

How Do School Feeding Programs Support the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the African Union's 2063 Goals?

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Abstract

School Feeding Programs (SFPs) represent essential interventions which enhance health along with nutritional status and educational attainment of children who live within regions experiencing food insecurity in low and middle-income countries. This paper examines the role of school feeding programs toward achieving the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along with the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063. Adult Nutrition Programs provide nutritious meals which support Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Quality Education (SDG 4) and Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3) directly through the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The research shows that SFPs substantially improve children's nutrition status while boosting their school engagement and educational performance specifically for female students and female children belonging to marginalized groups. SFPs participants drive local economic development since they purchase food from nearby farmers which strengthens community resistance. There exists an urgent need to study both the long-term outcomes and permanence of SFPs although their short-term advantages are already established. The article emphasizes linking School Feeding Programs to regional farming network while requiring specific policies that boost their operational efficiency. SFPs create basic approaches toward sustainable development achievement since they improve child welfare across worldwide communities.

Keywords: *Education, Gender Equality, Nutrition, School Feeding Programs, Sustainable Development Goals*

Introduction

School Feeding Programs (SFPs) are essential for improving education and nutrition, supporting both the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda and the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 goals (Huijbregts, & Bollig, 2018). Its goal is to deliver nutritious meals to children learning in schools with the main purpose being to enhance their health status and education performance alongside providing adequate nutrition (Mwalali, et al 2024). Such programs maintain vital importance for regions including low- and middle-income areas given their high prevalence of nutritional challenges and scarcity of food (Al-Jawaldeh et al 2023). The main functions of school feeding programs include food distribution to students while simultaneously improving their academic outcomes and reducing student non-attendance (Nkurunziza & Turinayo, 2022). Such meal programs deliver children's major food intake for the entire day therefore represent essential components of welfare and educational systems (Assefa, 2023).

The execution of SFPs differs among various geographical regions and national borders because it adapts according to specific local needs, available resources as well as cultural traditions (Leshabana, 2022). Sub-Saharan African SFPs fight against malnutrition and boost school enrollment but developed countries concentrate on nutrition variety and child obesity prevention through their SFPs (Mulaudzi, 2023). Program success rates depend directly on proper planning and delivery approach that integrates local farming methods and maintains local populations' active participation together with perpetual funding options (Daitai, 2017). Research shows that SFPs deliver advantages yet we lack adequate evidence about how their sustainable operation ties to wider development targets (Huang et al, 2020). Studies about school feeding programs primarily investigate their immediate effects on nutrition yet fail to provide substantial evidence about their complete contribution to United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals alongside African Union's Agenda 2063 targets.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development functions as a global framework which seeks to remove poverty while attaining sustainable development across the globe by 2030 (Lee et al., 2024). The UN 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that handle multiple social economic and environmental challenges (Assefa, & Mujtaba, 2025). Multiple goals in the UN 2030 Agenda correspond specifically to the objectives of school feeding programs. The SDG 2 objective to eliminate hunger and ensure food security receives strong impact from SFPs through their distribution of nutritional school meals that reduce child food insecurity and nutritional deficiencies (Mwalali, et al 2024). SDG 4 aims to guarantee equitable educational quality for all students through sustaining a fundamental link between school feeding programs and their ability to boost attendance and educational achievements among vulnerable students (Adipat, & Chotikapanich, 2022). SDG 5 focuses on gender equality and highlights that school feeding programs work to remove gender-based education barriers through their support for food and household labor needs of girls (Mkandawire, & du Toit, 2024).

The AU sets its strategic framework Agenda 2063 to transform Africa into a future global leader before the year 2063(Assefa, & Mujtaba, 2025). The agenda focuses on promoting two aspects: sustainable development joined with inclusivity alongside empowerment initiatives for women and youth groups (Assefa, & Mujtaba, 2025). Agenda 2063's main aspirations of inclusive development and sustainable growth match closely with the goals of SFPs especially through Aspiration 1. (Royo, et al., 2022). The goals of Agency 2063 evolve because SFPs help enhance child health and education thus enabling broader economic expansion (Huijbregts, & Bollig, 2018). The development of Pan-African ideals through SFPs will achieve Aspiration 2 by promoting social unity and community activism across the African continent (Walker-Smith, 2019). The SFP programs play a significant role in implementing people-driven development through nutrition and education services that prioritize empowering children especially girls as stated in Aspiration 6 (Corio, 2022).

