Friendly Schools initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), a water improvement plan can be created as a blueprint to present to donors. Alternative food-based initiatives can be used to implement water-improvement projects.
34. **Recommendation 7:** WFP should develop comprehensive strategies to maximize the development impacts of school feeding. (This is the main programmatic recommendation of this evaluation.) School feeding alone has limited value, but if combined with other interventions that address constraints to education and health, the power of school meals can increase dramatically. This means that school feeding should not be programmed in isolation. As in the very effective food security working groups, WFP could advocate for expanding the mandate of existing working groups such as the School Nutrition Health and Meals group in the Ministry of Education or integrate new members from relevant agencies. A precedent for such collaboration exists in the new Ministry of Education/Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation integrated model. This group would be responsible for ensuring a comprehensive approach to school feeding with complementary interventions designed to meet specific needs.
- **Recommendation 7a:** The expanded working group should first propose a needs assessment of all primary schools in the country, beginning in ASAL and urban slums, taking advantage of the Kenya Educational Sector Support Programme (KESSP) II to do so. This inter-sectoral needs assessment should build upon the current educational management information system database and identify indicators not only of enrolment and attendance, but also of school infrastructure, teacher–student ratio, student–latrine ratio, water availability, kitchen and eating facilities, and other factors influencing the learning environment (see Recommendation 6 for water). This assessment – available to all stakeholders – would form the basis of an integrated approach to health and education through school feeding. It would also create a baseline for future assessment of KESSP progress.
 - **Recommendation 7b:** The working group should go on to enhance the status of schools within communities using school feeding. Food brings children to school, and can also be used to bring parents and other community members to school. The true

potential of food lies in its magnet effect, and the gathering of parents and other community members at schools would provide an important opportunity for learning and sharing information. This approach has been successful in Afghanistan, where schools are centres for adult literacy and gender leadership courses; in Brazil, where farmer associations have produced food for school meals; in Honduras, where mothers prepare food and distribute it to students; and in Sierra Leone, where food monitors deliver HIV/AIDS awareness messages to parents and teachers.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ASAL	arid and semi-arid land
CP	country programme
EMOP	emergency operation
HGSFP	Home-Grown School Feeding Programme
KESSP	Kenya Educational Sector Support Programme
NGO	non-governmental organization
RDA	recommended daily allowance
SMC	school management committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene