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Co-operating Partner Reporting

World Food Programme in Bangladesh



World Food Programme

WFP Co-operating Partner Reporting Template

Co-operating Partner

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

WFP Project

Advocacy for the School Feeding in Bangladesh

Project Country

Bangladesh

Project Area

Dhaka/Bangladesh

Reporting Period

1 March 2022 to 31 August 2023



Part 1: Basic Section

1. Overall Performance

Applicable Not applicable

WFP has taken an initiative to facilitate advocacy on school feeding issue in Bangladesh and CAMPE as a network of NGOs involved in education and a good understanding of School Meals was engaged to assist in undertaking the advocacy initiatives. This engagement has contributed to creating an enabling environment necessary to move the school feeding agenda forward by engaging relevant decision-makers and stakeholders to influence policies and strategies for school feeding and meals towards improving quality with equity in basic education in Bangladesh.

Specific Objectives of the project were to:

- To effectively move the school feeding agenda forward, WFP seeks an NGO to undertake advocacy activities to ensure the engagement of relevant high-level decision-makers and stakeholders in Bangladesh;
- Advocacy efforts should focus on building awareness for school meals and the importance of removing food and nutrition gaps faced by the most vulnerable schoolchildren;
- Advocacy message should be aligned with the approved policy and the latest available data on the importance of school feedings as part of a comprehensive reopening framework for schools considering the COVID-19 school closure;
- The NGO will engage in advocacy activities designed to educate, motivate, and inspire stakeholders.

To achieve the key objective and targets of “advocacy for the School feeding in Bangladesh” Project, following activities were carried out by CAMPE during this period:

1. **Development of an action plan:** At the beginning of the project CAMPE, prepared an Action Plan, which is also considered as a Field Level Agreement (FLA) in consultation with concerned officials of WFP and CAMPE Team.
2. **Conduct a stakeholders mapping exercise.** CAMPE conducted a mapping exercise to better understand gaps, challenges, and opportunities related to school meals/feeding. The Stakeholder Mapping for the School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh provides an analysis of key stakeholders, their roles, responsibilities, and engagement strategies, aiming to enhance educational attainment and children's nutrition to build a healthy and knowledge society through the School Feeding Programme. The Programme is aligned with the National School Meal Policy 2019 and contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 & 4. The success of this programme depends on the active participation of diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities, educators, and more.

The Stakeholder Mapping Report offers invaluable insights into the multi-dimensions of stakeholder engagement at various administrative levels, from the national to the grassroots. It identifies challenges, opportunities, and strategic approaches for collaboration, communication among stakeholders, and resource mobilization. By leveraging the expertise and commitment of these stakeholders, we can work together to overcome challenges and ensure the sustained impact and expansion of the School Feeding Programme.

The report identified the stakeholder roles, responsibilities, and strategies for engagement, as well as suggestions for mitigating challenges and ensuring long-term sustainability. The report also highlights the importance of cross-sectorial coordination, integration with relevant ministries, and the involvement of local advocates for Programme success.

The findings and recommendations presented in this report will serve as a valuable resource for informing policy decisions, enhancing programme implementation, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. So, we are confident that the report can make significant strides in improving child nutrition, education, and overall well-being in Bangladesh.

3. **Stakeholder Consultation on School Meal:** CAMPE organized a “Stakeholder Consultation on School Meal” to collect input from relevant people on a draft “stakeholder mapping” to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of advocacy initiatives in the light of the “National School Meal Policy 2019”.

A total of 60 participants including representatives of concerned government agencies, CAMPE Council, Education Watch groups, development partners, INGO/NGOs, researchers, teachers associations, and other interested civil society groups actively participated and contributed to the consultation.

Ms. Rahnuma Nahid, Joint Chief, Education Wing, Socio Economic Infrastructure Division, Planning Commission emphasised on proper planning including procurement, management, and implementation during designing the DPP. She also acknowledged the findings of the Mapping exercise are relevant for the planning.

