



**Action
Health Incorporated**

Promoting Accountability in the
Delivery of the Home Grown School
Feeding Programme in Ogun State:
**THE GOOD, THE BAD AND WHAT COULD
BE BETTER**

Action Health Incorporated

Action Health Incorporated (AHI) is a non-profit organization committed to creating opportunities for young people's successful transition to productive adulthood. AHI was founded out of a deep concern about young people's limited access to preventive information and life skills to deal with the myriad of issues confronting them.

Since our establishment in 1989, AHI has served as an advocate and catalyst for creating better life options for young people in Nigeria. In partnership with individuals and institutions around the globe, AHI has helped to drive advocacy efforts in the public domain and engender action by states and the federal government to address the health and development needs of young people in Nigeria.

We envision a world where every young person's right to achieve their full potentials is guaranteed, where all young girls and boys can grow up to assume control over their lives, having the basic information, skills, and services to enhance their health and well-being.

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We are grateful to all distinguished members of the Community Accountability Watch Group [CAWG), as well as our Ogun State-based partner organizations who coordinated monitoring activities in their respective local government areas: Positive Outreach Foundation in Ado Odo Ota, Health Education and Empowerment Initiative in Ifo, Sam Ade Royal foundation in Ijebu Ode, and Peasants Dragnet in Sagamu.

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Finally, we are truly grateful to Action Health Incorporated's Staff and Consultants, who all worked tirelessly to ensure the successful completion of the project.

List of Acronyms

AHI	Action Health Incorporated
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAWG	Community Accountability Watch Group
CBO	Community Based Organisation
HGSFP	Home Grown School-Feeding Programme
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission
LGA	Local Government Area
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHGSFP	National Home Grown School Feeding Programme
NIBSS	Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System
N-SIP	National Social Investment Programme
PTA	Parent -Teacher Association
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
UN	United Nations
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Over the last few decades, corruption has become a rising scourge in Nigeria. To address this malaise, the government has made several efforts to curb the negative trend including institutionalizing the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000.

The Ogun Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) programme started in January 2017 with over 270,000 public primary school pupils and 3,000 cooks as beneficiaries. With the huge investments made by the federal government in the national school feeding programme, comes a high possibility of corruption in the implementation process. To mitigate this possibility, the MacArthur Foundation, initiated support for Nigerian-led efforts to strengthen transparency, accountability, and participation on this government-funded social investment programme intervention. Action Health Incorporated is one of the four (4) civil society organisations funded by The MacArthur to monitor the implementation of the programme in Ogun State.

In 2018, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) commenced the monitoring of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) to promote accountability and transparency with a specific focus on sixty (60) primary schools spread across four (4) Local Government Areas: Ado Odo-Ota, Ifo, Ijebu Ode and Sagamu in Ogun state.

“Promoting Accountability in the Delivery of the HGSFP in Ogun State: The Good, The Bad and What Could Be Better” report shows how community participation, advocacy and monitoring impact accountability and transparency, as well as, promotes collaboration between state actors and civil society organisations.

BACKGROUND

Hunger is an ongoing menace affecting over 615 million people out of 7.6 billion people in the world. It is estimated that over 14 million children under the age of five worldwide suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).¹

The global economic crisis, fluctuations in food prices in 2006–2008, wars and political conflicts, and devastating natural disasters have deprived millions of people of access to adequate food; and most of the individuals affected are in the most impoverished regions of the world.

40 percent of almost 83 million people, live below the country's poverty line of 137,430 naira (\$381.75) per year (NBS, 2019). About 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are out of school, with only 61 percent of 6-11 years regularly attending primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education. The mean year of schooling in Nigeria is 6.5 years (UN, 2019)², resulting in a higher proportion of children in Nigeria not having the minimum required number of years of formal education in Nigeria; going by the Universal Basic Education policy.

According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) about 10.5 million children (5-14 years)² are estimated to be out of school due to issues like gender discrimination, household poverty, and child labour, which have contributed to depriving many children of their right to access quality education. Albeit, evidence suggests that education is a veritable tool in alleviating poverty.

This report describes the situation of the government-led HGSFP in Ogun State before the citizen-led anti-corruption intervention, the changes observed in the course of implementation as a result of the actions applied to ensure accountability and transparency, what worked, what did not work and why, as well as, how accountability and transparency can be improved in the continuing implementation of the school feeding programme.

14 Million

Children under the age of five worldwide suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)

61%

of 6-11 years regularly attending primary school

35.6%

of children, aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education.

10.5 million

Children (5-14 years) are estimated to be out of school

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME



“The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) is a school feeding initiative that offers locally produced food items to primary school pupils”. Many governments around the world have consistently recognized the significance of the school feeding programme; in addressing short term hunger, by ensuring at least one daily nutritious meal to support access to education, improve human growth and development, stimulate food production and increase school enrolment. The high level of food insecurity, significant incidence of malnutrition and economic meltdown all combine to make school feeding programmes relevant.

**Beneficiaries
of the
programme
taking
their
lunch.**

In Africa, the school feeding programme is an initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - a programme by the African Union under the Food and Nutrition Security programme. This initiative was launched in 2003 when the African leaders through the African Union and NEPAD reached a consensus that the education, health and nutrition of young children had to be the key for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).³

In 2003, the programme was thus adopted as a key intervention to address hunger and malnutrition by African governments within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) agenda. Further to this, NEPAD, under CAADP teamed up with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Millennium Hunger Task Force to launch a pilot Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF), as an initiative that addresses the needs and growth of the local small farmers, while providing nutritious meals for pupils and improving enrolment and retention in schools.

The programme was initially piloted in Twelve (12) countries which include; Angola, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. Following the success, it has been adopted across over 14 countries in Africa.

In Nigeria, the programme was piloted in twelve States from the six geo-political zones in the country. These are FCT Abuja, Bauchi; Cross River; Enugu; Imo; Kano; Kebbi; Kogi; Rivers; Ogun; Osun; Nasarawa and Yobe. Many of the States did not continue and Osun State was one of the few, which continued the implementation of the programme.⁴

However, in 2016 the Federal Government reintroduced the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme as a key component of the National Social Investments Programmes (N-SIP) that aims to deliver a government-led and cost-effective intervention. The NHGSFP was precisely designed to provide a N70 adequate nutritious school meal for primary school children in classes 1-3 only. The programme is expected to reduce hunger, improve education outcomes to over 5.5 million children annually.

