

Enhancing Nutrition through Home Grown School Meals Program: Policy, Governance and Capacity Building in Nepal

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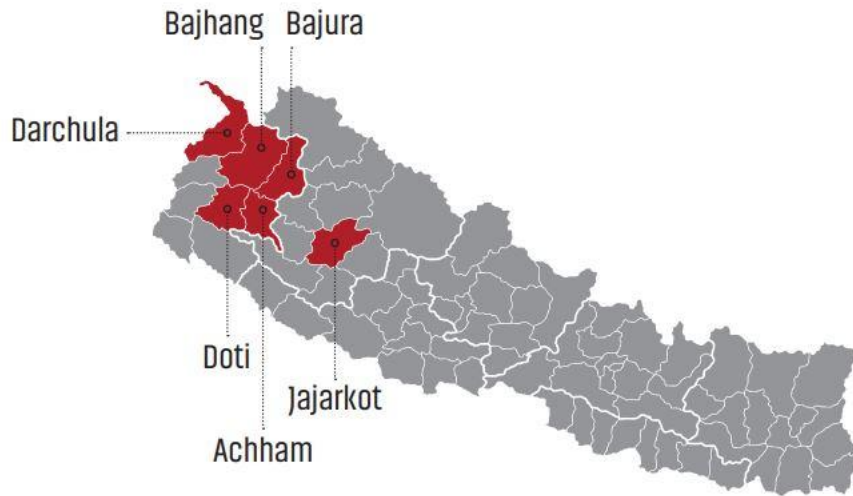
Introduction

Introduction to School Meal Program



- One of the largest Social Safety net investments by the Government of Nepal
- Contribution to the nutrition, educational and learning outcomes of school going children
- Universal coverage – across all community schools in Nepal till Grade 5
- Out of 77 districts, 74 being led by GoN and 3 districts currently by USDA FFECN (in the past cycle 6 districts)
- Various modalities of management of School meal – (in-source and out-source), management styles
- Home Grown School Feeding emerging as a tried and tested holistic method
- Institutionalizing the system in the context of federalism





Programme Duration
January 2021 - September 2024



Number of Palikas
56



Number of Schools
1,590



Number of cooperatives
106



Number of Farmers
31,205



Number of Students
273,534

USDA FFECN Home Grown School Feeding Program

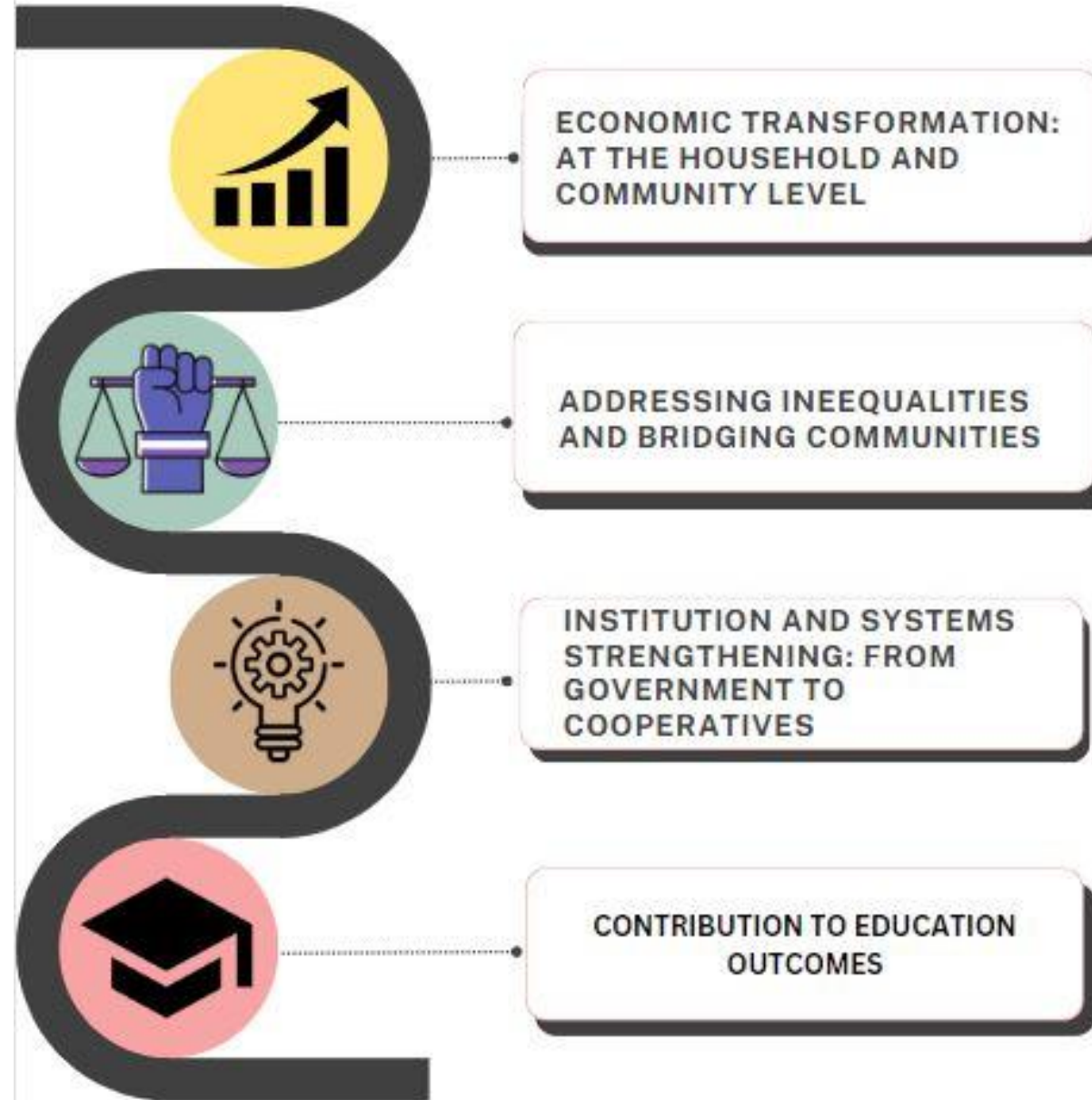
The purpose of this overall component is to **help build the capacity of local government and schools to procure foods independently and sustainably, and ensure the menu is properly diversified for improved nutrition.** Under this component there are two key, interconnected sub-activities:

