

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
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NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL FEEDING POLICY

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FOREWORD

School Feeding has been an integral part of the government's strategy to address children's hunger during the school day and expand access to educational opportunities to disadvantaged children, particularly orphans and vulnerable school learners.

The school feeding program is an effective mechanism for addressing child nutrition issues, increasing educational enrolment, retention and performance. The program also provides an income-generation, employment creation and economic integration benefits to communities in which it is implemented. The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has a crucial role to play in coordinating efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the school feeding programme. However, this implies institutional strengthening of school feeding at the national, regional and district levels. It also implies vigorous change management processes and capacity-building amongst stakeholders.

The efforts to address its challenges include addressing its public image, strengthening financial management, human resource capacity, procurement governance, monitoring and evaluation which have to be integrated into a holistic and focused accountability. It is in this regard, that a comprehensive policy on school feeding is necessary to assist the country to organize and deliver the programme in ways that would provide optimum benefits.

The goal of the School Feeding Policy is to deliver a well-organized, decentralized intervention providing school going children with nutritionally adequate, locally produced food thereby reducing poverty through improved household incomes and effective local economic development. The policy goes further to suggest ways the MINEDUC and other stakeholders can improve the implementation of the National Comprehensive School Feeding Policy (NCSFP). The school Feeding Policy calls government ministries, development partners, civil society, and private sector for their continued support to the NCSFP. Your valuable support is a demonstration of the commitment the Government has towards strengthening the Rwanda school feeding programme.

I call upon our development partners and stakeholders to join hands with the MINEDUC to address inefficiencies that limit the programme from realizing its potential.

MINEDUC will therefore continue to support efforts aimed at strengthening the school feeding programme in Rwanda so that it could contribute to the realization of the international and National Development Goals.

Dr. Eugene MUTIMURA
Minister of Education

ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Development Programme
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FRESH	Focusing Resources of Effective School Health
GCNF	Global Child Nutrition Forum
GoR	Government of Rwanda
HGSF	Home Grown School Feeding programme
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINEMA	Ministry in charge of Emergency Management
MINISANTE	Ministry of Health
NCSFP	National Comprehensive School Feeding Policy
NECDP	National Early Childhood Development Programme
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NST1	National Strategy for Transformation
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable children
RAB	Rwanda Agricultural Board
REB	Rwanda Education Board
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGA	School General Assembly
SHP	School Health Policy
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young children affected by food and nutrition insecurity have challenges in both physical and mental development that are irreversible, leading to poorer health status, stunting, lower educational achievement, and lower productivity throughout their lives. A hungry child cannot grow, cannot learn, and faces many health risks in their future.

To ensure children develop their full potential and become productive citizens, the Government of Rwanda has developed a comprehensive School Feeding Policy and Strategic plan, with recommended policy actions in 6 key areas: (1) scaling up the coverage of school feeding programmes; (2) ensuring health and nutrition sensitive school feeding programming; (3) promoting school gardening and farming; (4) securing sustainable financing for school feeding programmes; (5) creating appropriate policies and frameworks linking market access to farm produce by local farmers to the school feeding programme; and (6) partnerships, multi sectoral coordination, collaboration and shared responsibility in the management of school feeding programmes.

The School Feeding Policy is within the scope of sector policies and international, regional and national strategies. The proposed actions are aligned and contribute to the achievement of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1-7YGP), Vision 2020, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2018/19-2023/24), the National School Health Policy (SHP), the Multi-Sector Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition, and Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 4.

The policy proposes to achieve the vision that “all school children in Rwanda shall achieve their full development potential through a sustainable school feeding programme that provides adequate and nutritious meals at school”. In order to achieve this vision, the policy recommends a school feeding programme that provides nutritionally sufficient food, complemented by health and nutritional interventions to all school children. The policy requires that all locally available food be procured from local farmers in the country, thus creating a stable and predictable market for farmers. To enhance productivity, a capacity development component for parents, teachers, students and local farmers on food production, post-harvest loss reduction, processing, storage, quality, safety and preparation has been incorporated.

The policy emphasizes multi-sectoral collaboration specifically by education, agriculture, health, nutrition, etc. On basis of their technical expertise and comparative advantages; partnerships with all stakeholders including the community in order to multiply the school feeding benefits; and coordination of efforts to strengthen consistency and efficiency towards a common goal.

Monitoring and Evaluation systems shall be developed with a view to (i) provide regular information on the implementation of the programme; (ii) detect any malfunctions to identify corrective measures; and (iii) provide feedback on the general outcome of the programmes. A set of indicators have been identified in the strategic plan to measure the progress of implementation within the five year period.

1. ISSUE

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) recognizes the contribution of school feeding programme towards multiple economic development and poverty reduction goals and objectives. School feeding forms part of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) II, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), the National School Health Policy (SHP) and the Multi-Sector Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition. School feeding is also recognized as an effective safety net by the Social Protection sector.

Hunger and poor nutrition can destroy a child's ability to learn and flourish. A hungry child cannot grow, cannot learn, as well as face many health risks in the future. Schools are a natural and convenient setting to ensure well-nourished children both in bodies and in minds.

This policy acknowledges school feeding programme as a primary food assistance tool that can increase children's access to education and improve their health and nutrition status. Based on the Rwanda context, needs and the national goals, the school feeding policy shall:

1. Support education through enhanced learning ability;
2. Enhance nutritional status of the school going children;
3. Provide a safety net for food insecure households; and
4. Enhance agricultural productivity through linkage between school feeding and local farmers.

Combined with quality education, the school feeding programme shall increase enrolment, attendance, cognition and contribute to learning; with an appropriately designed food basket and rations, the programme shall improve the nutrition status of school children by addressing nutritional needs and micronutrient deficiencies; and combined with local production, it shall provide local farmers with a reliable and predictable market. Implemented alongside other complementary health and nutrition interventions, the programme shall ensure a supportive environment for delivery of school meals and reinforce the effects of the programme on the children.

The school feeding programme shall directly benefit school going children in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. Effectively implemented the comprehensive approach shall directly and indirectly benefit parents, teachers, local farmers and the whole community.

1.1 Definition and importance of School Feeding

The term school feeding has been used over the years to mean the provision of meals or snacks at school to reduce children's hunger during the school day. In a more comprehensive definition, WFP classifies the following as school feeding: i) at school meals that can include breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch or dinner; ii) take home rations provided as economic

incentives to families in return for a child's regular attendance at school; and iii) food provided to adults or youth who attend literacy or vocational training¹.

World Bank defines school feeding as “targeted social safety nets that provides both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level.”² School feeding is implemented as a strategy to reduce social vulnerability, increase school participation and mitigate the effects of hunger on learning and educational achievements.

The 2009 publication on *Rethinking School Feeding* established that school feeding programmes are important not only for their educational benefits, but also because in the short term they provide a safety net during crises, and in the long term they act as investments in human capital, local economies and equity³.

