SCHOOL - BASED FEEDING PROGRAM (SBFP): IMPROVED DIETARY DIVERSITY AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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Every day, some children across the country are suffering from malnutrition making them more susceptible to diseases. Children’s attending school often arrive with an empty stomach, making it harder for them to focus on lessons. A daily meal provides them better nutrition and health to achieve great in school. Different studies proved that breakfast is the most important meal of the day for everyone. It will provides us energy and improves our concentration and focus for our daily routine and day’s activities. However, some children living in extreme poverty, breakfast can be their one and only meal. A meal that can define if they will survive or not in a day’s activities.

Education department has been conducting School-Based Feeding Programs (SBFP) since 2010. DepEd, through its division and district offices, identifies pupils who are wasted and severely wasted. SBFP beneficiaries are selected based on this nutritional status database. School-Based Feeding Program last for 120 days, the feeding program targets the restoration of at least 70% of beneficiaries to their normal nutritional status and the improvement of class attendance by 85-100%.

School canteens are also tasked to help in the school – based feeding program among the pupil’s beneficiaries.

The DepEd guidelines on canteen operations for school – based feeding program includes:

Banning of junk foods detrimental to a child’s health
Serving nutrient-rich foods (i.e., fruits, vegetables, fortified products)

Reasonable prices

Clean preparations and facilities

The program aims to improve the nutritional status of wasted and severely wasted children’s. A child's beneficiary’s nutritional status is assessed before and after the program.

School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) is a safety net program designed to provide educational and health benefits to wasted and severely wasted children. Malnourished school children seriously affects their ability to learn and focus. The nutritional status of school children impacts their health, cognition, and subsequently their educational achievement. Undernutrition and poor health of school-aged children is likely to diminish their cognitive development either through physiological changes, lack of focus in activity and lesson or by reducing their ability to participate in learning experiences and activities - or both. Hunger has also been a major barrier to child learning process and focus on education.

Last year, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has signed a law institutionalizing a national feeding program for undernourished children in the country. On June 20, 2018, Duterte signed Republic Act 11037 or the “Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act,” which aims to combat hunger and malnourished among Filipino children. The education and social welfare departments shall be the lead implementers of this law. To ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the program, the education and social welfare departments shall establish a community-based mode of procurement, liquidation and audit of goods and services needed for the program.
References:

https://danitaschildren.org/programs/feeding-program/
https://www.projectpearls.org/programs/feeding/
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5782386/