The Government of Ogun State commenced implementation in January 2017, with 874 of the 1554 public primary schools in the state and scaled up in phases to 1,510 schools as at 2019. Over 270,000 public primary school pupils in Primary 1-3 benefited from the programme across the Local Government Areas of the state, with over 3,000 direct jobs created for cooks and other categories of workers involved in the food supply chain.⁵

During the implementation of the programme, the Ogun State Home Grown School Feeding Department, established a multi-sectoral State Steering Committee with members drawn from the State Ministries of Special Duties, Education, Agriculture, Health and Community Development, to develop an implementation plan in line with the guidelines for the National HGSFP.

2003

programme was adopted by African governments

12 states

in Nigeria piloted the programme, many states discontinued. Osun state continued implementation

2016

FG reintroduced the NHGSF Programme as a key component of N-SIP

N70

cost of one daily meal for each pupil

Jan 2017

Ogun state government commenced implementation with 874 of 1554 public primary schools.

270,000

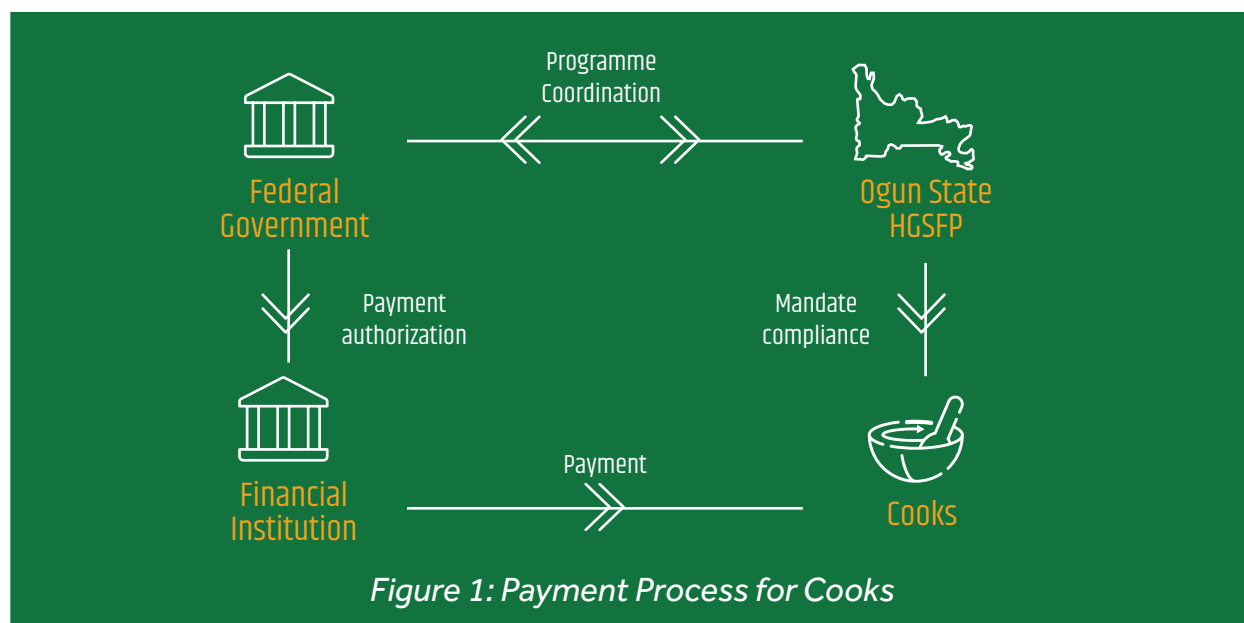
public primary school pupils in primary 1-3 benefited from the programme across LGAs of the state.

In line with the National HGSFP guidelines, cooks were recruited from communities where schools were located to ensure acceptance and reduce travel time and costs for cooks. Furthermore, selected cooks were trained and made to undergo food handlers' test in a recognised state health facility. In addition, the Ogun HGSFP made provisions for the bulk procurement of protein content by state-appointed aggregators at the rate of N25 for meat and N21 for fish. These sums are deducted from the N70 provision per pupil.

Furthermore, the Ogun State Steering Committee facilitated the provision of loans (N79, 769.52 each) to cooks through the provision of cooking kits – industrial coal pot, medium-size food warmer, two small warmers, big cooking spoon, turning stick, 100-litre drum, plastic bucket, knives, serving spoons, stainless serving spoon, two iron cooking pots, a bag of charcoal, metal colander, sieving spoon, sieving spoon, and plastic bowl. The loan also covered the purchase of a uniform (specially designed for cooks), apron and a cap. The loan was to be repaid over a period of three years, through deductions from payments made to cooks for their feeding assignment. Cooks were also required to open savings accounts with specified banks and their account details were shared with the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBBS) for verification in line with the national guidelines for the implementation of the project. Cooks were assigned designated number of pupils, the least being 70 and the highest 150 pupils respectively. Payments were made to these accounts fortnightly, covering the number of pupils assigned to them.⁶



In addition, the Ogun HGSFP made provisions for the bulk procurement of protein content by state-appointed aggregators at the rate of N25 for meat and N21 for fish. These sums are deducted from the N70 provision per pupil.