The benefits of school feeding can be classified as below:

- **Education:** Daily school meals provide a strong incentive to improve school enrolment and attendance, thus reducing absenteeism and drop-out rates. School feeding ensures children focus on their studies thus improving concentration, learning, cognitive functions, in-class behaviour and academic performance.
- **Nutrition:** Hunger and micronutrient deficiencies can cause irreversible damage to school children's growing bodies. School meals not only ensure adequate food for the school children but also provide a vehicle for food fortification and micro-nutrient supplementation thus addressing specific nutritional needs and micronutrient deficiencies such as Vitamin A, iron or iodine. When combined with deworming and micronutrient fortification, especially when tailored to specific nutritional needs - such as those for adolescent girls - that investment is multiplied.
- **Safety Nets:** School meals help families to educate their children and protect their food security in times of crisis. School meals support development, so children can become healthy and productive adults, breaking the cycle of hunger and poverty in the world's most vulnerable areas.
- **Local Agricultural production:** When school meals are prepared from locally produced food, the programme contributes to building food markets and enabling systems around them by generating a structured and predictable demand for food products (school feeding programmes run for a fixed number of days and often have a pre-determined food basket) thus benefiting local farmers and promoting sustainable local economic development.

¹ School Feeding Programmes: Why should they be scaled up? April 2004 Retrieved on 05 June 2016.

² Scaling up School Feeding: Keeping the Children in School while improving their learning and health. A World Bank Paper 2012. Retrieved on 05 June 2016

³ Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh M., Gelli A., Jukes M, & Drake L, 2009. Rethinking School Feeding: Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector

A joint Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) exercise undertaken by MINEDUC reported the following benefits of school feeding programmes in Rwanda: i) reduced indiscipline and pregnancy cases; ii) ease for parents to undertake other chores; iii) socialization during lunch time; iv) increased students' performance; v) reduced loss of time during lunch breaks; vi) timely accomplishment of school programmes; vii) increased self-learning; and, iix) assured healthy and balanced diet for students from poor families.⁴

1.2 Importance of School Feeding Policy

To ensure effective implementation of any programme, there is need to have a well-articulated policy with a regulatory framework that guides its implementation. This school feeding policy addresses the key issue of how the school feeding programme in Rwanda shall be implemented, and with what objective it is expected to achieve.

Specifically, the policy shall:

- Provide sound regulations, establish a visible mandate to be realized, set standards for service delivery across the different objectives, and establish appropriate institutions and processes for the delivery;
- Strengthen the governance, partnerships and multi sectoral coordination by creating a platform for cross sectoral interaction, coordination and convergence through the articulation of roles and responsibilities;
- Define the need for a secure budgetary allocation reflected in the public financial management system;
- Ensure long term sustainability and relevance of the programme;
- Guide all the partners (including donors) to a uniform operating framework that prevents any duplication or policy conflicts; and
- Be accompanied by technical guidance, with a credible basis and means for implementation.

The policy therefore provides a common ground for the efficient and effective implementation of all the school feeding initiatives in the country, and sets a foundation even for non-publicly funded school feeding initiatives to ensure they all contribute towards the nationally set objectives.

⁴ Joint Monitoring & Evaluation Field Study on Education in Rwanda, MINEDUC 2015

1.3 Guiding principles of the School Feeding Policy

The school feeding policy shall be guided by the following principles:

- 1.3.1 Quality service delivery:** Quality service delivery shall result from collective effort and be the responsibility of all the stakeholders involved in the school feeding process on a continuous basis in order to satisfy the beneficiaries. Quality will be based on education, health and nutrition standards.
- 1.3.2 Performance-oriented monitoring:** This shall be aimed primarily at providing management and relevant stakeholders with early indications of progress in achieving the results and desired outcomes. Performance oriented monitoring shall ensure an improvement in staff output through systematic and continuous measurement, including evaluation and reporting to take corrective action should this be required. The determinants of performance shall be technical, organizational and behavioural.
- 1.3.3 Sustainable funding, community participation and ownership:** School feeding programme shall utilize core financing from the government complemented by development partners, private sector and locally generated resources. In order to ensure ownership, the programme shall involve the people in a community to influence the agenda and solve their own problems. Mechanisms to have community members contribute ideas, participate in decision making and take responsibility for the initiative shall be put in place.
- 1.3.4 Accountability, transparency and shared responsibility:** Accountability and transparency principles shall guide the governance of school feeding programmes. Accountability shall involve both answerability and enforceability. As a shared responsibility, parties involved in school feeding shall be proactive in sharing information and citizens shall be proactive in requiring and providing feedback on programme-related information. There shall be shared responsibility between central government, districts, sectors, school committees, and community.
- 1.3.5 Equity and equality:** The Programme shall be guided by the principles of equity and equality to provide efficient and effective school feeding services delivered devoid of discrimination and prejudice; and resources distributed fairly and designed to achieve inclusiveness and in accordance with local contextual needs. Gender equality and women's empowerment shall be ensured by set indicators
- 1.3.6 Effective communication, collaboration, coordination and partnerships:** Multiple and effective channels of communication (including media) shall be used to ensure communication and dissemination of relevant information to stakeholders on a timely basis. All the stakeholders shall be given the opportunity to express their views and be listened to through culturally appropriate and accessible means.

Given the multi-sectoral nature of school feeding, collaboration of various sectors (within government, development partners, private sector and the community) on the basis of complementarity shall be strengthened to ensure consistency and efficiency. Stakeholders shall work together to maximize their comparative advantages towards a common goal.

1.3.7 Promotion of local initiative: School feeding programmes shall promote local initiatives and use of local produce, while harnessing ideas and innovations inherent in a specific local area to facilitate the production and procurement of local goods and services. This shall entail the utilization of locally grown food produce, labour and expertise in the development of menus, food production and preparation as well as the construction of requisite infrastructure.

1.4 Modalities of School Feeding

School feeding can be provided in the form of a meals or snacks eaten at school during school hours, or/and take-home rations for households if their children attend school. Take-home rations and in-school meals or snacks are very different in both their inputs and outcomes. The choice of the school feeding modality to apply should be heavily dependent on the context, objectives, local habits and tastes, the availability of local foods, and the costs.

On-site meals: These are distributed to children while at school during morning and afternoon meals and snack times. They may include a bowl of porridge, high energy biscuits, nutrient fortified crackers, or any meal composed of different food items.

Take home rations: Take home rations can be in form of a collection of basic items which are transferred to the family, and are used when addressing specific issues within the learning environment e.g. girl's enrolment, attendance and retention.

Depending on the context, the school feeding programme can combine onsite meals with an extra incentive from take home rations. The use of cash based transfers as a potential transfer modality in school feeding being reviewed. (*See Annex 1: School Feeding modalities, benefits, advantages and trade-offs*).

In the context of Rwanda, on-site meals modality is being used by all the ongoing school feeding programmes.

1.5 Target Groups

The targeted population for the school feeding programmes are primarily pre-school children, primary pupils and secondary school students including students in TVET schools. A comprehensive approach to school feeding adapted to local production and accompanied by complementary nutrition education and school gardening, shall ensure parents, teachers, local farmer and the community at large are directly or indirectly targeted in the school feeding programmes.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 International and Regional Frameworks for School Feeding

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989 articulates the inclusive right to food, health and education. The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) addresses issues of access, equity and the quality of basic education. The CRC and EFA provide the main framework for stressing overall well-being of school children, and are linked to the human right to education. This is further acknowledged in the joint UNICEF/UNESCO⁵ publication's goal 'to ensure that every child has access to quality education that promotes individual dignity and optimum development'. (See *Annex II for International treaties on food security and school feeding*).

