



Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
Réseau Inter-Agences pour l'Éducation en Situations d'Urgence
La Red Interagencial para Educación en Situaciones de Emergencia

INEE Good Practice Guide

School Feeding

In areas of crisis, school feeding programs are a common strategy to improve children's health, increase students' school attendance and retention and improve learning. Typically school feeding programs are implemented by NGOs partnering with food-giving organizations like World Food Program and government donors.

Strategies

- Ensure high health standards during preparation and storage

Concrete steps must be taken to ensure that illnesses are not spread through school feeding programs due to the poor storage and preparation. Sources of food contamination can include poor storage, polluted water, flies, pests, domestic animals, unclean utensils and pots, dust and dirt. Additionally, food can be contaminated spoiled by mold, insects or rodents if improperly stored. To avoid contamination care should be taken that food is sufficiently cooked and prepared close to the time of consumption, not reheated and served.

- Maximize nutritional inputs

Lack of food is often one of the challenges in areas of crisis as food is either not available or people do not have the ability to purchase it. It is therefore necessary to maximize the nutritional impact of the food which students have access to by ensuring that food that is cooked properly to avoid the degradation of vitamins within the food and that the students are free of worms.

Additionally, monitoring is essential to make sure that the donated food is reaching the students. In some cases, limited school food may be split between a select number of children, or food is sold or diverted for personal or school gain. In areas of severe malnutrition, food fortified with vitamins and minerals should be requested.

- Anticipate the effects of effects of school feeding on education and the community

Except in boarding schools and pre-schools, school feeding programs are meant to alleviate malnutrition or increase school attendance and retention and not as a long-term intervention. It is therefore important to consider its long-term impact on education, families and communities. If food is consumed on the spot all children should be treated equally.

- If special groups are being targeted such as girls or young mothers, does this cause resentment amongst their fellow students or in the community?

Distribution of edible oil or other food items to girls can be used as an incentive for girls' attendance, as it is used in the homes to feed both boys and girls.

- Does school feeding alter whether children have access to food at their homes?
- Should food be distributed to the whole community instead of just children?
- Does using schools for distributing food alter a community's view of education?
- In instances where food is used to attract children to school, what will happen when the assistance stops?

In regard to the latter, a clear exit strategy should be developed to minimize the disruption of the education system.

Checklists

Health assessment and monitoring

- Is the program focusing on promoting improving the health of malnourished children, attracting children to school or both?
- Has a baseline been conducted to monitor the children's physical improvement? How often will follow up surveys be conducted?
- Is the donated food sufficient to make up shortcomings within the students' diet? In terms of vitamins? In calories? Is the donated food being supplemented with fresh fruits and vegetables?
- Should de-worming be a component of the program? If so, include cost of de-worming tablets for both students and teachers. If de-worming is being done is it being done properly?

Donation of Food

- What commodities are being donated? Salt? Oil? Pulses? Grains?
- What is the quality of the donated food? Are the beans old? Any signs of infestation?
- Is the quantity of food sufficient for the targeted population? i.e. total number of children to benefit, number of meals per day, duration of school semester also taking into account boarding schools and school shifts
- How are the student numbers checked? What occurs if student numbers increase or decrease?
- Is the food fortified? Is this necessary? If fortified is it being prepared properly to preserve the nutrients?
- Is the donated food is culturally acceptable?
- Is there sufficient space for food storage?
- Are all children assisted equally? i.e. girls or young mothers being given a ration over boys Does this cause tension in the school? How could this be eliminated or mitigated?
- Is the food being delivered regularly? Are disruptions in delivery disrupting education?
- Is there an exit strategy for stopping the assistance?