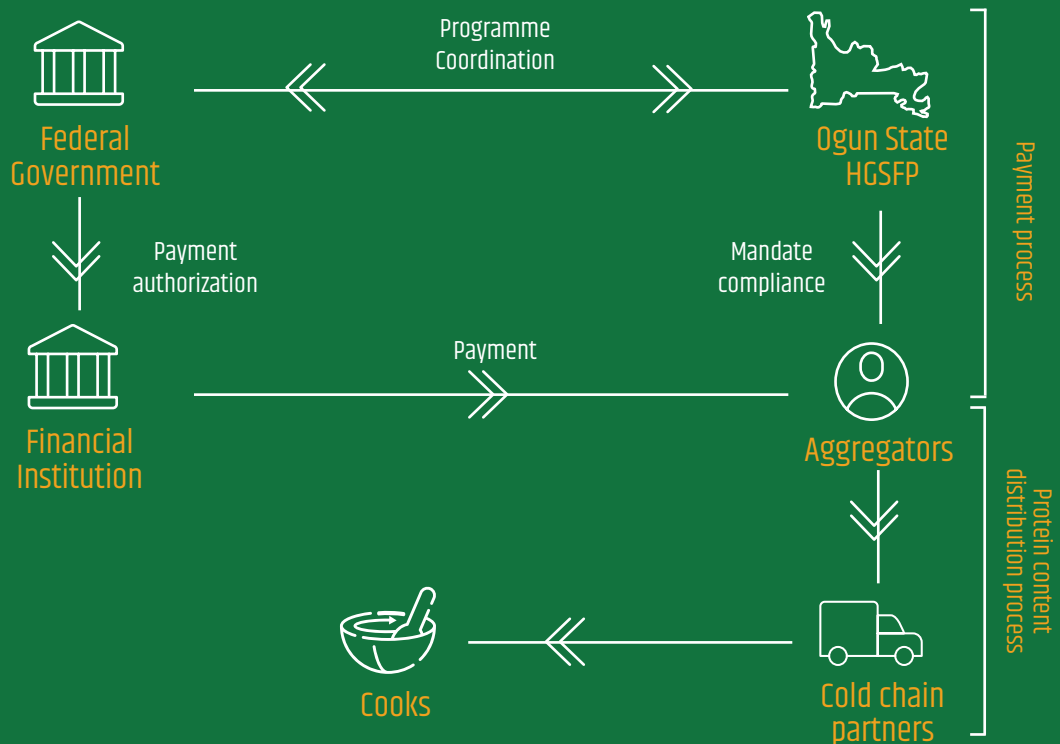


Figure 2: Protein Content: Payment, Processing and Distribution



 Day	 Menu
Monday	Rice, beans and fish
Tuesday	Beans, stew and fish
Wednesday	Rice, stew and meat
Thursday	Eba/Fufu, vegetable soup and meat
Friday	Ogun East: Ikokore and grounded fish Ogun Central and Ogun West: Eko and Moin-moin

Table 1: Approved HGSFP Menu for Ogun State Schools

Ogun State HGSFP Theory of Change

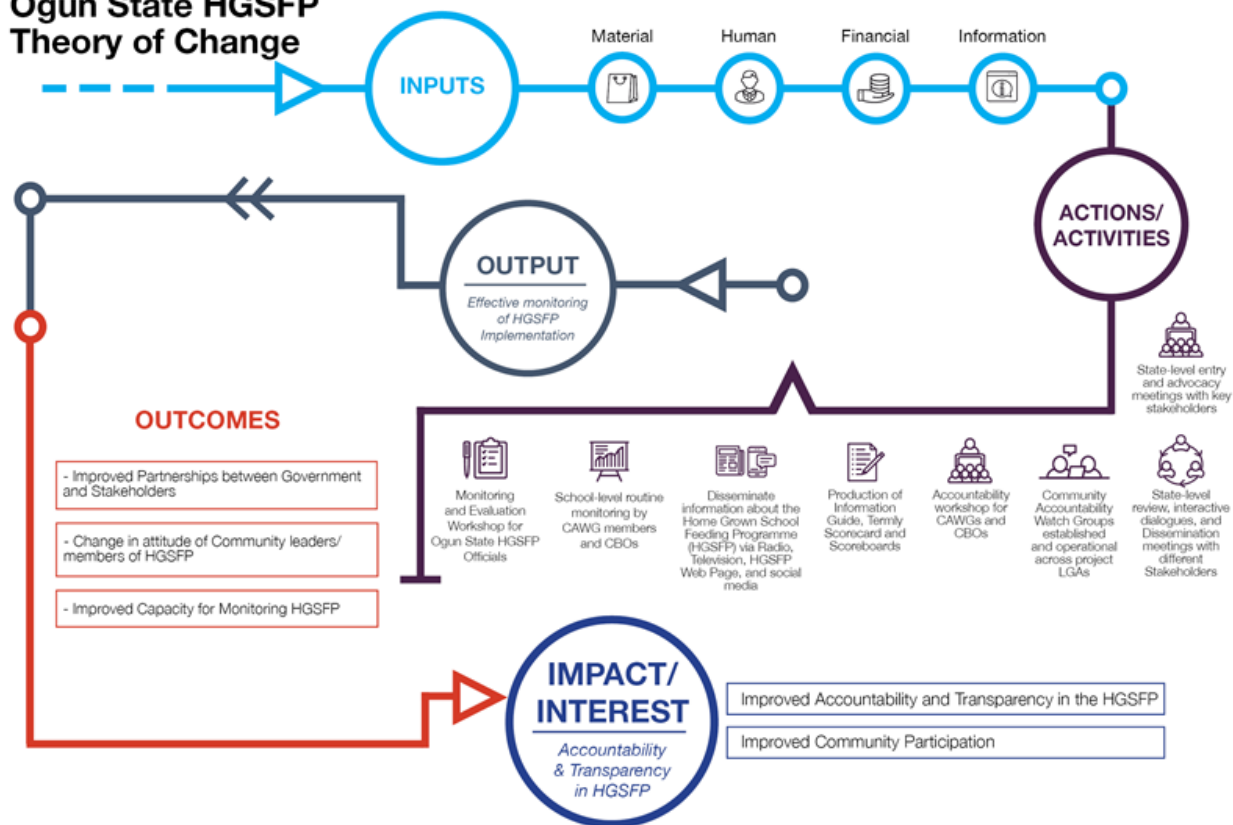


Figure 3: Theory of Change

ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE OGUN HGSFP



Corruption and lack of accountability in the implementation of social development programmes have far-reaching impacts on access to and quality of public services in countries around the world including Nigeria. The MacArthur Foundation's On Nigeria initiative sought to build on a theory of change, which harnesses the “voice” of Nigerian citizens and the “teeth” of the Nigerian public and private institutions, combined with capacity building and collaboration to address the problem of corruption in Nigeria.

Against this backdrop the MacArthur Foundation, engaged Action Health Incorporated (AHI) alongside three other non-governmental organizations, to conduct corruption mitigation activities focussing on the implementation of the NHGSFP in Ogun State. AHI was specifically funded to undertake accountability and transparency interventions in 60 (sixty) of the public primary schools implementing the government-led school feeding programme across four LGAs – Ado Odo Ota, Ifo, Ijebu Ode and Sagamu.