Poor health and malnutrition are key underlying factors for low school enrolment, attendance, poor performance and non-completion. The World Education Forum held in Dakar Senegal in 2000 by UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank and other partners identified four key elements in ensuring effective school health: effective school health and nutrition policies; a safe and sanitary school environment with portable water; health, hygiene and nutrition education; and school based health and nutrition services such as school feeding and deworming⁶. Inspired by the Focusing Resources of Effective School Health (FRESH) framework, all of which provide for a supportive context for delivery of school feeding and may reinforce the effects, WFP and UNICEF along with other partners support the implementation of the 'essential package' for complementary interventions.

School feeding is seen as a unique safety net that contributes to the education and well-being of children. It is for this reason that the EFA (2010) in Addis Ababa called upon EFA partners to build inclusive education systems and intensify efforts to support initiatives targeted at the most marginalized, including social protection measures such as cash transfers and scholarships, community involvement and multi-sectoral approaches such as school feeding and early childhood development programmes. During the 2009 G8 Summit, global leaders endorsed the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, acknowledging that 'Delivering food, cash and vouchers through effective emergency assistance as well as through national safety-nets and nutrition schemes such as food and cash for work, unconditional cash transfer programmes, school feeding and mother-and-child programmes is an imperative goal'.

The value of linking School Feeding to local production of food has been widely recognized. In 2003, African Governments in their aim to restore agricultural growth, food security, adequate nutritional levels and rural development in Africa endorsed the home grown school feeding programme (HGSP) of the Comprehensive Africa Development Programme (CAADP). In the same year, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

⁵ Joint UNICEF/UNESCO Publication on Human Rights based approach to Education for All 2007.

⁶ Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh M., Gelli A., Jukes M, & Drake L, 2009. Rethinking School Feeding: Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector.

identified HGSF as having immediate impact on food security in Africa with the potential to contribute long term development goals.

The UN World Summit 2005 recommended the expansion of local school meals programmes using home grown food where possible as one of the quick impact initiatives. The Millennium Project's report 'Investing in Development' made a 'quick win' recommendation of 'expansion of the school meals programmes to cover all children in hunger spots using locally produced food by 2006'. In this report, proposed initiatives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through linking school feeding with agricultural development included; i) purchasing locally/domestically produced food; ii) school gardens; and iii) the incorporation of agriculture into school curricula. All these initiatives would stimulate demand for locally produced food and trigger market mechanisms particularly in marginal rural areas where such mechanisms do not exist.

The Africa Union (AU) Special Food Summit (2006) reaffirmed the HGSF initiative and resolved that the implementation of HGSF must be expanded to reach 20 percent of member states by 2008. At the NEPAD/AU Accra Ghana HGSF meeting (2010), the value of school feeding as a key mechanism in advancing food security, education and agricultural development was highlighted. During the Global Forum on Education in Korea 2015, a panel was set up to gather maximum voices and intensify advocacy at the continental level for the promotion of school feeding adapted to local agriculture.

The annual Global Child Nutrition Fora (GCNF) have been providing a framework for reflection and advocacy for school feeding, showcasing countries with significant success in implementing nationally owned school feeding programmes. A Conference of African Ministers of Education in the margins of the Regional Conference on Education in Sub Saharan Africa called for the school feeding programmes as local development driving force and vector for quality education in the post-2015 agenda.

To strengthen continental ownership of the HGSF approach, the AU Summit 2016 adopted the proposals to form a multi-disciplinary technical committee of African experts under the supervision of AUC to conduct a study on the relevance and impact of school feeding in AU member states; the institution of 1st March as the African Day of School Feeding and the elaboration of modalities for observing the African Day of School Feeding by AUC, Member states and partners.

The developments above, clearly show the increasing recognition by the world community and particularly by African governments of the importance of school feeding. School feeding is therefore seen as critical in the achievement of SDG 2: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture; SDG 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

2.2 National

School feeding forms part of the Government of Rwanda Programmes, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1-7YGP), the Education Sector Strategic Plan, Food Security and Nutrition policy, the School Health Policy, the Multi-sectoral Strategy to Eliminate Malnutrition, and is recognized as an effective targeted safety-net by the social protection sector in the social protection sector strategy in the country.

According to Vision 2020, Rwanda is committed to reaching “Universal Education for All” in line with SDG 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The objective is to have all infants and young children fully achieve their developmental potential⁷.

The National Strategy for Transformation (NST1-7YGP 2017-2024) highlights the eradication of Malnutrition through enhanced prevention and management of all forms of malnutrition⁸. Furthermore, in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (2018/19 – 2023/24) the Government aims at strengthening school nutrition programmes, drawing upon community participation and creating a national HGSF programme.

One of the key strategic directions of the National Food and Nutrition Policy aims at improving food and nutrition in schools. The strategy calls for sustaining and expanding existing school feeding programmes, and further recommends that emphasis be placed on bringing on line and rapidly expanding new approaches to school feeding including the large scale Home Grown School Feeding programme.”⁹ The need for strengthening the ongoing school feeding programmes is further reiterated in the National School Health Policy.¹⁰

Finally, the 11th National Leadership Retreat held in Gabiro (2014) recommended “to put in place mechanisms enabling implementation of the school feeding programme in 12-year basic education in collaboration *with parents*”¹¹. The 16th national leadership retreat recommended revamping the implementation school feeding program¹².

⁷ MINECOFIN (2012). Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (2013 – 2018). Government of Rwanda

⁸ Republic of Rwanda (2017). Government Programme 2017-2024

⁹ MINALOC, MINISANTE, MINAGRI (2014). Rwanda National Food and Nutrition Policy

¹⁰ MINEDUC (2014). National School Health Policy, Government of Rwanda

¹¹ 11th National Leadership Retreat

¹² 16th National Leadership Retreat

3. SCHOOL FEEDING VISION AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Vision

All school children in Rwanda shall achieve their full development potential through a sustainable school feeding programme that provides adequate and nutritious meals at school.

3.2 Objectives

School feeding shall be recognized as a programme with multi-sectoral objectives, supporting various priority areas of the Government of Rwanda.

3.2.1 Short-term objectives

- To provide nutritionally sufficient food complemented by health and nutritional interventions to all school children;
- To enhance enrolment, reduce absenteeism and improve the concentration span of the school going children;
- To provide a stable and predictable market to local farmers through increased demand for local food commodities; and
- To improve skills and knowledge of parents, teachers, students and smallholder farmers on food production, processing and preparation.

3.2.2 Medium-term objectives

- To increase equitable access to education ensuring vulnerable children e.g. orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) and children from poor households are targeted;
- To improve on learning capabilities, cognition, performance and completion rates;
- To enhance productivity through improved food production, processing, storage, food quality and safety; and
- To reduce both parents' and government spending on education and medical care costs.

3.2.3 Long-term

- To have a healthier and better qualified workforce, and better parents for the next generations;
- To improve social equality and equity;
- To enhance high quality local economic productivity; and
- To break the intergenerational cycle of hunger.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 General Food Security and Nutrition Situation

The Rwanda Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (2018) reported continued economic growth coupled with progress in social development in a number of areas, reaching most of the MDGs. Food and nutrition are recognized as important for the overall development of the Country and have been highlighted among the long term foundational issues in the EDPRS II. 81.3 percent of all the households are food secure corresponding to approximately 2,034,942 million households. Among them, 979,045(38,6%) households are at high risk of becoming food insecure. 468,062 households are food insecure and 42,551 are severely food insecure. Food insecurity is high in western and northern parts of the Country. At the provincial level, the Western province is most concerning with over 29.9 percent of its households considered food insecure. 74 percent of households in Rwanda practise agriculture (including 88 percent of rural households). Cereal production has continued to increase annually, an indication that Rwanda has a great opportunity to link school feeding to local agricultural production.

