

Food and Nutrition Security: The complementing roles of Health and Education sectors

The education sector is one of the important stakeholders towards achieving food and nutrition security in Sri Lanka. Promotion of healthy eating through nutrition education and awareness to achieve nutrition security is a common goal of both education and health sectors, which can contribute directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

- Despite a number of interventions to uplift the nutritional status among school children in Sri Lanka, undernutrition indicators have been stagnant for the last two decades, with a rising trend in overweight and obesity.
- The current economic crisis of the country has resulted in further deterioration of these indicators.

How can the education sector help to combat malnutrition?

Through empowering all school children to inculcate healthy dietary behaviours and physical activity with nutrition education through school curriculum and enabling school environment via the following key areas

The National Nutrition Policy recognises six policy priority areas to combat malnutrition



Food and nutrition security for all citizens



Coordinated multi-sector collaboration and partnerships



Legal framework strengthening for protection of the right to safe food



Nutrition improvement throughout the lifecycle



Nutrition promotion in emergency situations and extreme weather conditions



Strategic management of information and research

Supporting children's nutrition through the School Meal Programme

- Streamline and expand School mid-day meal programme to cover 1/3 of the daily caloric requirement of primary school children.
- Expand school mid-day meal programme to cover all children in targeted schools.

Creating supportive environments

- Establish/ streamline implementation of school canteen policies and guidelines on healthy food for schools, other education and training institutes.
- Promote playing/ physical activity at all appropriate settings (schools, home etc).
- Establish/streamline Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services (AYFHS) centres to promote healthy eating, physical activity and psychosocial support among adolescents and youth.
- Improve and maintain water sanitation facilities and sanitation at schools
- Educate, empower and mobilise teachers and parents through awareness on scientific information on balanced diet, utilisation of diversified nutritious food and safety of food

Nurture children's minds and bodies with the power of education

Improving nutrition knowledge and practices is an important strategy for reducing the burden of NCDs in the country. Food and nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and practices among school children are key factors to achieving household food and nutritional security.

- Streamline school health programme including age-appropriate health and nutrition education
- Promote healthy dietary practices at home and schools
- Empower the community to minimize food wastage at retail and consumer levels.
- Streamline implementation of Strategic Marketing and Communication Plan for FBDG.

Health promoting schools

- Provision of age-appropriate nutrition knowledge
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles by encouraging healthy food and sleep habits, and physical education
- Using school children as change agents for promoting healthy lifestyles in their households
- Create supporting environments





TARGET 1.4 	EQUAL RIGHTS TO OWNERSHIP, BASIC SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES	TARGET 10.1 	REDUCE INCOME INEQUALITIES
TARGET 2.1 	UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD	TARGET 10.4 	ADOPT FISCAL AND SOCIAL POLICIES THAT PROMOTE EQUALITY
TARGET 2.2 	END ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION	TARGET 10.5 	IMPROVED REGULATION OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL MARKETS AND INSTITUTIONS
TARGET 2.3 	DOUBLE THE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES OF SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS	TARGET 10.A 	REDUCE TRANSACTION COSTS FOR MIGRANT REMITTANCES
TARGET 2.7 	PREVENT AGRICULTURAL TRADE RESTRICTIONS, MARKET DISTORTIONS AND EXPORT SUBSIDIES	TARGET 11.8 	STRONG NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
TARGET 2.8 	ENSURE STABLE FOOD COMMODITY MARKETS AND TIMELY ACCESS TO INFORMATION	TARGET 12.2 	SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES
TARGET 9.2 	PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION	TARGET 12.6 	ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING