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ABSTRACT

Micronutrient deficiencies particularly iron and Vitamin A are unacceptably high among young children in Kenya; about 76% and 74% of pre-school children are deficient in Vitamin A and iron, respectively. This affects cognitive development, lowers school performance, limits adult productivity, reduces immunity and eventually contributes to high burden of infant and child morbidity and mortality. The major factors contributing to high malnutrition in Kenya include: increasing food insecurity, as a result of recurrent droughts and rising food prices; poor dietary diversity and poor access to fortified foods; inadequate quantities of food; diseases and other underlying factors like poor hygiene, childcare and feeding practices, and low access to nutrition knowledge and services. There is also widespread promotion and use of inappropriately constituted cereal and legume mixes. In order to adequately realize children’s right to basic nutrition, as entrenched in the constitution of Kenya, acceleration of nutrition interventions is necessary. The HGSM programme targets primary and pre-primary school children enrolled in schools located in semi-arid areas, food insecure areas, areas with low education indicators and high levels of malnutrition. This review article will provide an overview of the HGSM programme scenario in the food security sector, the problem, micronutrient deficiencies, strategies/methods of implementation, effectiveness of the HGSM and recommendations.

Key Words: Micronutrient deficiencies, Food security, Home Grown School Meals