Although a lot of multi-sectoral initiatives and interventions have led to improvements in the nutritional status of Rwandan children in the past several years, the prevalence of malnutrition is still high. The 2016 Rwanda Demographic Health Survey (RDHS 2015) reported that nationally 38 percent of children under the age of 5 are stunted, which is considerably high. Stunted children are more likely to be found in poor, rural and food insecure households. High stunting rates are also directly correlated with young mothers, mother's level of education and wealth quartile, and mothers who are themselves undernourished (BMI below 18.5 – 24.9 kg/m²). 37 percent of children age 6 – 59 months in Rwanda have some level of anaemia, mostly caused by inadequate dietary intake of iron, malaria and intestinal worm infection. Worm infection affects 65 percent of the population in Rwanda¹², and school aged children typically have the highest intensity of worm infection of any age group.

Vitamin A supplementation and deworming tablets to children age 6 – 59 months and iron/folic acid tablets to mothers has been organized through campaigns twice yearly mother-child-health week events. There is no yet an iron supplementation programme targeting children.

4.2 School feeding programmes in Rwanda

Currently, there are three school feeding programmes operating in Rwanda.

The first one is the National Early Childhood Development Programme (NECDP) funded school milk programme called *One cup of Milk per Child* which serves milk in pre-primary and primary students in grades 1 two times per week in 19 districts. The '*One Cup of Milk per Child*' program was launched by Government of Rwanda (GoR) in May 2010 following the Integrated Development Programme (IDP) resolution that authorized Rwanda Agriculture

¹² MINEDUC (2014). National School health policy, Government of Rwanda

Board (RAB) to implement the programme in schools. In 2018, the program shifted from RAB to NECDP. The '*One Cup of Milk per Child*' programme was introduced to reduce malnutrition among Rwandan children, with a specific objective of improving the nutrition status of children attending school in order to enhance the development of their brain capacity and to promote school retention of children attending pre- and primary schools. The NECDP supported programme is fully funded and operated by the Government.

The second School Feeding Programme is the MINEDUC supported school feeding programme in public and Government-aided secondary schools. In public and Government-aided secondary day schools, the programme is community based and parents are primarily responsible to provide food for their children either in kind or in cash. The Government provides **56 Frw** per day per student to supplement parents' contributions. This programme focuses on providing at least one nutritious meal per day in order to increase enrolment and promote regular attendance, thus improving students' performance. Out of the total 455,487 students in secondary day schools, a total of 413,235 students receive lunch at school, while the remaining get lunch at home.

With regards to the secondary boarding schools, the Government subsidizes parents' contribution by providing an earmarked transfer for school feeding of **56 Frw** per day per student, to supplement parents' contributions compared to **156 Frw** before FY 2015/2016. Typically, boarding students are provided with three meals per day throughout the school year. The coverage for secondary boarding school children is 100 percent.

The third School Feeding Programme is a WFP supported programme, which begun in 2002 in response to the increased food insecurity resulting from the Southern Africa Regional drought in that year. Currently, HGSF Programme is supporting at least 83,000 primary school children in 104 schools located in 4 districts namely, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Karongi and Rutsiro where poverty and food insecurity is considered high.

Together, these programmes are recognised as having contributed greatly to the substantial achievements in education, health and nutrition status of school going children.

Schools and community readiness to implement a school feeding programmes requires availability of facilities including kitchens, dining halls, stores, kitchen equipment, water and sanitation facilities, among other items. There is also need for skills on food safety, handling and preparation. The joint Monitoring and Evaluation study reported shortage of infrastructure (kitchen and dining facilities) and other materials appropriate for the programme. In the *one cup of milk per child* programme, schools are responsible for storing and distributing the milk. The schools are using the existing infrastructure for milk storage in which the sanitation standards are questionable.

4.3 Cost of school feeding in Rwanda

According to the Rwanda School Feeding Programme Cost Analysis¹³, the cost of *one cup of milk per child* programme is **409 Frw** per serving per child; the cost of WFP assisted programmes are **120 Frw** for providing one child with one meal consisting of beans, maize, vegetable oil and salt per day. The cost of providing one child with one meal per day in the secondary boarding schools is **122 Frw** ; while the cost of providing one meal per day per child is **200 Frw** in Secondary day schools. Notably, the Government only provides an earmarked transfer for school feeding of **56 Frw** per day per student to secondary schools.

MINEDUC is trying to establish partnership between Government and parents to improve school feeding programme in “Primary and Secondary Education” with Government emphasis on the primary responsibility of parents to provide food for their children. Expecting adequate contribution from parents either as cash or in kind (food on non-food items) has remained a challenge.

The 2015 Joint Monitoring & Evaluation report highlighted lack of commitment, low financial capabilities, irregular school meals provision and limited involvement of the local authorities as some of the key reasons for this constraint.

This challenge was clearly demonstrated when WFP piloted a “3 + 2 Initiative “of providing food only three days per week while the community was to take on supply responsibility for the remaining two days per week in May 2011. The transition had a negative impact on the regular attendance and retention of boys and girls in WFP assisted schools in both Eastern and Southern provinces¹⁴. Inadequate financial resources have also been a constraint for WFP in its implementation of the school feeding programmes.

4.4 School gardening and farming programmes

School gardening and farming projects have been implemented through MINEDUC with funding from EU, FAO, Gardens for Health International and WFP, CARE International through their Farmers of the Future Initiative (FOFI), and the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) with support from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). School gardens contribute to achieving the objectives of the National Food and Nutrition Policy 2013-2018 (NFNP), the National Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan 2013-2018 (NFNSP), the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2014-2018, and the School Health Policy 2014 – 2018 (SHP).

The National School Health Strategic Plan 2014-2018 states that MINEDUC must ensure the provision of at least one balanced meal per learner during study time and should strengthen school gardening and farming activities wherever land is available. School gardens are important pedagogical tools for learning and teaching about food and nutrition and this would

¹³ Government of Rwanda and WFP (2012). Rwanda School Feeding Programme: Cost analysis, October 2012.

¹⁴ Evaluation of WFP DEV 10677.0: Food Assistance Support to Education (January 2008 – December 2012)

complement the school feeding program and serves as income generating activity for the school¹⁵. Although FAO supported school gardens project in the country has phased out, it aimed at strengthening the capacity of schools on food-self-sufficiency while integrating community, students and members of parents committees in the program and promoting the activities of agricultural production and animal husbandry at school. Through school gardens, students, parents and local community gained practical skills on modern technical agriculture and animal husbandry practices such as the building of home gardens, kitchen gardens, methods of sowing or planting due to their participation¹⁶. FAO supported several schools with water tanks to tap rainwater for watering school gardens and ensuring hygiene.