- 1) the Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) of food, to complement a hybrid food basket,
- 2) the Home-Grown School Feeding component (HGSF) and technical assistance post-handover.

The LRP sub-activity is the introduction, on a small scale, of a few locally procured foods and the capacity development of local government and school management committees, to learn how to manage that procurement.



Rationale



Method of Implementation



Farmer

- Farmers' group formation
 - LF selection
- Capacity building - CSA
- Linkage with the agro cooperatives, LG, AKC, input suppliers, schools etc

Post harvesting
IPM tools-drought
resilients, drip irrigation, bio
pesticides, CSA indigenous
crops crop diversification,
based on the menu



Cooperative

- Market assessment and Gap Analysis
 - Linkage
- Capacity building
- Supply chain
- Market system and local economy strengthening



Government

- SMP subcommittee formation
 - Capacity Strengthening
- SoP Review/Revision/Development
 - System Establishment
 - Sustainability



School

- Constant coordination with SMC, Committee, PTA
 - Record Keeping
- QA, Record Keeping, Periodic Monitoring
 - Gap identification and advocacy/coordination with LG
 - Constant coordination with the agency responsible for SHN

Results



- Over 250,000 students being fed warm day meals on a regular basis
- 1066 farmers supplying vegetables and lentils through this modality. 838.41 MT vegetables imported in the last year alone. Over USD 970,000 worth of vegetables and lentil procured locally under the program
- Capacity enhancement of 106 cooperatives
- One TA places in each LG for School Meal Program support
- School Meal management sub committee under each LG Education Committee
- Coordination between Education department, Agriculture department, Health department and Administration Unity under the LGs
- 56 LGs have prepared their tailor-made policies to implement mid-day meal through Home Grown modality
- Coordination amongst all three tiers of the government – Federal, Provincial and LG
- Reduced absenteeism, drop-outs, increased attention span of students, increased retention rates. Has reported to learning loss recovery, contribution to education outcomes (NARMA, 2024)



Implications



KAP TRANSFORMATION TIME PERIOD

Transformation of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices amongst Institutions and Individuals require significant engagement and long period of intervention



LEADERSHIP

Programme tends to be more successful where the elected representatives or bureaucrats are committed to make a difference. More often, this commitment is lacking



SCHOOLS' INTEREST AND CAPACITY

Schools of various capacities. Infrastructural challenges, resource deficit, politicization, vested interest in terms of school meal budget



LRP RELATED CHALLENGES

Arid land, varying landscapes and production related challenges. Price of commodities, specially lentil a bit challenging (local and indigenous varieties more expensive, lentil loss during processing)



Implications and Recommendation

- Potentials of replicability and scalability across the nation and lessons can be shared to other country's School Meal programs as well
- As Hon Minister (MOEST) Vidya Bhattarai's first decision in the office - School Midday Meal National Framework (based on local production) to be developed. Multi-sectoral collaboration essential in the development of this framework
- Mandatory coordination of MoEST, MOALD, MOHP for the success and sustainability of the modality
- Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan III highlights the modality in several areas. Adherence to it in the days to come
- Further collaboration essential between all three-tiers of the government for better management
- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to track programme performance, fund utilization, and food quality.



Any Questions?
Thank You.