School Feeding: Perspective from the Russian Federation

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Current Status of School Feeding in Russia

School feeding is a huge sector of Russian economy:

- the coverage of school feeding is 13.5 million schoolchildren; 50,000 enterprises; 250,000 workers employed; annual turnover is 5 billion USD
- school feeding is an element of system of feeding in education: including higher education, professional education, kindergartens
- impact of school feeding is multiple: 20 percent of population, but 100 percent of future
Transition from Socialist Model to new market environment

- in the 1920-30s the system of communal kitchens, cafeterias
- collapse of socialist model and weaknesses of school feeding system (lack of financing, obsolete equipment, not clear regulations)
In 2007 after some discussions Government started large-scale investment in social sphere priority national projects in education, health care, agriculture, affordable housing

- decision to launch experimental projects on strengthening school feeding system as part of national project “Education”
- establishment of the Project Administration Working Group (including SIFI)
- pathfinder approach: no clear strategy
School feeding strategies classification depending on country nutrition status:

- to reduce hunger and malnutrition: physical minimum
- to provide sufficient nutrition
- to provide well-balanced and healthy nutrition: the best nutrition
- to overcome effects of improper feeding: obesity and diseases because of unhealthy diets
How Experiment was implemented

- competitive tendering to receive finance from federal budget: implementation by Ministry of Education and Federal Agency of Education, regional authorities of the Russian Federation as recipients
- selection criteria as the main mechanism to trigger a spillover effect: set by Project Administration Working Group
- coverage of Experiment: in 2008-2009 21 regions of Russia received financing 50 millions USD from federal budget, invested 100 millions USD
Experiment preliminary outcomes

- re-equipment of school kitchens and cafeterias, overall infrastructure
- intensification of equipment and services supply, market of agricultural commodities
- linking different elements of school feeding system: agricultural producers, processors, consumers
- changes in political context and institutional coordination
Lessons learned from 2 years of Experiment

Sustainability of school feeding system

- depends on adequate economic model
- institutional and legislative context
- the essence of sustainable school feeding: turnover of agricultural stock and products after processing among ultimate consumers
- other factors must be subordinate to the provision of the turnover in the most efficient way
General Principles of School Feeding

- School feeding (as essential element of social feeding) is a specific sector of economy that functions according to its own principles.
- School feeding as a public good, role of government in its provision is essential.
- Mechanism of food distribution among the most vulnerable groups of population.
- Systemic approach provides growth of agricultural sector (stable demand).
- Lack of systemic approach leads to problems in education, health care, agricultural development even with sufficient investment.
School Feeding Programme in Armenia

- initiated in 2010 by Russia and WFP with SIFI expertise is a pilot programme
- gradual transition to national ownership through development of agricultural sector
- it requires tremendous analytical, financial and managerial efforts but is going to provide model for similar countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan etc.)
Thank you!