Growing crops at the school reduced the cost of purchasing food for school meals¹⁷. Inputs for school gardens can come from a wide range of sources, including purchased fertilizer and pesticides, livestock manure (either bought or acquired from school livestock), human manure from Ecosan toilets, purchased and retained seeds, and bought or borrowed tools. At many of the schools whose gardens are productive and involve the students, the children are asked to bring hoes from home while the schools often keep a small stock of tools.

The current status of school garden coverage in 2018 is at 68.5%, from 60.7% in 2014. The projects have however experienced challenges that include the short term nature of the school gardens initiatives without operational exit strategies for sustainability; training of teachers to build their capacity but no linkage with district agronomists to provide technical backstopping; availability of water particularly during the dry season; lack of land; lack of financial resources for the gardening activities, and exposure to external destructions as most of the schools are not fenced.

4.5 Water, sanitation and hygiene status in school

Lack of adequate water and sanitation facilities at schools is a major health hazard for school children. Common water and sanitation related diseases in Rwanda are diarrhoea, which is among the top three main causes of morbidity in the country¹⁸.

According to education statistics year book 2018, 55, 6 percent of primary schools and 61.9% secondary schools in Rwanda have access to piped tap water. Nationally, 76.5 percent of primary schools and 75.4% secondary schools have rainwater harvesting systems; however, these systems often fall into disrepair. With regard to toilets, the ratio of children per toilet is 25:1 in pre-primary; 54:1 in primary; and 19:1 in secondary. The main challenge experienced

¹⁵ FAO (2012). Rapport Des Activites Du Projet Jardins Scolaires

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ European Union Report (2014). Technical Assistance to support Country-Wide Establishment of Model School Nutrition Gardens in Rwanda. Inception Report

¹⁸ MINECOFIN, NISR, MINISANTE, One UN, USAID, et al (2016). Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey. Government of Rwanda.

is not only the lack of WASH facilities in some schools, but also the fact that some students do not like the taste of the water treated with *sûr eau*.

5. RECOMMENDED POLICY ACTIONS

5.1 Scaling up the coverage of school feeding programmes

The Policy proposes universal coverage of school feeding programmes for pre-primary, primary and secondary school children.

While it is acknowledged that individual targeting is complex and can lead to stigmatization, MINEDUC in partnership with MINALOC, and other stakeholders should identify vulnerable children e.g. orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and children from vulnerable households (*Ubudehe 1 and 2*), and exempt their parents from the requirement to contribute for the feeding of their children in school, preserving children's dignity.

In the course of scaling up school feeding programme, existing programmes shall be maintained with the proposed improvement.

- Given the high cost of UHT milk, the policy recognizes the need for including other modalities for the school milk programme. There is need to compare milk provision through UHT versus boiling before distribution with regards to budgeting and sustainability.
- With regards to the secondary boarding schools, the Government subsidizes shall increase from 56 Frw per day to 150 Frw per day compared to 156 Frw before FY 2015/2016, while the pre-primary, primary and secondary day schools who have been getting 56 Frw per day shall increase to 100 Frw. The parents' contribution shall compliment the Government subsidy as indicated above.

Considering private schools, the school feeding programme is found in pre-primary and primary schools; but in secondary day schools the students remain hungry. With the implementation of this School Feeding Programme, all schools including private ones will follow guidelines regarding school feeding minimum package.

5.2 Ensuring health and nutrition sensitive school feeding programming

The nutritional requirements of school children are determined by age, sex, and activity level and health nutritional status of children. MINEDUC shall work with a Nutrition and Food Technologist to develop a guide on a school menu that ensures nutritious meals with sufficient carbohydrates, protein, fat and other necessary micronutrients. Appropriate food baskets with the necessary nutrient values shall be designed at the school level based on availability of different food commodities. Increasing fresh food to the school meals highly increases the nutritional quality and provides an opportunity to avoid monotonous meals thereby increasing palatability, respect for local eating habits and creates a chance of stimulating local food markets. Rwanda has a large scope of fresh food that could be added to the food basket such as fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, roots and tubers, with the choice depending on availability and prices in the local markets. Guidelines on how to develop an appropriate food menu shall be inscribed in the school feeding implementation guidelines to be developed by MINEDUC.

School feeding programme shall be accompanied by comprehensive package of complementary interventions “Essential package”. This shall include the set up and availability of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities; health, nutrition and hygiene education; systematic deworming; micronutrient supplementation; psychosocial support; energy saving stoves and clean cooking ; among other interventions. To achieve all the above, there shall be close interaction between the school feeding and school health policies in their implementation.

As part of school readiness for school feeding programmes, MINEDUC shall develop guidelines for minimum requirements for school feeding programmes. These guidelines shall provide a list that clearly outlines the pre-requisite infrastructure and equipment required for managing a school feeding programme. Appropriate infrastructure including a well ventilated kitchen, a store room, dining room, adequate gender sensitive sanitation facilities, and hand washing points, among others will have to be constructed in all the schools.

The policy proposes strengthening of the provision of safe water to the children and staff in the schools. This shall be achieved through construction and maintenance of rainwater harvesting systems and connection of schools to the national water grid. Water quality and adequate treatment of drinking and cooking water shall be ensured.

The policy recognizes the need for all schools to set up waste management systems, e.g. eco-san toilets, Flexi biogas (fertilizer and source of energy), with the involvement of the community (making briquette from the waste). Training and supervising shall be provided to the teachers and learners on solid waste management.

5.3. Promotion of school gardening and farming

Nutrition shall also be addressed through the establishment and/or improvement of the school gardening and farming programmes, which will act as an educational forum for learning for the children and parents, and increased production for school feeding. MINAGRI shall define the minimum package and provide support to school gardening and farming, friendly learning materials to support schools in establishing and management of school gardens and farms. As an avenue for community participation, the parents of the targeted school children will be involved in the management of the school gardens and farming. Children will use the gardens for both theoretical and practical learning. The school gardens will be an entry point for both agricultural and nutrition education. Food production from the gardens/farms shall be added to the school feeding basket when available.

The school gardening/farming projects shall be implemented in accordance with the Rwandan national strategy for sustainable school gardens. The Policy envisages that school gardens and farms shall be established and maintained in all the schools in Rwanda. Technical assistance for school gardening and farming will be coordinated by education-decentralized institutions with the support of the local agronomists.

5.4 Securing sustainable financing mechanisms of school feeding programmes

To ensure reliable and predictable core public financing, school feeding costing shall be included in the financial planning process of MINEDUC and funded through a consolidated national budget line. Budget lines and plans shall also exist at regional, district and school levels sufficient to cover the operational costs of running the school feeding programmes. The SF funds shall be disbursed directly to schools in a timely and effective manner. Schools shall establish a technical SF funds management team, in line with Rwandan procurement law.

Pre-primary, Primary and secondary Public and Government aided day schools, the government shall provide the subsidy for **100 Frw** versus **39 Frw** parents contribution per day for 195 days per annum while the Public and Government-aided boarding secondary schools and primary special schools the government shall provide the subsidy of **150 Frw** per day because it requires three meals a day for 273 days per annum.

However, for students from poor families enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary day schools, MINEDUC in Collaboration with MINALOC will work on modalities of supporting those students including exempting them from the parents' contribution.