Advocacy visit to the Ogun State HGSFP team and the Commissioner Barrister Adeleke Adewolu, Ministry of Special Duties and Intergovernmental Affairs, to seek support for programme implementation

LGA	Number of schools
Ado Odo Ota	24
Ifo	14
Ijebu Ode	12
Sagamu	10
TOTAL	60

Table 2: Number of selected intervention schools by LGA

The specific objectives for our project implementation were to:



Strengthen synergy between government Ministries Departments and Agencies, Parent Teachers Association, Community Leaders and School Based Management Committees to improve accountability and reduce areas for corruption in HGSF programme;



Support and enhance existing accountability mechanisms that improve the delivery of the HGSFP



Document and disseminate lessons learned about practices that facilitate accountability generally, as it relates to mitigating corruption within the HGSFP in Ogun State

3.1 Situation of the Ogun State HGSFP before the Commencement of Monitoring by AHL in 2018

At the project's inception, a baseline study was conducted in the sixty (60) schools to determine the status of implementation as well as identify gaps/weaknesses in the current operational procedures of the HGSFP that required strengthening.⁷

The study was conducted using questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews – with representatives of School-Based Management Committees (SBMC)/Parent Teachers Associations (PTA), four (4) Desk officers, four (4) Head Teacher/Health Teacher, and Sixty (60) Cooks.

Through this study, the following findings were documented:



1. Key stakeholders such as parents and representatives of SBMCs/PTAs and community-based organizations were previously uninvolved in monitoring of food delivery in schools, they also did not see themselves as having any role to play in ensuring accountability and the overall success of the programme.



2. A significant proportion (28%) of teachers were not aware of the reporting mechanism for cooks' misconduct (i.e. failure to provide food, or provision of insufficient quantity of food, lateness and non-conformance to the approved menu) from the HGSF programme design



3. The payment system was not clear to the cooks as they reported unexplained deductions/charges from their remuneration. In addition, payment was consistently delayed and this led to inconsistency in the provision of meals to pupils.



4. Generally, the population of registered pupils in Primary 1-3 in the schools was irreconcilable with the total number of pupils assigned to cooks for feeding. This resulted in "excess provision in some schools and insufficiency in others". In schools where provisions made exceeded registered pupils, feeding was extended to other classes (i.e. Kindergarten class), and where food was insufficient, the appropriate serving portion size was rationed/reduced.



5. Knowledge of the operational procedures of the programme was generally poor. This was partly because there was no resource material providing detailed information on the workings of the HGSFP.



6. Other challenges in the implementation of the programme included difficulty in accessing funds through ATM points, or long queues at banks, poor documentation of cooks' attendance and performance, insufficient bowls for serving pupils, difficulty accessing schools because some cooks were working outside their communities, difficulty accessing cold chain partners, small meat/fish size, and poor access to potable water in schools.

PROJECT STRATEGY

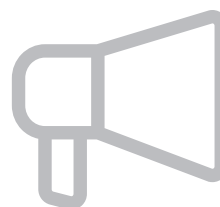
The project adopted six strategies to promote accountability and transparency in the Ogun State HGSFP; these were.

1. Advocacy
2. Community Mobilization
3. Capacity Building
4. Monitoring
5. Public Education
6. Meetings and Dialogue Fora



Advocacy

Upon project inception, advocacy meetings were held with the Ogun State Ministry of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs to solicit for partnership and support for the implementation of the project. This led to the joint selection of project LGAs and public primary schools. Advocacy meetings were also held with Education Secretaries and Desk Officers to get their buy-in with having “external parties” coming to observe and document activities within their areas of jurisdiction. These interactions helped with breaking the ice and facilitating access to the schools in their respective LGAs.



Advocacy meetings with stakeholders to solicit support for programme implementation.

Community Mobilization

At the commencement of our intervention, we recognized that community stakeholders – community leaders, religious leaders, community-based organizations working on developmental projects – were key to achieving accountability and transparency in the HGSFP on a sustainable basis; being critical stakeholders they were well-suited to demand for accountability in the delivery of the programme. In each of the four LGAs, a Community Accountability Watch Group (CAWG) was established with SBMC representatives for each of the schools as members. The CAWGs were required to demand accountability and compliance with the HGSFP design in schools within their communities. The CAWGs met with the HGSFP Officials on a termly basis to discuss the implementation, progress and challenges of the programme in each of the respective schools represented, and also recommend areas for improvement in each of these schools.



“

My children are beneficiaries of the programme, and I'm aware the food are prepared in a hygienic environment because I go around to inspect the food at least 3 times in a week. - **Mother, Ijebu Ode**

Community outreach led by CAWGs with the Olorituns of Ijebu land to sensitize them about the HGSFP





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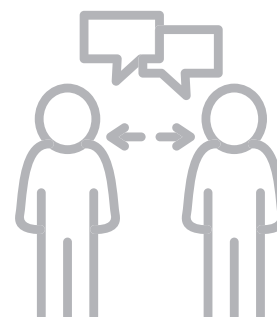
Ogun HGSFP Monitoring and Evaluation Plan developed in partnership with AHI.

Capacity Building

At inception, it was observed that the key stakeholders had very limited capacity for monitoring and demanding accountability; partly because they were not sufficiently informed about the programme and they hardly saw themselves as having any role to play in the success of the program. Recognizing these limitations, training sessions were organised to address the knowledge, attitude and capacity needs of different stakeholders.

Training conducted included capacity building for Community Accountability Watch Group (CAWG) on monitoring the HGSFP and roles as CAWG. Similarly, selected local Community Based Organisation (CBOs) partners were trained as monitors to oversee the school feeding activities and the CAWG.

In addition, the capacity of the Ogun State HGSFP government officials was built on how to emplace effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation systems on the programme. The outcome of the trainings was the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Ogun State HGSFP. With these trainings, we were able to strengthen the systems for ensuring accountability and transparency.



“

Through the training I received from AHI when we wanted to commence monitoring, I have been able to stand for change as cooks listen to me when I tell them to serve meals according to the right standard.

- CAWG member (Ijebu Ode LGA)



Capacity building workshop for Community Stakeholders on advocacy and accountability, their roles and responsibilities and basic steps in monitoring.