Mr. S. M. Ansaruzzaman, Project Director, School Feeding Programme, Directorate of Primary Education emphasised on the political commitment of the government in favour of the school feeding which will contribute to achieve the SDG4. He emphasised on gradual scaling up of the school meal programmes which would contribute to achieving not only SDG4 but also goal 2, 3, 5 and 8.

Mr. Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, Director, Planning, and Development of DPE emphasizes on linking of quality education and health and nutrition. Earlier DPE used to provide biscuits to children in school feeding programme, now considering diversifying the food and enhance coverage of the programme. He also recommended NGOs and development partners could consider scaling up or undertake the school meal programme where, DPE could extend support.

Dr. AQM Shafiul Azam, Director, Planning and Development of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education emphasis on combating poverty linking with SDG 2 (addressing hunger) and SDG 4 (quality education). He has emphasized on community engagement in preparing DPP and also extended the school meal programme to secondary level.

Ms. Rasheda K. Choudhury, Executive Director, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and former adviser to the caretaker government said that the Government has adopted a school meal policy and the upcoming DPP should aligned with the commitments. The government can involve Civil society to implement this policy. Reflecting on the draft output of the Stakeholder Mapping, she recommended to include some of the important actors like other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, local entrepreneurs, micro-credit regulatory authorities, PKSF, Rotary-Lions Clubs, etc. She has expressed CAMPE's commitment to continue its effort to strengthening advocacy for school meals.

- 4. Online Stakeholder Consultation on Post-Covid Situation:** CAMPE also organized an online Stakeholder Consultation on Post-Covid situation in schools. A total of 126 representatives including concerned government agencies, non-governmental development organizations, international organizations,

development partners, representatives of teachers associations, education watch groups, and education researchers participated in the consultation.

The participants emphasis on the lessons learned from the previous projects, particularly separation of responsibilities for ensuring transparency and accountabilities; ensuring food safety and hygiene; cost effectiveness including variable cost and overhead costs; linking with agricultural value chain and engaging local producers with adequate training. Focus on the most marginalised is critical, for example, exclusion pockets like Char, Haor, Hills and coastal belts, etc. are home of most marginalised. Besides northern part and north eastern part of Bangladesh are ranked as food deficit areas which need attention in the planning process. Some of the key recommendations include (i) to achieve the SDG goals, priority should be given to primary school children for their poverty eradication and hunger reduction. They are the most important stakeholders of the School Meal Programme. In this regard, their opinions should be considered seriously & implementation of school meal programme requires committed people. Therefore, mothers should be involved in this programme. Moreover, assistance of local Union Parishad may be taken.

- 5. Consultation on School Meal Experience Sharing with Stakeholders Including Media:** CAMPE organized a “Consultation on School Meal Experience Sharing with Stakeholders Including Media”. Objectives of the Consultation were to share experiences, lesson learned and recommendations on grassroots reality from the implementing partners in different parts of Bangladesh; to seek stakeholder’s opinions for overcoming challenges the next course of action; to identify some critical advocacy issues and relevant stakeholders for taking up follow-up interventions. A total of 48 participants including representatives from CAMPE, UNICEF, WFP, BRAC, RRF, FIVDB, GAIN, Shushilan, ESDO, ASBAE, Teacher Associations, Print Media, Electronic Media, Online media, Social workers, Teachers and CAMPE staff were participated and contributed in the consultation.