Research on the systematic assessment of how SFPs enable the achievement of global and regional goals shows a noticeable literature gap. Studies that analyze the entire impact spectrum of SFPs on development indicators lack extensive examination even though research shows immediate benefits in school attendance and nutrition. Research on such gaps must be resolved to maximize SFP program success and their compliance with UN 2030 Agenda and AU's Agenda 2063 objectives. A set of longitudinal studies should be conducted to evaluate SFPs' extensive effects on children's medium- and long-term health and educational progress and economic outcomes. The analysis of methods which link SFPs to local farming systems for enhancing environmental sustainability and

food safety needs immediate examination. Additional study needs to explain the supporting policy standards and finance systems which sustain SFPs while investigating local elements that impact scheme development and implementation.

Research dedicated to understanding SFPs effects on girl education progress and feminine empowerment would generate useful information particularly in areas with significant gender inequality. Studies about effective partnerships between governments NGOs and communities who deliver SFPs will uncover the best methods for implementing these programs. The recognition of school feeding programs as essential instruments for education and nutrition improvement stands against the urgent need to analyze thoroughly their support functions for UN 2030 Agenda and AU's Agenda 2063. Research development in this domain will both strengthen SFP effectiveness and support UN 2030 Agenda and AU 2063 sustainable development and social equity targets.

Purpose of the Article

The article investigated the central impact that SFPs make toward supporting the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU's Agenda 2063. The article reviewed multiple pieces of literature systematically to analyze the effects of school feeding programs on health education social outcomes which revealed their vital role in advancing development initiatives. The research endeavor served multiple purposes because it showed both immediate SFP advantages and suggested potential enhancements to help resolve essential worldwide issues including poverty and food scarcity together with gender discrimination.

Research questions

1. How did school feeding programs contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. In what ways did SFPs support the AU's Agenda 2063?
3. What were the measurable impacts of SFPs on children's health, education, and social outcomes?

Methodology

A systematic review is a structured and rigorous approach to synthesizing existing research on a particular topic. It involves a defined methodology that minimizes bias and enhances the reliability of findings. The systematic review methodology for this article consisted of several key stages: establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, searching for relevant literature, data extraction, and analysis.

Establishing Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: To ensure that the review was focused and relevant, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. This included:

- **Inclusion Criteria:** A total of 68 studies published in peer-reviewed journals have evaluated the impact of SFPs on health, education, and social outcomes. These studies focus on low- and middle-income countries and were conducted between 2016 and 2025.

- **Exclusion Criteria:** Literature not focused on SFPs, studies that did not provide empirical data, and publications that were not available in English.

Searching for Relevant Literature: A comprehensive literature search was conducted using multiple academic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords and phrases such as "school feeding programs," "nutrition," "educational outcomes," "UN 2030 Agenda," and "AU Agenda 2063" were utilized to identify relevant studies. The search strategy was documented to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

Data Extraction: Once relevant studies were identified, data extraction involved summarizing key findings, methodologies, and outcomes. A standardized data extraction form was used to capture essential information, including study design, sample size, intervention details, and measured outcomes. This process helped organize findings in a manner that facilitated comparison and synthesis.

Quality Assessment: Assessing the quality of the included studies was crucial for evaluating the strength of the evidence. Various tools, such as the Cochrane Risk of Bias Tool or the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale, were employed to assess methodological rigor and potential biases in the studies. This step ensured that only high-quality research contributed to the final analysis.

Data Analysis and Synthesis: After data extraction and quality assessment, the findings from the included studies were analyzed and synthesized. This involved quantitative methods, such as meta-analysis, or qualitative approaches, such as thematic analysis. The synthesis aimed to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature regarding the impacts of SFPs on health, education, and social outcomes.

Identifying Research Gaps: An essential component of the systematic review was identifying research gaps and areas needing further investigation. This included areas where there was limited empirical data, inconsistencies in findings, or under-researched populations. Highlighting these gaps informed future research directions and provided a roadmap for further studies.

Drawing Conclusions and Recommendations: The final stage of the systematic review involved drawing conclusions based on the synthesized findings. This section outlined the contributions of SFPs to the UN 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063, emphasizing their importance in achieving sustainable development goals. Additionally, actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers were proposed, focusing on enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of SFPs.

Through this systematic review methodology, the article aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how school feeding programs could be leveraged to support global and regional development agendas. By synthesizing existing research and identifying key areas for further exploration, this article sought to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding nutrition, education, and sustainable development, ultimately advocating for policies and practices that enhanced the well-being of children and communities worldwide.