Preparation

- Is there sufficient water for cooking and cleaning?
- Is there a place for food handlers to wash their hands? Do they use it?
- Is fuel available? Is it purchased or do students bring it? What is its impact on the environment?
- Does the school have access to the other ingredients to cook the food and make it palatable? I.e. sugar for porridge or salt/pepper and oil
- Are fuel-saving measures being implemented? E.g. soaking of beans, use of fuel saving stoves
- Is the food cooked thoroughly? Where possible choose easy cook commodities, especially for the mornings.
- Are cooked food eaten immediately? Are cooked foods carefully stored? Are cooked foods reheated thoroughly?

- Are locally produced vegetables safe? Especially, if crops are grown on land grown with waste water? Is contact between raw food and cooked foods avoided?
- Are kitchen surfaces, utensils and cooking pots clean? Does the school have sufficient soap for cleaning pots?
- Are foods protected from insects, rodents and animals?

Impact on school, family and community school

- Does the community contribute to the planning and implementation of the school feeding program? It is good to involve the Parent Teacher Associations in the management of the school kitchen, menu planning-- variety in the weekly and monthly school menu will depend upon their initiative, and budgeting
- How does the school get complementary foods such as greens and onions for cooking? Is this an additional expense for the school?
- Are certain groups targeted for assistance? How does the school feeding program affect relations between students?
- Does the school feeding program affect whether students get food at home?
- What will happen when the school feeding program stops? Will children stop going to school?

Resources

All documents are available through the online Good Practice Guide on the INEE website: www.ineesite.org

- [Selected targeting and design for school feeding and other food assisted education \(FAE\) programs.](#) (pdf), Available at Catholic Relief Services (CRS) web site (<http://www.catholicrelief.org>)
- [SFP's \[\(School Feed Programs\): Establishing the Context.](#) (pdf), Available at Catholic Relief Services (CRS) web site (<http://www.catholicrelief.org>)
- [A compilation of best practices for school feeding programs.](#) (pdf), Available at Catholic Relief Services (CRS) web site (<http://www.catholicrelief.org>)
- [Adolescents : Assessment of nutritional status in emergency situations.](#) (pdf), Available through OCHA at (<http://www.reliefweb.int>)
- [Adults: Assessment of nutritional status in emergency situations](#) (pdf), Available through OCHA at (<http://www.reliefweb.int>)
- [The WHO Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation](#), Available through World Health Organization (WHO) at (<http://who.int>)
- [A Summary of CRS Experience with Food Assistance in Education](#) (6 page PDF file), By Cornelia Janke
- [A Presentation on Food-Assisted Education](#) (9 page PDF file), A summary of CRS' experience implementing food-assisted education programs, describing the rationale for linking food assistance with education and some of the results of such programs. By Jennifer Nazaire
- [Selected CRS School Feeding/FAE Targeting & Design Guidelines](#) (2 page PDF file), A presentation which defines food-assisted education (FAE) and describes FAE objectives and interventions. By Jennifer Nazaire

- [SFPs and Education: Establishing the Context](#) (18 page PDF file) A two-page document outlining selected targeting and design best practices for school feeding and other food-assisted education programs. By Cornelia Janke
- [Food Security and School Feeding Programs](#) (19 page PDF file), A background document which makes the case for designing school feeding programs so as to meet multiple education, health, and other objectives and provides guidance to do so. By Kristin Hicks
- [Wrapping the Perfect Package: What Educational Inputs Make a Difference?](#) (5 page PDF file), A background paper which discusses the links between school feeding programs and long- and short-term food security. Includes a discussion of rations, by Beryl Levinger
- [Monitoring and Evaluation for CRS School Feeding Programs](#) (20 page PDF file), A short summary of literature describing what needs to be in place in a school to ensure children attending actually learn, by Beryl Levinger
- [Best Practices for School Feeding Programs](#) (11 page PDF file), A comprehensive handbook with tools for designing and implementing an effective monitoring & evaluation system for school feeding programs.
- [Food-Assisted Education Programs in Haiti](#) (6 page PDF file), A compilation of best practices for school feeding programs, A Joint Presentation by CRS, CARE, and World Vision, 1999.