HGSFP Monitoring and Evaluation Office (Mr. Adewale Agoyun), Ijebu Ode Education Secretary (Mrs. Ifedola Olusoga) and CBO partner (Mr. Samuel Adebayo) partaking in a group work exercise during a capacity building workshop for the Ogun State HGSFP team on monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring

The implementation of the feeding programme was monitored across 60 schools through in-person observation and interviews with head/health teachers and cooks every week of the school term.

At commencement of the project a standardized monitoring tool was designed to collect data on the performance of cooks, punctuality, hygiene, number of pupils assigned and fed, access to hand washing equipment, size of protein content served, quantity and quality of food served, adherence to prescribed menu, payment received, ease of access to payment and the Cooks' performance register by the school.

Monitoring activities were designed to document level of compliance with the HGSFP implementation guideline and provide needed feedback for improved implementation. In carrying out this activity, two categories of in-person monitors were involved in the process – CBO representatives who monitored school feeding twice a week, and CAWG members, who monitored once a week.

Data collected from the monitoring exercise, was used to produce a termly scorecard. This scorecard helped schools keep track of their progress and performance over time in comparison with other schools.





As a result of monitoring by third party, we have been able to get first-hand information on what is happening. This has really helped us with resolving issues speedily.

- Mr. Agoyun Adewale- Ogun State HGSFP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

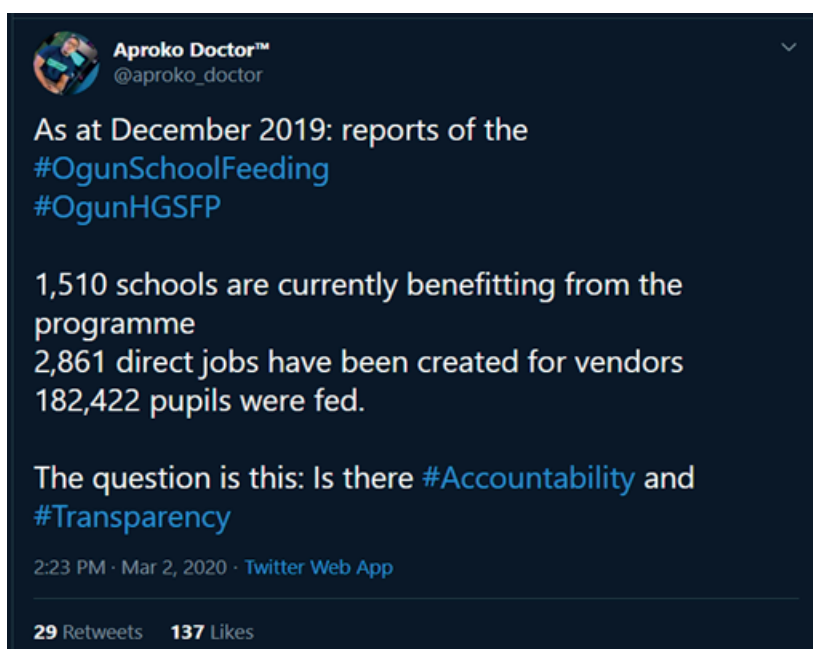
Public Education

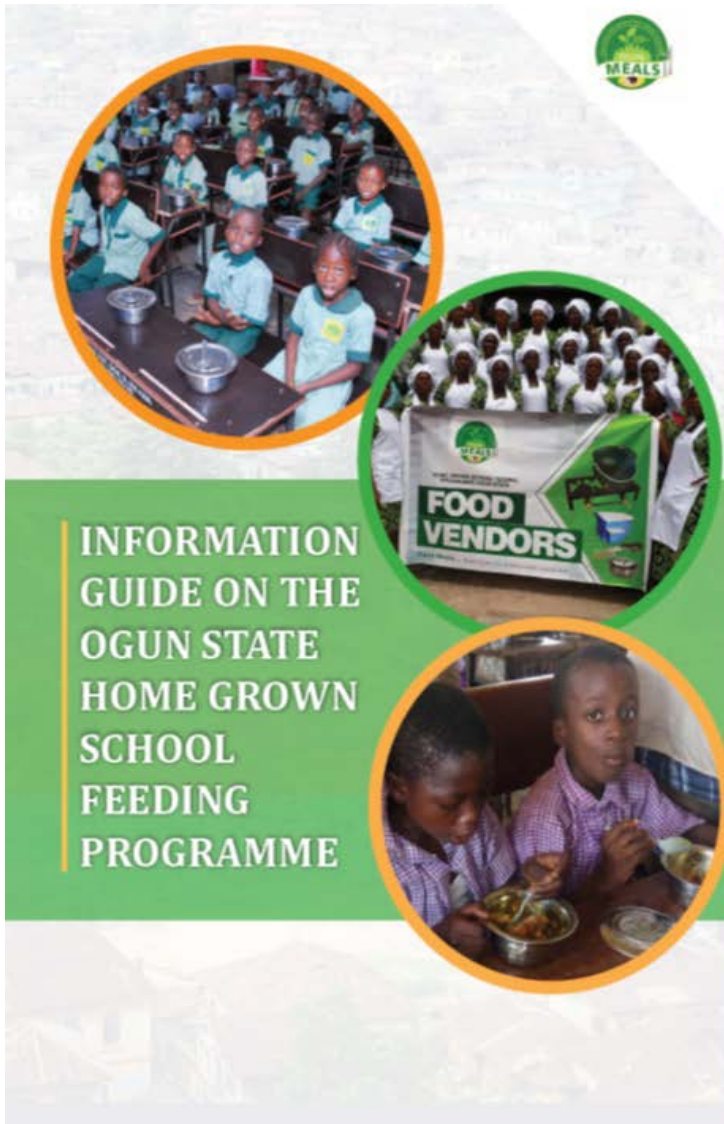
Beyond the physical engagement of stakeholders and monitoring of programme implementation, several media tools were utilized to engage and sensitize the public about the Ogun State HGSFP and initiate a discourse on issues around accountability and transparency on the programme.

In disseminating information and keeping the public abreast of the programme, a webpage that provides an update on project activities was created on the AHI Website. Also, an informational guide was developed to promote awareness about the programme as well as address the poor knowledge of the operational procedures of the programme identified at the baseline.



Furthermore, activity reports were published in the local newspapers and online media channels. A social media campaign was implemented to sensitize the public and raise awareness about the programme, disseminate lessons learned about practices that prevent transparency and accountability within the HGSFP in Ogun State. Over 1.2 million persons were reached during the campaign. This resulted in increased awareness and improved accountability.