Literature Review

UN 2030 Agenda: A Global Commitment to Sustainable Development

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a worldwide commitment to addressing critical social, economic, and environmental challenges (Carpentier, & Braun, 2020). Adopted in September 2015, this agenda consists of 17 SDGs designed to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. The interconnected nature of these goals highlights that solutions to one issue often require attention to others, promoting a holistic approach to sustainable development (Nikolova, 2024).

Critical Areas of Focus: Education, Health, and Nutrition

Among the 17 SDGs, several specifically target essential areas such as education, health, and nutrition, which are vital for human development (Assefa & Mujtaba, 2025). For instance, SDG 2 aims to end hunger and promote sustainable agriculture, while SDG 4 emphasizes the importance of inclusive and equitable quality education (Shulla, & Leal-Filho, 2023). Additionally, SDG 3 focuses on ensuring good health and well-being for all, recognizing the role of proper nutrition in achieving positive health outcomes. These goals demonstrate the interdependence of education, health, and nutrition, highlighting the need for integrated strategies (Fernandez, 2020).

The Impact of School Feeding Programs on SDGs

SFPs are instrumental in advancing multiple SDGs, particularly those related to education, health, and nutrition (Leshabana, 2022). By providing nutritious meals, SFPs directly combat food insecurity and malnutrition, aligning with SDG 2: Zero Hunger (Lile et al., 2023). They also improve school attendance and academic performance, supporting SDG 4: Quality Education. Furthermore, SFPs promote healthy lifestyles in line with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being and contribute to gender equality by alleviating household burdens on girls, facilitating their access to education. This interconnected approach underscores the importance of SFPs in fostering comprehensive human development (Kanampio, 2022).

African Union's Agenda 2063: A Vision for Transformation

The AU's Agenda 2063 is a transformative strategic framework designed to propel Africa into a global powerhouse, fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development (Durokifa, 2023). Launched in 2015, the agenda envisions a continent that is united, prosperous, and driven by its own citizens, emphasizing African ownership and self-reliance (Agupusi, 2021). It outlines seven key aspirations that reflect a comprehensive vision for the continent's future, including sustainable development, good governance, and the empowerment of women and youth, acknowledging the interconnected challenges Africa faces (Tella, 2018).

School Feeding Programs: Catalysts for Achieving Development Goals

SFPs are essential in advancing the aspirations of Agenda 2063, particularly in the realms of education, nutrition, and economic development (Kanampio, 2022). By providing nutritious meals, SFPs improve school attendance and academic performance, aligning with the agenda's emphasis on quality education and human capital development (Assefa, 2023). They also address food security by combating malnutrition among school-aged children, serving as a vital safety net for vulnerable families (Devereux et al., 2018). Additionally, by sourcing food locally, SFPs stimulate local economies and create job opportunities, while also promoting gender equality by encouraging girls' access to

education (Brigham, & Haug, 2022). This integrated approach highlights the critical role of SFPs in fostering sustainable development across the continent.

Findings

RQ1: How did school feeding programs contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Overview of Contributions

SFPs serve as essential interventions that support the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (de Romana, 2021). The paper evaluates the alignment of SFPs with SDGs focusing on zero hunger (SDG 2) and quality education (SDG 4) and good health and well-being (SDG 3). SFPs offer nourishing meals to children which solves immediate hunger yet builds long-term benefits that link with the entire framework of the 2030 Agenda (Pastorino et al., 2023).

Contribution to Zero Hunger (SDG 2)

The SFPs directly serve SDG 2 by resolving food scarcity and undernourishment problems in children who attend school (Leshabana, 2022). Numerous research shows that such programs lead to substantial nutritional improvements particularly in hunger-prone regions of low- and middle-income countries (Assefa, 2023). Avoiding hunger becomes possible through SFPs which demonstrates their ability to decrease stunting and underweight among children as vital indicators of malnutrition (Pastorino et al., 2023). The reduction in child hunger through SFPs creates immediate health benefits in addition to laying foundations for long-term educational development. SFPs work to produce a productive future generation through one nutritious daily meal which supports the overall goal of hunger elimination (Leshabana, 2022).