MINEDUC and MINECOFIN shall complement the national budget with innovative financing mechanisms from development partners, private sector, and local authorities and in kind support by parents and the local communities. It is acknowledged that parents have the responsibility to feed their children. A school feeding model should be developed to include affordable parents' contributions through flexible means.

5.5 Creating appropriate policies and frameworks linking market access to farm produce by local farmers to the school feeding programmes using unconventional procurement method.

The policy prioritizes a homegrown approach to school feeding programmes to ensure multiple benefits and sustainability. School feeding programmes shall be linked to locally produced food for long term food and nutrition security and local community development.

In line with the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority (RPPA) legal framework and processes, MINEDUC shall develop an appropriate supply chain or procurement model with detailed guidelines to ensure transparent, efficient and accountable approach from local farmers using unconventional procurement method. The procurement strategy aims at improving the welfare of the local farmers overcoming market imperfections, minimizing transaction costs and gaining market access. The strategy shall ensure the local farmers retain the greater share of the final price of the product. As a social safety net, school foods commodities should be tax exempted.

Systematic capacity development of organized cooperatives of local farmers, and entrepreneurs, as well as the adoption of policies which favour local farmers and small and medium food dealers shall be undertaken. Additionally, there shall be capacity building and

technical assistance for local farmers, parents, teachers and school caterers on the supply chain process (food safety, handling and quality management).

5.6 Partnerships, multi sectoral coordination mechanisms

The policy envisions a school feeding programme that goes beyond education to include health and nutrition, agriculture, social protection. School feeding multi-sectoral governance and institutional coordination arrangements shall be put in place at the national, district, Sector and school levels. A national multi-sectoral steering committee shall be set with clear terms of reference and accountability measures to enforce shared responsibility by all the stakeholders. Additionally, there shall be technical committees set up at national, district, Sector and school levels to provide the requisite skills and knowledge, support and oversight in the management of the school feeding programme.

To ensure sustainability, development partners supporting the Government to establish nationally owned school feeding programmes shall clearly define their exit strategies to ensure gradual national ownership of the school feeding programme with inbuilt handover plans to the government. All school feeding initiatives in the Country shall be implemented in conformity with the national principles, priorities, policies, and needs.

6. STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

In order to develop and harmonize the SF Policy and strategic plan, the Ministry of Education organized two workshops that were conducted in June 2016 and November 2016, to consult governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Besides representatives of the Ministry of Education, the consultation involved participants from the Ministry of Health, Agriculture, Gender and Family Promotion, Ministry of Disaster Management, Sports and Culture, Local Government, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Ministry of Infrastructure, Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Ministry of Labour, District Directors of Education, 5 Head Teachers and 5 Parent-Teacher Association, Seventh day Adventist Church, UN agencies, namely UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO, and civil society organizations like World Vision International, also participated in the discussions and recommendations of this policy.

The main recommendations of the groups were:

1. Development of a broad national school feeding policy that allows for different approaches and modalities in the provision of school feeding in Rwanda,
2. Development of a financial framework for the implementation of the policy and strategic plan including a clear commitment from the Government on the financial support for the implementation of the Policy.
3. Universal coverage of school feeding integrating pre-primary and primary learners, and a subsidy for all learners in public and government aided schools.
4. Provision of guidelines for food baskets that ensure a balanced diet with sufficient carbohydrates, protein, fat and the necessary micronutrients based on locally available, preferred and affordable food. Menu setting should be flexible and not standardized or based on specific commodities. Nutritionist to work with MINEDUC and schools on this.
5. Review of the cost of implementation for the “one cup of milk” programme. Recommend to NECDP to check the feasibility of using boiled milk from farmers than UHT packed milk.
6. School gardening and farming should go beyond being educational forum for learning for the children and parents, to farms with increased production for supplementing the school food and income generating to the schools. Schools should consider undertaking small livestock management e.g. poultry and rabbits.
7. The structures should put into consideration vulnerable families and refugees who are not able to contribute.

The overall objective of the consultation was to have an updated, reviewed and technically validated documents, which contains the guidance on school feeding program, providing the nutritionally sufficient food complemented by health and nutritional interventions of school children. The draft policy and strategic plan have been widely distributed for comments and inputs among all stakeholders.

Further, on 08th May 2019 Government stakeholders including MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, MINALOC, NECDP, MININFRA, MINEMA, MIGEPROF, MINISANTE, MINICOM, MINEDUC, and affiliated agencies were consulted during development of unconventional procurement method on procurement of school food in Rwandan schools. Also UN agencies that supporting in school feeding like World Food Programme (WFP) were consulted.

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation of the School Feeding Policy shall require the participation of key actors in education, agriculture, health, infrastructure, social protection and finance sectors, among others. To improve the quality of implementation, the synergies from the different expertise are crucial. Strong multi-sectoral governance and institutional arrangements shall be put in place to ensure shared responsibility and accountability.

7.1. Institutional Framework

The successful implementation of school feeding programmes shall depend on strong coordination, collaboration and partnerships between institutions in charge of education, agriculture, health, infrastructure, water and sanitation, among others. The coordination mechanisms shall be put in place at all levels including the national, regional, local governments, parents and the rest of the community.

The implementation of the School Feeding Policy and its Strategic Plan shall be governed by both political and technical structures.

National level

School Feeding Steering Committee

A National Steering Committee drawn from a core group of decision makers in key ministries and partners shall have the responsibility of providing overall leadership and guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the achievement of the School Feeding policy objectives. While the overall leadership role in the implementation of the school feeding programmes shall be vested on MINEDUC, other ministries including MINAGRI, MINALOC, MININFRA, MINICOM, MINISANTE, MIGEPROF, the UN agencies, both local and international and national non-governmental agencies and the private sector shall support all the process in the implementation. Collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders is key for the successful implementation of School Feeding programmes at national, district, school and community levels. MINEDUC shall develop a clear Terms of Reference to outline the roles and expectations from the National Steering Committee.

School Feeding Technical Working Group

The work of the Steering Committee will be supported by a Technical Working Group (TWG) composed of technical staff with requisite expert skills and knowledge in programming and implementation of school feeding programmes. Membership to the TWG shall be drawn from Government Ministries/Institutions, decentralized institutions (districts), faith based organizations, UN Agencies and NGOs. The TWG shall be chaired by MINEDUC, and shall meet on a regular basis to deliberate on specific needs and recommended actions. The TWG shall regularly feedback to the National Steering Committee on progress and plans.

Cross Cutting Programs Unit

The Technical Working Group shall work closely with the Cross Cutting Programs Unit in MINEDUC to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the School Feeding programme. The Cross Cutting Programs Unit shall coordinate the day-to-day implementation of the programme; set standards by developing guidelines and tools for use by the district, sector, cell and school level teams; carry out monitoring and oversight activities; provide regular feedback to the TWG; advise on capacity building needs and development plans; and conduct research and analysis on best practices within the country and beyond.

Decentralized levels

District Level

School Feeding activities shall be coordinated by the District School Feeding Committee composed of the Vice Mayor in charge Social Affairs; Directors of Education, Directors of Health, Directors of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Directors of Social Development unit, CNF Coordinator, Security organs, Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) Officer; Faith-Based organisations' representative, and Private Sector Federation representative. The committee shall be chaired by the Vice Mayor, and shall have the following responsibilities: developing mechanisms for resource mobilization from the community and Development Partners at district level for school feeding activities; carrying out joint action planning, implementation and monitoring of School Feeding activities; and periodic reporting on the progress of implementation to the national level.