INFORMATION GUIDE ON THE OGUN STATE HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

For Enhanced Learning

For the HGSFP, the following designated Ogun State
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08154664861



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Meetings and Mediation Fora

A major mediation forum was organised to provide clarification on finance-related aspects of the school feeding programme's implementation that were not adequately understood by the cooks. The forum was attended by representatives of the Ogun State financial institution responsible for funds disbursement and aggrieved cooks had the opportunity to ask questions about various ambiguous deductions from their accounts. This resulted in a better understanding of the banking operations and helped to clarify hitherto confounding experiences with the financial institution. Other meetings involving different stakeholders in the implementation of the HGSFP in the state were held periodically (i.e. the quarterly **Interactive Dialogue Meetings** with community/religious leaders, the **Project Progress Review Meetings** with state-level officials involved in HGSFP implementation to give feedback on monitoring activities which held twice annually; and the annual **Dissemination Meetings** with organizations working on HGSFP accountability and transparency in other LGAs in Ogun state to compare notes, share lessons learnt and make recommendations to state-level officials).



“

The meetings we conducted with community members helped to change their viewpoints and perceptions about the schooling feeding programme.

- Sodipo Olalekan-CBO Partner



Cross section of different stakeholders and Cooks in attendance at a mediation forum with the bank to clarify grey areas relating to their finances

4.1 What Difference Did We Make?

The intervention resulted in a change for the better among different stakeholders. Greater openness and collaborative partnership was achieved with government which enabled the facilitation of enhanced processes for the delivery of the school feeding programme while improved ownership of programmes was accomplished with members in the beneficiary communities.

From the project's onset we had positioned our organization as partners in progress with government, assuring them that all the information we found in the field, will be heard directly from us and not read them on the pages of newspapers. To this end, structures were put in place for regular quarterly meetings, allowing us to bring feedback from the field. This collegiality facilitated government's acceptance of citizen's involvement in monitoring the HGSFP activities and it set the stage for greater openness with receiving feedback and paying attention to seeking faster resolution. As diverse exigencies arose, they were addressed in the shortest possible time for the greater good of programme beneficiaries.

At the community level, through public education and awareness creation, encouraging community members' involvement and building their capacity for monitoring the programme, community stakeholders gained a better understanding of the programme, and their roles in ensuring accountability. This has led to an improved sense of ownership among community stakeholders, and a commitment to seeing that attention is called to anomalies observed during monitoring. Prior to our intervention, there was general disinterest and a feeling of powerlessness among community members.

“

A change in the perception of community members about the school feeding programme from 'what can we get, to what can we do' has helped to improve CAWG's resolve to contribute their quota to reporting whether things are being done right or not, on the school feeding programme.

- Dammylola Shodiya.- CBO Partner



Cross section of different stakeholders and Cooks in attendance at a mediation forum with the bank to clarify grey areas relating to their finances.

At the level of our colleague community-based organisations (CBOs) in the four project LGAs whom we offered technical assistance and institutional capacity building, they now have improved competencies with programme monitoring and evaluation, as well as greater collaboration between their various organizations and state government officials.

In addition, community stakeholders see themselves as custodians at the community level and are more willing and able to demand compliance with programme design from local implementers. This way, the intervention is promoting a **culture of participation**, which enhances accountability and transparency in the communities. The practice of gathering and reporting on-the-spot data about school feeding activities, has helped with accelerating the identification and resolution of challenges.

It was observed that, there was a clear difference in the attitude of cooks and teachers in project schools which distinguished them from the unmonitored non-project schools. Cooks in schools being monitored were more compliant with guidelines when compared to those who were not being monitored. Also the attitude of the teachers in the monitored schools was more supportive as they were more likely to be found documenting the quality of meals being served to their pupils compared to the unmonitored schools. Stakeholders' involvement in monitoring is a probable reason for the observed difference in implementation outcomes for schools in the state.



Community members' involvement in the monitoring activities has facilitated a better understanding of the laid down procedures and feedback channels for addressing deviation from implementation guidelines.

- Mrs. Mopelola
Osolukoya- State
Operations Officer,
Ogun State HGSFP



Words of a Head Teacher



Thoughts on the monitoring of school feeding by SBMC representatives

The SBMC representative comes regularly, as well as the AHI monitoring officers in charge of the food vendors. Their findings are documented each time they come.

Did feedback improve the implementation of school feeding?

Yes. I remember at a time, cooks complained about unexplained deductions in their remuneration. It was rectified by the officials in charge.... Also, when we complained about cooks not coming to school regularly while school feeding was ongoing, the AHI monitors followed up by informing the government or people in charge....

These complaints were addressed promptly and the cooks adhered to corrections.



Words of a cook in Ado-Odo/Ota



What difference has the involvement of the SBMC made?

Initially, the SBMC representative did not monitor us so we ... took things easy. However, when monitoring by SBMC representatives began, we had to be more serious, knowing that we were being watched and could be queried if we were found doing what was wrong.

On the Mediation Meeting with the Gateway Bank

There was a remarkable difference in the way they were dealing with our money. Some of the deductions were rectified and the bankers began to relate with us with patience compared to the initial time (before the meeting).

Strengthening implementation with feedback

We are grateful and very appreciative of everything the government has done for us. Many of our complaints were attended to.... We were also told to reject stale meat and fish provided by the cold chain partners and report to the SBMC/ monitoring officials when we get to the school. We were also informed that eggs will be included in the school menu for the upcoming period.

We have heard that the operating bank will be changed and excess deductions will no longer be an issue,



Words of a cook (Sagamu)

What difference has the involvement of the SBMC made?

Whenever we make complaints to them they usually appeal to us and ask us to be patient with the Government. I can say complaints made to them were attended to promptly.

Unexplained deductions were no longer made on our accounts and whenever we go to the bank and write to make withdrawals for all our funds, we are allowed to do so, unlike before when we were told re-write the withdrawal slip because **we couldn't deduct all the funds paid into our accounts.**



Words of a parent of a beneficiary pupil

About SBMC monitors

...we have members of the PTA who come to the school to check the cooks. They usually ensure cooks give the right amount of food. They are helpful and I think it's good.

About the school feeding programme

The programme is really good. For some children whose parents cannot afford to provide them lunch, the programme has helped them a lot.