Major reflections/recommendations received from the guests and participants of the meetings included, inter alia, the following:

- School Meal is a child-friendly initiative committed by the Hon'ble Prime Minister;
- The government has recently declared that a “programme for primary school feeding” (2023-2026) is being prepared for implementation;
- Implementation of school meals is a very critical issue. its efficient management requires direct and indirect involvement of the local community particularly for ensuring transparency and accountability;
- School meals are vital as many children go to school with an empty stomach every day due to poverty. It is hard for them to focus in class, and their learning outcome often do not reach the desired level;

- Students will get better nutrition if they get mid-day meals in school. It is also a great incentive for families to send their children to school;
- The school feeding programme has been a blessing for children from underprivileged regions such as *Chars, Haors*, and Hill districts;
- The school meal will contribute to increased enrolment of children of pre-primary and primary level, raise attendance, improve attention to lessons and increase retention in school. It will also contribute to ensuring nutritional security of the children and at the same time, making good use of local agricultural products;
- The initiative will contribute to increasing the duration and quality of student-teacher contact in schools by eliminating hunger during the school day, as the learners can learn in a joyful and congenial environment, free from hunger;
- The programme should involve the local community in fulfilling the nutritional requirements of children in school, conserving traditional food habits, culture, and indigenous values. It will help build a strong foundation for healthy, capable, and talented human resources. Also promote environmental protection, homestead gardening and conserving the nature;
- The government of Bangladesh and NGOs can work together on school meal-related issues. The government can consider the engagement of national and local NGOs based on the comparative advantage for ensuring quality, targeting the most marginalised, and improve service delivery;
- Collaboration, networking, and partnerships at national and sub-national levels among government agencies, academic institutions, experts, private sectors, UN agencies, development partners, NGOs, INGOs, CSOs, local community, and media are essential to minimize the gaps for achieving equitable and quality education through a school meal programme.

All those initiatives aim to identify and analyse key stakeholders involved in the programme to ensure their active engagement, contribution, and effective management for its success. It is expected that it has recognised the definition of school feeding needs better understanding by all stakeholders, understanding of the food basket and judicious utilisation of the recognised food basket in selecting the menu, developing value chain, ensuring a minimum acceptable quality of food as per the national standard, operational management and food safety, and stakeholders' engagement is key for the success of the school meal/feeding programme.

There are multiple groups of stakeholders engaged in the school meal/feeding within and beyond the government-led school feeding programme. Their knowledge and expertise as well as systematic engagement of stakeholders could improve the school feeding for ensuring food security and improved nutrition of the children across Bangladesh focused on the most marginalised. The programme aligns with the National School Meal Policy 2019 and relevant Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on improving child nutrition and reducing hunger, increasing school enrolment, and creating a congenial learning environment towards launching a large project on school feeding.

2. Challenges and Changes

 Applicable Not applicable

Although the government is keen to launch a large programme on school feeding and gradually move towards comprehensive coverage of school meals, the current reality is a little unclear. Concerned government officials were a little 'careful' about the move as there were some directives from the ECNEC. Moreover, changes in the leadership in ministry, DPE, and School Feeding project make the situation more challenging.

There were issues of high-level directives about the food basket preference, coverage, and budgetary implications. Without getting a reasonable signal, concerned officials were hesitant to open up on the issue. Thus, CAMPE management in consultation with concerned WFP officials adopted a strategy to go slow and allow space for the concerned government officials to feel comfortable and the action plan had to be revised and activities had to be deferred several times.

After getting the green signal, we had to rush to accomplish the interventions as per the action plan. Thus, there are some savings as well.

Despite challenges, the project has achieved the substantial goals of the project. There was a minor change in the mapping exercise as the government has taken the alternative decision not to go for school meals as they intended before COVID-19. The mapping has refocused on government priority areas. Besides, the secondary education-related officials also intended to see their reference in the stakeholder mapping, which was incorporated.

3. Measuring Results

 Applicable Not applicable

Level of Results	Indicators	Targets	Baseline (date)	Previous follow-up (date)	Latest follow-up (date)	Source of verification
Outcome description						
Output description	A plan including timelines for proposed school feeding advocacy activities	1	0	1	2	Copy of the Action Plan
	Mapping of High-level school feeding stakeholders and ways to engage them	1	0	0	1	Copy of the report
	Organise consultations,	3	0	0	3	Attendance sheet and

	workshops, and discussions for advocacy outreach					report of the consultations
	Produce workshop and high-level meeting reports	3	0	0	3	Copy of the reports
	Media events	1	0	0	1	Attendance sheet and report of the consultation

A plan including timelines for proposed school feeding advocacy activities: one action plan was developed at the beginning of the project on 29 March 2022, which was revised once on 12 April 2023. There were no significant changes in the plan except the timeline.

