

2009 International Campbell Collaboration (C2) Colloquium

Submitter Information

Elizabeth Kristjansson
Email: kristjan@uottawa.ca

Abstract Information

Abstract Title:

Costs and cost-outcomes of school feeding programs in LMIC. Further ap

Format:

Paper

Themes:

Education, social welfare, and public health in Low and Middle Income Countries

Authors:

Rae Galloway, M.S., Path Aulo Gelli, World Food Program Ute Meir, M.A., World Food Program Donald Bundy, PhD, Wolrd Bank Francisco Espejo, MD, MSC, World Food Program The World Bank

Abstract:

Background. The present paper concerns a cost and cost-outcome study of school meal programs. It is based on a Cochrane/Campbell review of school meals (Kristjansson, 2007), which was one of the first reviews produced by members of the Cochrane Equity Field. This review provided an opportunity to conduct a cost-outcome analysis of school feeding programs. Our main objectives were to: 1) provide an up-to-date, realistic estimate of the costs of school feeding 2) combine these estimates with results of the Kristjansson et al review to estimate all the costs of school feeding programs to the World Food Program, the governments, and communities and 3) provide feasible recommendations for program implementation Methods. We calculated costs for four countries: Kenya, Malawi, Lethoso, and the Gambia using a combination of World Food program documents and interviews with WFP staff, Ministry of Education staff, and teachers (in Kenya). To provide a meaningful comparison, we standardized the days fed to 200 and the energy given to 700kcal. Cost per outcome was calculated by dividing the costs per child per year in each country/region by the average gain (e.g. IQ points, days of attendance, kg of weight) per 200 day school year from the Kristjansson (2007) review. Results. The Kristjansson review demonstrated that school feeding programs were effective in improving attendance and math performance in the long-term, in producing small gains in height, weight, and that they show promise in improving performance on intelligence type tasks. Costs per child per year ranged from \$28 to \$61 dollars a year per child. The cost for an extra day of attendance per child ranged from \$4 to \$12, while the cost of an extra point on the Wide Range Achievement test ranged from \$31.6 to \$69. Conclusion: School feeding programs do improve some aspects of the health of disadvantaged children. We believe that the cost/outcome ratios can be reduced by focusing on enhancing student outcomes in ways that will lead to little cost increase and provide several recommendations for making school feeding programs more effective and cost effective. This is particularly important in an era where world food supplies are dwindling.