Sector

At Sector/Cell levels, a team shall be set up to coordinate the implementation of school feeding activities. The team shall be led by the Sector Executive Secretary and shall include Sector/Cell Officers for Education, Agriculture, and Social Affairs, Animal Resources Officer, CNF Representative, Faith-Based organisations' representative, and Private Sector Federation representative; Security Organs; Heads of schools; SGA Representatives, ES Cells. Key responsibilities delegated to the Sector/Cell for the implementation of the School Feeding shall include advocating and sensitizing the community about School Feeding and its benefits; carrying out joint action planning at the decentralized level; assisting in the implementation of monitoring activities; and periodic reporting on the progress of school feeding implementation to the District level.

School Level

At the school level, there will be a committee responsible for the day to day management of school feeding activities. The school feeding committee will be composed of the head teacher), two representative of teachers (male and female), two representative from students (male and female), a representative from the SGA, a store manager and a representative of cooks. Key responsibilities for this committee shall include: integrating school feeding activities into the school action plan; records management (both numbers of children feeding and food utilization); and ensuring school readiness for school feeding (kitchen, stores, dining, utensils

and WASH facilities). This committee shall be responsible for ensuring the actual meal provision to the children.

7.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Ministry of Education (MINEDUC)

- The lead government entity for the coordination, management, implementation and monitoring of the school feeding programme;
- Chair the National Steering Committee for School Feeding;
- Provide minimum guidelines for the implementation of the School Feeding policy and Strategic Plan;
- Develop the capacity of school feeding personnel;
- Develop Terms of Reference (specifying composition, roles and responsibilities) for the different committees and working groups at both national and decentralized levels in the implementation plan of the SF policy;
- Undertake advocacy and resources mobilization for the school feeding programme and school feeding infrastructure;
- Conduct research and document existing good practise in school feeding domain;
- Develop guidelines for minimum requirements for schools readiness for the school feeding programme;
- In consultation with the relevant ministries develop standards for establishment of school feeding infrastructure;
- Provide oversight, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the school feeding programme;
- In collaboration with MINAGRI, provide technical support on school garden management

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN)

- Consolidate the existing budget lines for school feeding and ensure sufficient budgetary allocation for the School feeding programme and related operational costs;
- Advocate for and facilitate the mobilization of local and international resources to support School Feeding programmes;
- Provide guidance and assistance to the School Feeding team when preparing budget proposals and multi-year funding proposals;
- Provide funding to relevant ministries to ensure implementation of complementary interventions;
- Develop strategies and guidance for innovative financing of school feeding programmes; and Provide guidance on financial management systems.

Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI)

- Create an appropriate frameworks linking the supply chain of local farmers produce to the school feeding programme;
- Capacity development of local farmers to increase production, improve the processing and ensure quality of their (produce) production;

- Provide technical and financial support in school gardening;
- Assist livestock resources extension in schools;
- Strengthen the supply chain of milk (production, processing, quality control, distribution, etc) for the scale up of the *one cup of milk per child* component

Ministry of Health (MINISANTE)

- Support to complementary health and nutrition interventions including adequate WASH facilities, hand washing stands, deworming, etc;
- Provide school based health services;
- Set up waste management systems.

Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA)

- Enhance the provision of clean running water in schools;
- Enhance the provision of flexi biogas/clean cooking systems to reduce the use of firewood in schools;
- In consultation with the relevant ministries develop standards for establishment of school feeding infrastructure including solid waste management systems.

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)

- Sensitize relevant stakeholders on promoting children rights to nutrition services;
- Include school feeding contribution in the minimum package of OVCs; and
- Mobilise and encourage families to participate in the school feeding programme.
- Development of a school menu that provides adequate and nutritious meals to the relevant groups of children;
- Secure complementary funding for potential nutritional supplements (e.g. sprinkles) and/or fortification processes;
- Carry out capacity-development on nutrition issues at all levels;
- Prepare and disseminate a comprehensive nutrition document;
- Conduct operational research on school nutrition status and identify best practices that can be replicated in the different schools;

Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC)

- Oversee the implementation of School Feeding policy at decentralized entities;
- Ensure that School Feeding activities are integrated in performance contracts at all local levels;
- Develop mechanisms for community and local leaders resource contribution to the School feeding programme;
- Mobilize resources to support school feeding programme for children from poor families at all levels of education; and
- Provides guidelines for community involvement in the School Feeding programme.

MINICOM

- Create an appropriate framework linking the supply chain of cooperatives produce to the school feeding programme;
- Capacity development of cooperatives to increase production, improve the processing and ensure quality of their production.

Development partners

Support the implementation of school feeding programmes and related initiatives until the government takes over all the components.

7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The school feeding TWG in collaboration with the cross cutting programs unit shall establish mechanisms and tools for monitoring and evaluating of the implementation of the SF policy and Strategic Plan to ensure continuous information flows, analysis and knowledge sharing. Monitoring data of the school feeding programme shall be integrated within the existing education information systems.

Monitoring and evaluation shall focus on:

- Coverage and quality of services;
- The impact of the school feeding programme on the access to schooling, retention, achievement and health of learners; and
- Sustainability of school feeding programme.

The Monitoring and Evaluation framework shall propose a set of national indicators and timeframe that shall be used to monitor the implementation of the School Feeding Programme.

8.FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of the School Feeding Policy and Strategic Plan shall require adequate and reliable resourcing. The core financing of the school feeding programme shall be obtained in a national budget line under MINEDUC, while the budget of complementary interventions related with school feeding will be allocated to the relevant ministries. Government budget shall be supplemented by funding from UN Agencies [WFP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO], other development partners including non-governmental agencies, the Private Sector, and the local community. Initiatives supported by development partners shall have a clear exit strategy with a programme for handover to the Government. Such a process shall ensure sustainability.

8.1 Financial plan

The Government fully funds the *One cup of milk per Child* and the subsidy for school feeding in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. The Government shall consolidate the budget lines to support the ongoing programmes, proposed scale up, new initiatives and all the related operational costs. Relevant ministries shall intervene to ensure the implementation of integrated initiatives on comprehensive school feeding components outlined in the SF policy and Strategic Plan.

8.2. Human resources development plan

The School Feeding Team will be assisted by local community. The school feeding promotion should ideally be delivered by school feeding committee and local authorities. The school feeding promotion activities may also be provided by other cadres such as Community and by non-government or community-based organizations.

Employing additional staff: where districts assess that current staff capacity is not sufficient to deliver the SF package, districts will have to employ additional staff to perform this function. District and national budgets must take this possible requirement into account and support these districts by giving priority to school feeding budgets.

Training requirements: training and re-orientation is required for all categories of staff who will be implementing the SFP.

Categories of staff that will require training/re-orientation

- School feeding committee will require training in all aspects of the SF policy.
- Teachers/head teachers (directors) who have to implement the SF policy will need training.

9.LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The school feeding Policy reinforces the existing international, regional and national legal frameworks and Conventions to which Rwanda is a signatory. While there is no legal commitment needed to implement this policy, the current Ministerial Instructions N°002/2014 of 16/06/2014 regulating school feeding in secondary day schools in Rwanda and determining the composition of school feeding committees and their responsibilities at the different levels, should be reviewed and reinforced to become a comprehensive legal framework integrating all school feeding programmes at all levels.