Mapping of High-level school feeding stakeholders and ways to engage them: The mapping exercise was carried out covering the high-level stakeholders including the institutions as mentioned in the previous section. A copy of the report has been annexed to this report.

Organise consultations, workshops, and discussions for advocacy outreach: Three consultations have been organised under this project on 23 July 2023, 31 July 2023, and 24 August 2023. The third one was focused on interaction with media personnel. A total of 235 people attended the consultations of which 57 persons (24%) were women. Among them, 25 persons have joined an online survey using Google Forms to prioritise critical issues.

Produce workshop and high-level meeting reports: Three separate reports have been prepared for the above-mentioned three interventions and submitted to WFP. Copy Annexed.

Media events: As mentioned above, one interaction has been arranged with the media on 24 August 2023 as mentioned above.

All the planned activities under the FLA have been accomplished.

4. Beneficiaries

Applicable Not applicable

Activity					
Beneficiaries		Male	Female	Food distributed (mt)	Cash/Voucher distributed (US\$)
by age group	Children (under5)				
	Children (5-18)				
	Adults (18+)	178	57	N/A	N/A
	Total	178	57	N/A	N/A
by residence status	Refugees				
	IDPs				
	Residents				
	Total				

Although the ultimate beneficiary of school feeding is children, however, this project is targeted at strengthening advocacy for school meals which beneficiaries are the primary and supportive stakeholders. The concerned government officials and development partners are the primary stakeholders as they would make decisions on the school feeding and ensure required service. A total of 235 persons (57, 24% women) have participated in the consultative process. Among them, 35 persons have also participated in an online survey.

5. Participation of Population

Applicable Not applicable

CAMPE involved stakeholders in the project, including decision-making related to implementation through the three consultations, desktop review, and survey. These key stakeholders shared their comprehensive feedback and suggestions which are reflected in the report.

There are four major categories of stakeholders in three layers. The main categories of stakeholders include (i) government, (ii) private sector and non-state actors, (iii) development partners, and (iv) civil society. The layers represent how close they are in decision-making, implementation, service delivery, or beneficiary and supportive stakeholders. The three layers considered are (i) core stakeholders, (ii) Primary stakeholders, and (iii) secondary (supportive) stakeholders.

The success of the School Feeding Programme relies on the active engagement, contribution, and management of diverse stakeholders. Government, private sector, development sector, and civil society stakeholders played a significant role in ensuring the programme's sustainability and impact.

6. Risk management

Applicable Not applicable

The high-level decision-maker's directives were critical for ensuring the engagement of the government officials. CAMPE found it was difficult due to special directives provided by the ECNEC and subsequent misleading reports by the media.

They were also reluctant to speak on the issue in consultative forums organised by civil society which is an important component of accountability as agreed in SDG 16 and 17.

To overcome the challenges, CAMPE has engaged with political leadership and senior government officials on other occasions and published an open appeal to the Honourable Prime Minister for supporting and scaling up school feeding or meal programmes. CAMPE raised the issue of school meals in the national budget consultations where the children from marginalised communities raised their demand to the Planning minister in front of the Director General of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and other government officials, development partners, and CSO leaders. The minister and the director general talked on the issue. The media also highlighted the importance of school meals and school feeding programmes.

7. Coordination Applicable Not applicable

The coordination on the Advocacy for School Feeding in Bangladesh was held between CAMPE and WFP. Besides, the progress and key interventions were reported in one of the Local Consultative Group for Education (ELCG) meetings for awareness and to draw the attention of the development partners. In organising the consultations, CAMPE coordinated with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE). The school meal issue was also discussed in one of the education cluster meetings as part of the Education in Emergency (EiE) related topics.