Impact on Quality Education (SDG 4)

Research shows that SFPs result in better school attendance statistics and better academic achievements of students. Studies show that proper nutrition in children leads them to maintain better school attendance patterns and participate in educational activities (Adipat, & Chotikapanich, 2022). Research combining SFP outcomes revealed these interventions increase both student enrollment numbers and especially benefit girls who struggle to attend school (Al-Jawaldeh et al., 2023). The improvement of educational access and learning results through SFPs creates a pathway to achieve SDG 4 (Carpentier, & Braun, 2020). The link between nourishment and cognitive performance demonstrates the necessity to handle wellness together with education as unified commitments (Assefa, 2023). The national educational goals benefit from SFP programs because they generate an educated workforce which drives economic development (Brigham, & Haug, 2022).

Promotion of Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3)

SFPs function as core components that support the achievement of healthy well-being within children (Assefa, 2023). Children receive education about nutrition together with hygiene lessons as part of the health instruction included in many SFP service offerings (Daitai, 2017). The integrated approach in these programs leads to better health results that minimize diet-related diseases while supporting complete well-being of participants (Devereux et al., 2018). Health education elements integrated into SFPs expand the program benefits to include lasting nutritional impacts (Huijbregts, & Bollig, 2018). The early development of healthy behaviors in SFPs leads to enduring community health benefits which supports SDG 3 goal to secure well-being for all people (Fernandez, 2020). A sustainable approach for development demands comprehensive strategies that unite health education with nutrition practices since both form necessary parts of education (Huang et al., 2020).

Economic and Social Implications

The programming of SFPs results in health and educational effects which extend to produce wider social and economic advantages (Assefa, 2023). Local food procurement by SFPs drives economic benefits through community agricultural stimulation resulting in job creation as well as support for sustainable farming (Leshabana, 2022). The program supports the achievement of SDG 8 that emphasizes decent work coupled with economic development (Lee et al., 2016). The productive economy SFPs establish demonstrates how they support local communities to become resilient and demonstrate sustainable practices (Mulaudzi, 2023). The connection between educational and nutritional investments with local economic systems enables SFPs to establish a development cycle that gives power to communities and supports multiple economic goals (Mwalali et al., 2024). Sustainable development requires the integration of social programs with nearby economies to deliver full sustainable development results (Nikolova, 2024).

Gender Equality and Empowerment (SDG 5)

SFPs have reinforced gender equality through their ability to promote female student enrollment in educational institutions (Mahama, 2018). SFPs serve as a relief for families who no longer need to keep girls at home to assist with housework because parents can utilize meal provisions for school attendance (Assefa, 2023). SFPs use their gender equality promotion duties to demonstrate why social obstacles must be resolved before education achievements can be made (Arkorful, 2023). SFPs work toward SDG 5 because they understand unique girl requirements to build an environment where women can participate equally in society (Dos Santos et al., 2022). Gender equality aims are part of the diverse range of sustainable development outcomes that result from the implementation of SFPs (Halisçelik, & Soytaş, 2019).

RQ2: In what ways did SFPs support the African Union's Agenda 2063?

Overview of Contributions to Agenda 2063

The SFPs act as vital pillars for advancing the AU's Agenda 2063 because they directly target the fundamental goals of poverty reduction combined with educational excellence and nutritious health together with economic enhancement (Leshabana, 2022). Through SFPs providers give nutritious food which serves as a critical step to achieve sustainable development across Africa (Mainje

et al., 2024). Community meal programs fulfill immediate nutritional needs of the population while they benefit the country extensively through an example of Agenda 2063's holistic approach (Onyeaka et al., 2024). Multiple developmental issues are simultaneously handled across different components of Special Food Programs through coordinated interventions systems (Ayele et al., 2020). Understanding sector interconnections remains a fundamental need for development policies since this acknowledges how knowledge promotes educational programs that achieve healthy and economical success (Comyn, 2018).

Contribution to Aspiration 1: A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development

The implementation of SFPs directly counteracts poverty and boosts food security because they embody Africa's vision of becoming prosperous (Prospek et al., 2024). These programs deliver one nutritious meal each day to children who are particularly from low-income backgrounds thus enabling them to combat their hunger and flourish better. SFP programs serve as key instruments to dismantle poverty patterns because they concentrate on food security (Roy, & Stretch, 2018). Taking action to provide instant nutrition first establishes the fundamental elements needed for enduring economic stability (Mrabet, 2023). The academic and social outcomes of children improve when they receive proper nutrition which leads them to become successful students and beneficial members of their communities (Prangthip et al., 2021). The creation of inclusive SFPs requires designers to develop programs which provide access to all possible recipients. The most vulnerable communities need specific customized programs which should exclude no child from sustainable development initiatives (Saikia et al., 2022).