10. IMPACT ON BUSINESS

School Feeding programme has a direct impact on agribusiness and smallholder farmers market access. The acquisition of the main food basket staples from local producers and cooperatives, will boost the sector, by providing a structured and predictable demand for their produce. By purchasing fresh food from local farmers near the schools, the programme will benefit local farmers around the school localities because there will be a consistent demand of food commodities from schools.

The implementation of this programme shall improve the supply chain processes (production, post harvest loss reduction, processing, etc) thus ensuring improved quality of agricultural products in the short and long run. The programme shall also at all levels get the involvement of the private sector either in innovative financing, corporate social responsibility, fortification, provision of micronutrient supplements, milling and food processing industry.

In addition to the expected gains from the agriculture sector, the school feeding programme shall create economic benefits, in terms of education, improved health and nutrition and value transfer to beneficiaries, as demonstrated by the school feeding investment case in Rwanda, prepared by NISR and MINEDUC showing that for every USD 1 invested in school feeding in Rwanda, the country can expect to receive a USD 3 return over the life of a child¹⁹.

¹⁹ Government of Rwanda and WFP (2012). Rwanda School Feeding Programme Cost analysis, October 2012.

10. IMPACT ON EQUALITY, UNITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

As an investment in the future of Rwandan children, it is expected that School Feeding program will have a considerable impact on equality and social cohesion among children. The programme shall provide a platform for ensuring vulnerable children or children from vulnerable households enjoy the benefits of the school meals. Sharing a meal in school also supports the socialization process towards national cohesion for the school children.

Gender equality and empowerment of women shall be considered in the identification of local farmers to participate in the programme and the related complementary health and nutrition activities.

11. HANDLING PLAN/COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This policy shall trigger national dialogue on School Feeding. Periodic information and education campaigns shall be undertaken to shed light on the more general School Feeding programme objectives to alleviate hunger and poverty, and contribute to raising awareness and concerns about vulnerable populations (e.g. children at risk of not enrolling in schools or dropping out of school, and small-scale farmers, especially women, who are unable to access markets and thus produce solely for their own subsistence). In addition, School Feeding program shall engage in regular communication, outreach and awareness activities to develop models of public and private partnership, and enhance local governments' participation with communities, NGOs and faith based organisation in managing School Feeding programme, and ensuring its sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of the School Feeding Policy and its Strategic Plan provides a great opportunity for the Government of Rwanda to achieve multiple national development goals, including in the education, health and nutrition, agriculture, and social protection sectors. To accomplish this process, a number of factors are critical:

Availability of resources: Significant resources are required not only for the procurement of food for the school meals, but also the programmatic components such as agricultural and supply chain development, human resources, infrastructure development and equipment. Adequate and reliable government budgetary allocations and resource mobilization from development partners, private sector and community are necessary to sustain the programme.

Strengthening multi-sectoral partnerships, coordination and collaboration: Multi-sectoral dialogue is necessary for the successful implementation of the school feeding programme. Coordination mechanisms at the national and decentralized levels shall provide the direction, make decisions and provide oversight to multiples benefits to all the beneficiaries.

Capacity development/strengthening: Investment in capacity development should include all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the school feeding programme. To develop the requisite expertise, the capacity of the government structures and staff both at the national and decentralized levels is necessary. Additionally, there is need for adequate capacity development support for food procurers, smallholder farmers, parents and teachers on issues of productivity, diversity, processing, post-harvest loss reduction, supply chain management, food quality, safety, handling and storage.

Strengthening community participation: Involvement of the community is a prerequisite for ownership and thus sustainability. There is need to identify ways in which the community can contribute either in kind or cash, or even through ideas or labour, without overloading them with expectations that they are not able to meet.

Context based approach: In order to achieve lasting nutritional benefits the school meals food basket needs to be adapted to locally available food reinforced by nutrition education to the parents. Additionally, to link the local farmers to school feeding market, there is need to tailor the procurement approaches and systems to favour smallholder farmers in order overcome market imperfections, minimize transaction costs and gain market access for small-scale farmers.

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ANNEXES

7.2. Annex I: School Feeding modalities, benefits, advantages and trade-offs.

	Meals	Snack/High Energy Biscuits	Take home rations
Expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have significant educational benefits related to enrolment, attendance, drop-out, educational achievement • May have benefits on cognition by alleviating short term hunger – depending on timing • May reduce micro-nutrient deficiencies depending on the food basket (it should provide 80% of the micronutrient requirements for the school aged children) and complementary interventions • Provide an immediate food transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have similar educational benefits related to educational achievement but perhaps lower benefits on enrolment and attendance. • May have benefits on cognition by alleviating short term hunger • May reduce micronutrient deficiencies depending in the contents of the biscuit and complementary interventions. • Provide an immediate food transfer, however usually lower than meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have benefits on enrolment, attendance and drop-out (especially for girls, orphans and vulnerable children, if so targeted), • There is emerging evidence for benefits for education achievement • Provide a food transfer to the household
Advantages and trade offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a safety net point of view, their transfer value is limited in amount of food the child eats at school • Food basket may be tailored to local tastes and cultural habits • Require community involvement and participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy content insufficient for long school day schedules or boarding schools or when school age children food consumption needs to be supported • Useful to reach a wider number of children at a lower cost than onsite meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a safety net point of view, they function much like conditional cash transfers – useful when CCT is in place. • They can give higher transfer value than on-site meals or snacks. • Traditionally targeted to certain groups of vulnerable children but could be distributed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for full day and boarding schools • Food basket has increased costs, high transport and preparation costs • Costs may be contained by modifying the food basket (e.g. using micronutrient powders such as sprinkles with one commodity) • Requires cooking facilities, storage at school, access to cooking fuel, community involvement and teacher monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to serve early in the school day (important to address short term hunger) • Less infrastructure (no cooking, limited storage, reduced community and teacher involvement). Useful especially in urban or emergency settings. Longer shelf life. • Since they are considered snacks, there is a reduced risk that the child will get less food at home because of substitution • Less need for community or teacher involvement • The effect of snacks or biscuits on enrolment or attendance of children depends on the extent to which they are considered a meaningful incentive to children and their families 	<p>widely to reach particularly vulnerable households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not require cooking • Require less community involvement but teacher time to monitor attendance • Evidence that they also benefit pre-school children • Potentially cumbersome to transport from school to home, protection concerns (high quantities of food distributed at one time).
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Annex II: International and regional treaties on food security and school feeding²⁰

The relevant International and regional treaties on food security and school feeding include:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (OHCHR 1948)
2. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 (OHCHR, 1996)
3. The World Food Security Compact of 1985 (FAO 1985)
4. The African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1986 (ACHPR, 1986)
5. The Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 'Protocol of San Salvador' of 1988 (QAS, 1988)
6. The convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (OHCHR, 1989)
7. The World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition of 1992 (FAO and WHO, 1992)
8. The European Social Charter of 1996 (Revised) (Council of Europe 1999)
9. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1999 (ACERWC, 1999)
10. A European Union Agenda for the Rights of the Child of 2011 (European Commission, 2011).

²⁰ Global School Feeding Sourcebook page 81