

AN EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS AND NUTRITION STRATEGY PROGRAM IN THE WESTERN REGION OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Good nutrition throughout the lifecycle is a prerequisite to good health, as it adds to the quality of life and is the foundation of a strong and productive society. School meals have multiple benefits, not only to the child but also to the community. This study sought to establish whether the policy formulation, adoption and implementation of school meal and nutrition policy was all inclusive and what is the level of implementation and in addition what are the challenges that key implementers could be facing and how can they be addressed. The study objectives were to establish the level of knowledge, to determine the level of implementation and to find out the challenges facing implementation of the Kenya National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy in the Western Region of Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional qualitative design. Purposive and quota sampling technique were used where information rich persons were sampled in counties and sub counties of relevant ministries. They were selected based on the characteristics of the population and the objective of the study. A total of 95 respondents were interviewed. Data collected was used to formulate key themes for analysis, coded and finally percentages were used to present the final report and findings. 87.6% of the key informants were aware of the policy and 33.8% of the key informants felt that the policy needed a financial support framework. Despite of the challenges, 88.6% of the key informants reported that many (62.2%) schools had adopted various strategies to help them realize the goals of the National School Meals and Nutrition Strategy. Most (78.2%) schools have opted for parents' contribution towards school meals and nutrition programme at schools. Having a policy is not sufficient, a supportive environment is essential for realization of the policy goals and objectives.

Keywords: Evaluation, School Meals, Nutrition Policy.