CAMPE will continue this effort to coordinate with the member organisations and an ad-hoc task force or forum may be created under the broad umbrella of CAMPE like some other forum run by CAMPE such as the Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) Forum, Coalition of lifelong learning (COLL), Youth Groups, etc.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation Applicable Not applicable

The monitoring functions of CAMPE included (i) self-reporting, (ii) periodic visits, (iii) monitoring by the core group of CAMPE staff, (iv) monitoring by the CAMPE Council and General Body, and (v) joint donor monitoring.

Three main domains of monitoring include (i) program interventions, (ii) financial resource management (including VFM), and (iii) operations management at different levels. The levels included community, sub-national, and national levels. There were quarterly meetings with WFP on the status of the implementation of the project.

In addition, the CAMPE board/council plays an oversight role in the monitoring of CAMPE interventions. CAMPE, through its different Council sub-committees, reviewed the strategic issues for strategic decisions at the Council and AGM.

9. Sustainability and Resilience Applicable Not applicable

- State financing is key for sustainability of the school feeding;
- Linking the programme with income-generating activities can cover some expenses towards sustainability;
- Leveraging local resources and seeking partnerships with local businesses can contribute to cost efficiency;
- Evaluating the success of the Programme and learning from other countries' experiences can inform potential expansion to more schools;
- Exploring additional funding sources, including CSR funds and donations, expands the Programme's reach;
- Including the Programme in national education policies ensures its long-term sustainability;
- Strengthen Stakeholder coordination among government, development partners, civil societies, and corporate sectors to align with SGD 17.17.

10. Lessons learned Applicable Not applicable

- School Meals is an important element of quality learning that reinforced in the consultative process for advocacy initiatives.
- Teachers, students, parents, and the community are the main actors in school feeding programmes, and officials CSOs, and suppliers are supporting bodies. Their positive attitude and competencies are very important.
- School meals cannot stand alone without importance on food values sanitation and hygiene.
- Hot meals can serve all nutrition's to the students.
- Collaboration & coordination mechanism is very important among GO, DPs NGOs, and Schools for this multidimensional task.
- Short-term and event-based advocacy may address initiative issues but continued and long-term Advocacy is very important in activating targets.
- Area-based massive campaigns through engaging Media are also important.
- Harmonization between the demand side and the input delivery system should be emphasized.

Part 2: Optional Section [Choose up to three (3) of the following questions]**11. Progress towards gender equality** Applicable Not applicable

Genders is a critical consideration for achieving inclusive and equitable decisions. Gender transformative actions are critical. In the context of Bangladesh, boys, and men often get preference for access to quality and nutritious food in countries like Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh has demonstrated conscious effort and affirmative actions could address the issue, for example, the female quota for women in teacher recruitment and conditional cash transfer played a critical role in promoting women's empowerment through jobs and education. Similarly, the school meal could be a game changer in addressing hunger and malnutrition for girls of school age.

12. Transfer of resources Applicable Not applicable**13. Vulnerable Individuals** Applicable Not applicable

The school meal is critical for addressing hunger and nutrition deficiency among the most marginalised. As it is an equitable action, the school meal should consider a minimum of 30% of the calorie intake needed and 50% of the micronutrients needed that would cover 10 food baskets. This initiative has tried to promote this key principle so that the programme renders benefits to the most vulnerable communities. In addition, WFP had prepared a poverty map that would help in better targeting the programme so that the participant can contribute to an informed decision-making process.

14. Implementing Partners

Applicable Not applicable

15. Visibility

Applicable Not applicable

16. Value for Money/Cost effectiveness

Applicable Not applicable

17. Environment

Applicable Not applicable

The consultations have emphasised culturally appropriate food which is linked with the agricultural value chain and low-tech solutions. It also recommended the capacity building of the communities for developing the supply chain and community-based healthy agricultural practices aligning with environmental protection and homestead gardening.