

SCHOOL BASED FEEDING PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

by:

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School-Based Feeding Program is an essential strategy for achieving the goals of education in improving the health, and performance of school children. School-based Feeding Program has an explicitly significant impact in helping children increase academic and extra-curricular performance. However, its sustainability is the biggest problem that every school must resolve.

School-Based Feeding Program is one of the flagships of the DepEd Order No. 28, “DepEd’s school health and nutrition programs” launched in 2018; food to be prepared and served in the school-based feeding program should meet the nutrients needed by the school children to perform well in class. Food production is a significant element in the preparation of meals, thus the ways and means of acquiring food have made the feeding program in school hard to sustain.

Donation of food, either raw or prepared, provided that it is in perfect hygienic and sanitary condition, has been accepted by schools to sustain its feeding program. School heads and feeding coordinators should establish a close relationship with farmers to purchase locally sourced food that is affordable and favors to increase in farmers’ income as well. School gardens should also be established and maintained to support the feeding program.

Another problem encountered in implementing school-based feeding is the low participation of parents during the preparation of meals for their children. Operation of the school-based feeding program also creates an additional workload for the teachers. Furthermore, insufficiency of the feeding area for preparing and eating, and enough

kitchen tools and utensils are some of these problems too. Thus, the budget allocated for all 120-day feeding programs not only for food but other all the factors involved in the whole implementation of the program should be considered in the planning process.

School-based feeding program implementers should continuously be finding means to raise funds for the continuity of the feeding program activity. They should inform and instruct the parents about the presence of the school feeding program and its goals and objectives. Thus, school administration should provide more training about budgeting, food handling, proper hygiene, and sanitation; teachers should increase proper and constant monitoring of the learners' hygiene as well; and learners should have an awareness about the importance of proper diet to have good health.

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