Words of a government official

About AHI's intervention in the Ogun State HGSFP

AHI's intervention has really helped the State HGSFP office to put a formal structure in place for monitoring what our cooks are doing in the schools within their project catchment areas. At the HGSFP's inception, the State Office did not have the kind of system they have now put in place for us. Furthermore, through AHI's intervention the programme has reached the grassroots (community members) in Ogun State as they are now able to take ownership and participate in the programme.

About Ogun State HGSFP Office-AHI partnership

The collaboration with the support group has helped to show that government programmes can work when people come together. Although partnering with external bodies (NGOs) is not easy, we being Civil Servants who need to manage information carefully. But I will say the collaboration has helped modify the programme and also reduced corrupt practices even when anyone might want to cut corners.



1 Baseline Assessment



5 Trainings



1 Project Launch Meeting



1 Project Website/Online Engagement Channel

1 Twitter Online Engagement




25 Community Watch Group Engagements



8 Interactive Dialogues



5 Termly Scorecards



2 Information Guides



1 Cooks Attendance and Performance Register



3 Planning Meetings



1 Endline Assessment

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND WHAT COULD BE BETTER

5.1 What Worked?

Advocacy: Partnering with state actors helped to build trust, which facilitated entry into schools and made it possible for management team to cooperate with independent monitors. Synergy between government and non-government actors also enhanced the sharing of information and provision of feedback from monitoring activities for improved programme implementation.

Community involvement: The willingness to demand for accountability in the implementation of the programme by community stakeholders improved tremendously. This helped the cooks to comply with the implementation guidelines, 'knowing fully well' that they were being watched by different categories of stakeholders and could be sanctioned.

Capacity building: The conceptual approach towards improving the monitoring skills of the CAWG members provided a clearer understanding of their roles as key stakeholders and community vanguards. For instance, some SBMC/CAWGs donated plates and sets of cutlery, tables, portable water for pupils in their schools and while in a particular school they built a servery/modest kitchen for the school feeding programme. These strategic support signified a strong sense of ownership and sustainability.

Meetings and Mediation Fora: The various dissemination meetings and interactive dialogues made it possible for stakeholders to seek clarification on matters where there was any perceived deficit in transparency. The mediation forum with the bank officials gave an insight to policymakers that it was expedient to change the financial institution handling the payment of funds to cooks. As a result of this, the government recently changed the financial institution in line with the concerns raised during the mediation forum.



Capacity building training conducted for CAWGs in Ado Odo Ota LGA on use of monitoring tools

What Worked?

Meetings and Mediation Fora

Improving ownership and demanding accountability

Advocacy

Building trust, synergising with government and non-government actors, sharing information, providing feedback and improving programme implementation

Community Involvement

Improving ownership and demanding accountability

Capacity building

Improving stakeholders' monitoring skills, ensuring sustainability



5.2 What Did Not Work and Why?

Despite all these distinguished intervention initiatives described above, success was not recorded in all areas; while monitoring was useful for documenting non-compliance with implementation guidelines, it did not suffice to achieve full compliance even when feedback was provided to all parties. A major reason for this was that some factors required for full compliance were outside the sphere of control of local actors.

Funds management was an accountability challenge. Information on the disbursement of funds (i.e., amount disbursed, number of pupils paid for, etc.) to cooks and aggregators remained vague; this made it difficult for monitors to verify claims of non-payment of funds for feeding to cooks during the course of monitoring.

Timeliness of funds disbursement was one major factor that local actors – (state-level government officials, teachers, cooks, and community stakeholders) could not control. Although the initiatives helped identify this daunting challenge and provided platforms for discussing ways of addressing the issue, nothing changed. The power to make the necessary changes resided with the Federal Government agencies responsible for funds disbursement.

School Enrolment Data was problematic with obvious inconsistencies in the veracity of enrolment figures across most schools. This led to an audit inquiry into the school enrolment by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). In Ogun state specifically, the NBS audit inquiry revealed lower numbers of pupils in some schools in Ogun state than the numbers presented by these schools. CBO monitors also observed differences in the number of pupils provided by schools and the actual headcounts. These discrepancies posed a major challenge to ensuring transparency in the implementation of the HGSFP.

Interruptions in school feeding programme were observed during the 2nd term of the 2019/2020 session. Monitoring reports showed that this was due to the fact that new cooks were recruited while old ones were dropped. The bureaucratic bottlenecks associated with this process stalled school feeding (as recruitment of new cooks is a relatively long and demanding process which involves training, documentation, procurement of utensils, opening of dedicated accounts and bank verification by

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They bring food for some time and then they stop for a long time without any feeding. My children just get home and say, ***they didn't bring food again o!*** Many parents rely solely on this food but, their children get to school and they are not fed. I don't know what causes it but I know that when they bring food, all the children are happy.
- (Mother, Ado-Odo Ota)

federal authorities, vaccination etc.). More so, the disengagement of cooks placed them at a disadvantage, as they were unable to benefit from the school feeding programme after the repayment of their loans.

5.3 Good Practices - What We Found Useful

Recognising and seizing the opportunity for ‘**synergy**’ between government officials, non-governmental organizations and community stakeholders in putting systems in place to ensure accountability and transparency was highly instrumental in the work of strengthening the Ogun State HGSFP implementation process and blocking leakages. The State Government Officials’ willingness to collaborate with non-governmental partners was also very commendable.

The advocacy visits were very helpful with fostering the interest shown by the community stakeholders – community and religious leaders, CBOs, and parents. We found volunteers amongst the community stakeholders who expressed their heart-felt gratitude for the opportunity’ to improve the delivery of the programme in their localities. They moved away from the common practice of apathy towards government programmes and showed great enthusiasm towards owning the HGSFP. Hence, the intervention demonstrated the value of social capital – shared understanding, values, trust and cooperation – in development. In fact, some community members contributed to infrastructural resources for the programme in their localities and these initiatives were remarkable achievements on the project.



5.4 Lessons Learned

Community participation: Engaging community stakeholders in projects, such as ‘monitoring of the HGSFP’ fostered strong sense of ownership and improved social capital. This enhanced accountability and transparency, and improved programme implementation outcome. Community participation also strengthened local capacity for project management.