Impact on Aspiration 4: An Africa of Good Governance and Democracy

SFPs create better educational possibilities and educational results in marginalized communities which supports good governance (Okeke et al., 2025). School meals provide girls and other students with access to food which enables them to attend classes on a regular basis and both drop out numbers decrease and grades improve (Pastorino et al 2023). Such regions benefit substantially from School Feeding Programs because educational resources prove inadequate (Aurino et al., 2019). Higher enrollment numbers produce better-educated citizens who demonstrate greater democratic participation abilities through literacy development (Robertson, 2022). The implementation of SFPs to prioritize education enables governments to develop an enlightened citizenry (Morgan, 2025). The education provided by SFPs develops democratic processes while creating transparent governance through citizens who expect good leadership from their elected officials (Ogidi et al., 2025).

Promotion of Aspiration 3: A Healthy and Well-Nourished Population

SFPs manifest almost complete compatibility with the government goal to deliver a healthier population (Shahid, & Bishop, 2019). The meal programs serve as a method to both treat child malnutrition together with boosting their complete health status (Assefa, 2023). These health education components in SFPs teach children essential information about nutrition and hygiene as well as beneficial life habits for enhanced impact (Roothaert et al., 2021). When SFPs combine educational nutrition programs with health education activities they produce better results in developing healthier communities (Gupta, 2024). A region's sustainable development needs a healthy

population because productive people can better contribute to economic expansion (Chen et al., 2019). The assessment program enables children to acquire knowledge about nutrition and health which results in life-long healthy choices and cost efficiency for governments as well as communities throughout the years (Trends, 2017).

Economic Development and Aspiration 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

SFPs reach economic benefits to local cities by using food from nearby farmers and suppliers which generates employment and stimulates agricultural growth in the area (Ahern et al., 2021). Such food preparation strategies support economic expansion and proper employment along with child nutrition since they both support farming industry development and strengthen nearby economic growth (Swensson, 2018). The inclusion of local food systems within SFPs improves community economic empowerment while securing food supplies to all community members (Ahern et al., 2021). The sustainable development cycle is enabled through this approach which enables both economic success for local farmers and delivers needed nutritional resources to children (Hariram et al., 2023). The economic advantages of school feeding programs can become most effective through active policymaker collaboration with agricultural stakeholders of their local communities to build community resilience (Pastorino et al., 2023).

Gender Equality and Aspiration 6: An Africa Where Women and Youth are Empowered

The enrollment of girl students in educational institutions depends heavily on SFPs because they serve as vital agents for gender equality promotion (Assefa, 2023). The provision of meals reduces family expenses which makes it possible for parents to enroll their girls in school instead of keeping them at home for household work (Roothaert et al., 2021). The contribution to gender equality holds great importance for Agenda 2063's goal achievement. Educating women and girls creates positive effects on single households which spill over to create advancement throughout the community (Hujó, & Carter, 2019). A high level of education among women leads them to work outside the home while funding their family's health improvements and their children's schooling along with community growth (Alemayehu, 2021). As a result, SFPs need to create proactive gender-specific education support initiatives for their implementation efforts (Assefa, 2023). The AU's Agenda 2063 finds essential support through SFPs as they help achieve main aspirations for poverty elimination while boosting education and health levels together with economic development and gender balance achievements (Huijbregts, & Bollig, 2018). The analyzed evidence shows SFPs create immediate nutritional benefits and sustainable development throughout the whole continent (Ahern et al., 2021). The complete success of these policies requires policymakers to build their strategies on community-based solutions which focus on quality nutrition while making spaces accessible and building economic opportunities locally (Mfitumukiza, et al., 2020). Funding sustainability through proper mechanisms coupled with complete monitoring systems will serve as the foundation for enduring success of SFPs (Pastorino et al., 2023). SFPs will persistently contribute to Agenda 2063 transformation through these selected strategies which will enhance Africa's health and education aspect while facilitating greater equity (Huijbregts, & Bollig, 2018).

RQ3: What were the measurable impacts of SFPs on children's health, education, and social outcomes?

