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| **Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) program in Ethiopia: successes and challenges in program implementation and scale up** |
| **Background/Objectives** In Ethiopia, currently 7 million children are suffering from food insecurity. Food insecurity has several negative ramifications on children, including lower access to education, increased drop out-particularly among girls, and decreased cognitive ability. The World Food Program’s Home Grown School Feeding Program (HGSF) aims to combat food insecurity by providing food which is produced in the country to participating program schools. The goal of this study is to identify key successes and barriers in program implementation and scale up of HGSF program and its major component: WASH.**Methods** A modified “Tanahashi Model” was used to highlight the major barriers in successfully implementing the HGSF program and its WASH component. We performed a nutritional analysis of the school meal to evaluate its nutritional sufficiency. Data from in-depth interviews and focus groups of key stakeholders for HGSF program in the SNNPR region of Ethiopia, and desk review were used in this study.**Results** The key challenges identified in the HGSF program include unreliable water access, added financial burden on the community, quality control issues with food, partial deficiency of essential micronutrients in school meal, and fluctuating cost of gasoline affecting the delivery of food to schools. The barriers to successful WASH programming in schools are inaccessibility to water, poor quality of WASH infrastructure, financial unaffordability, and poor interagency collaboration. The successes of the HGSF include buy-in at all levels, sociocultural acceptability of the school meal, improved educational outcomes, and alleviation of financial burden of the marginalized population. The main success of WASH programming was comprehensive training for the teaching staff and cooks in hygiene promotion and practices.**Discussion** The HGSF program has successfully increased school enrolment and attendance, particularly among the marginalized population, and reduced financial burden of the low-income drought-ridden households, thus helping the country to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. However, supply side constraints such as: shortage of safe water for cooking, drinking, and handwashing, as well as ‘Quality’ constraints- namely the poor quality of sanitation facilities have emerged as a major barrier that is preventing this program from reaching its full capacity across this region.**Keywords***Ethiopia, School Feeding, Education, Nutrition, Bottleneck Analysis* |