Partnerships: Adopting strategies and collaborating with different institutions and groups of people with mutual benefits are the most assured ways of achieving synergy. Government departments, CBOs and parents should have an ‘holistic approach’ towards improving school feeding delivery and transparency in the overall implementation of the HGSFP.

On-the-spot monitoring, is an effective tool for ensuring accountability and transparency in the implementation of interventions involving continued provision/transfer of materials. It provides both positive and negative feedback on what needs to be reinforced and what needs to be improved upon in the implementation of the programme.



5.5 What Could Be Better?

The accountability and transparency intervention in the implementation of the HGSFP induced a number of concepts and thoughts for improved implementation; several of these relate to the provision of funds for the implementation of the HGSFP, financial information management, and statistics of eligible beneficiaries. Some propositions that could make for improved accountability and transparency in the implementation of the HGSFP in Ogun State are outlined below:

Local Government Education Authority

Ensure provision of **accurate data** on eligible beneficiaries for improved transparency. A recent data validation exercise by NBS revealed discrepancies, which suggests absence of transparency in the process. This would not have been the case if local authorities had provided accurate data. However, it has been observed that the practice of presenting inaccurate statistics on beneficiaries cuts across the country ‘as the earnest longing for sharing in national resources’ is often the motivation for such practices. Local authorities are expected to take the lead in promoting integrity because if the size of beneficiaries is accurate, it will be easier for relevant state departments to make informed decision on the provision of funds.

The HGSFP units of the Local Government Education Authority should sustain the capacity building of SBMC representatives, continuous monitoring of school feeding, provide accurate data, feedback, updates to state-level actors, school teachers, and cooks for improved implementation.

State Government

- Improve coverage of the HGSFP to pupils in upper primary classes (i.e., Primary 4-6) through provision of additional funds. At present, one of the major hurdles is the non-inclusion of upper primary pupils, of whom some come from very poor households. Albeit, it remains unclear, how retention in the upper primary classes would be sustained; since school feeding significantly affects school enrolment and retention. Efforts should be made to ensure that the upper primary pupils become beneficiaries so as to achieve the universal basic education policy of compulsory nine years of formal education.
- Accountability and transparency in the implementation of the HGSFP can be improved through a ‘structured system of recruitment for cooks’ involving key stakeholders and including SBMC/PTA representatives and other community stakeholders in the selection process. At present, community-level actors view the selection process as too steeped in politics. Some hold the view that slots for cooks are shared among politicians, with little consideration for key selection criteria.
- Loans provided to cooks for the purchase of utensils reduces their overall remuneration. It would be kind of the government to help in the purchase of these utensils at no cost to the cooks. The Government needs to develop a policy to protect cooks from being unduly disengaged, irrespective of the change in government from one administration to another. The disengagement of cooks at the commencement of the tenure of a new government resulted in great losses for the cooks, and the entire programme.

The Federal Government

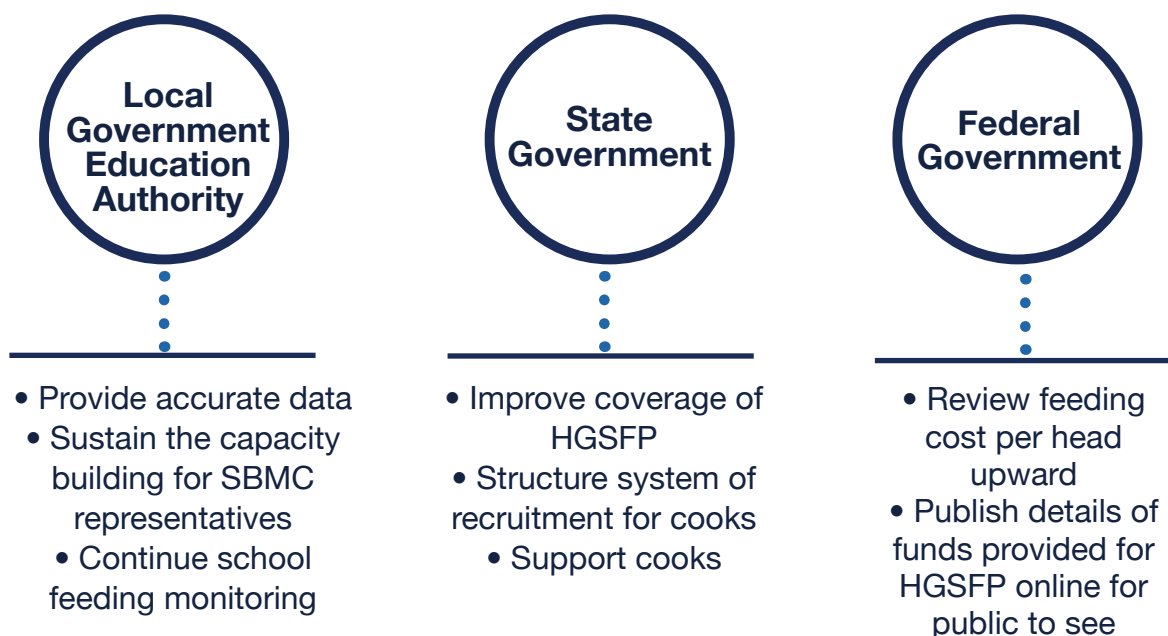
- As laudable the HGSFP is, there is a need for an upward review of the cost of feeding per child in line with the current economic exigencies. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) suggests a rough estimate of \$ 0.25 per day for the feeding of a pupil.
- Information about the release of funds – amount released, period covered, number of pupils provided for etc., should be made more accessible to all stakeholders. Similar to the sharing of data on allocation of funds to states and LGAs from the Federation's account, information should be shared on the provision of funds for the HGSFP. This will improve transparency and help stakeholders hold managers of their resources accountable.



The inclusion of CAWGs in the HGSFP monitoring was a breakthrough and should be adopted by the State Government.

- Folashade Ofurune - CBO Partner

What Could Be Better?



CONCLUSION

Transparency and accountability in the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, or any government-led social investment intervention of this kind, remain crucial to ensure successful implementation. Citizens need to move from being passive members of the community, to becoming more active and responsive because their engagement and action are invaluable and essential for equitable programming. In consonance with accountability intervention's theory of change, the "voice" of Nigerian citizens and the "teeth" of Nigerian public and private institutions, and combined with capacity building and collaboration is a veritable tool for addressing the problem of corruption in Nigeria.

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