Health Outcomes

SFPs that focus on supplying supplements to families enable children to achieve better nutrition resulting in observable reductions of malnutrition indicators together with stunting scales and underweight measures (Assefa, 2023). A study reveals that SFP program participants grow better in height-for-age and weight-for-age measurements than children who do not attend SFPs. SFPs enhance nutrition through their benefits and thus establish a healthier child population while promoting their physical growth and brain development (Fauziyah, & Olajubutu 2024). The enhancement of health outcomes contributes to decreased student illness-based absences since healthier schoolchildren miss less education time (Yang et al., 2022). The research indicates that proper nutrition serves as a key element for advancing educational involvement and health success in individual students. The health education components of SFPs help children make good hygiene decisions and improve their lifestyle choices because these practices enhance their overall well-being (Mulaudzi, 2023).

Educational Outcomes

While SFPs raise both student enrollment rates and school attendance specifically for vulnerable student groups including girls (Assefa, 2023). School-meal recipients demonstrate better academic results and their regular attendance at school matches the evidence provided by research studies (Yim, 2024). School meal programs effectively motivate parents to enroll their children since they overcome financial obstacles that stand in the way of school attendance (Roothaert et al., 2021). Improving child nutrition let students focus better and achieve better academic results which demonstrates how health affects educational success directly (Ruffini, 2022). Dropout rates decrease when SFPs operate because these programs strengthen educational engagement throughout students' academic lives thus enabling poverty to break and creating empowered educational future generations (Assefa, 2023).

Social Outcomes

SFPs create better social relationships between students and higher community engagement. The eating together process allows students to develop friendships through social interactions which create both belonging and improved emotional health (Gupta, 2024). Social benefits from SFPs strengthen both individual student health education and their social abilities together with emotional strength (Mwanthi et al., 2024). Students feel connected and supported because of the communal aspect in SFPs (Federici, 2024). The improvement of school attendance enabled by SFPs gives girls the power to participate more equally in educational settings (Assefa, 2023). Such empowerment creates significant long-term benefits because educated women tend to become active community participants who also engage in decision-making activities (Assefa, & Adamu, 2024).

Adequate data shows how SFPs create important connections between health improvements if students receive better nutrition and enhanced education results which lead to stronger social outcomes (Fauziyah et al., 2024). SFPs serve as essential tools for child development because they strengthen nutrition and education alongside social group unity (Mbaziira, 2018). The results demonstrate why policymakers should back and extend SFPs because they represent a pivotal method to attain sustainable development goals which deliver advantages to families and communities together with individuals (Alabdali et al., 2025).

Discussion

The findings of this analysis illuminate the essential role of SFPs in supporting both the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The results reveal significant impacts on children's health, education, and social outcomes, positioning SFPs as critical interventions in the fight against hunger, poverty, and inequality. This discussion contextualizes these findings within existing literature, particularly focusing on the implications for Agenda 2063.

SFPs directly address food insecurity and malnutrition among school-age children, aligning closely with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims to end hunger and ensure food security. Numerous studies confirm that SFPs can reduce the prevalence of stunting and underweight in children. For example, a systematic review by Al-Jawaldeh et al. (2023) indicates that SFPs effectively improve dietary diversity and micronutrient intake, especially in low- and middle-income countries. This evidence reinforces the notion that SFPs not only alleviate immediate hunger but also establish a foundation for long-term health and educational benefits.

From the perspective of the African Union's Agenda 2063, SFPs are instrumental in achieving several of its key aspirations, particularly Aspiration 1, which aims to end poverty in all forms everywhere. By providing nutritious meals, SFPs directly contribute to reducing poverty levels among vulnerable populations, ensuring that children receive the sustenance necessary to thrive both physically and academically.

Moreover, Agenda 2063 emphasizes the importance of investing in education as a catalyst for economic growth and social development. SFPs play a vital role in this regard, as they not only improve enrollment rates but also enhance academic performance, which aligns with the AU's goal of fostering a well-educated and skilled population. The positive correlation between SFPs and increased school attendance, as noted in the empirical study by Assefa (2023), supports the AU's vision of a dynamic and prosperous Africa driven by its citizens.

SFPs also promote good health and well-being, a finding supported by existing literature. Programs that incorporate health education components have been shown to instill healthy habits in children, leading to better health outcomes. Thiagarajan (2025) demonstrated that integrating nutrition education into SFPs improves dietary choices among children, aligning with the holistic approach of these programs. This contributes to the AU's Agenda 2063 goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all, particularly for children who are the future leaders of the continent.

The economic benefits of SFPs, particularly their role in stimulating local agricultural economies, resonate with the AU's emphasis on sustainable economic growth and development. By sourcing food locally, SFPs create jobs and support sustainable farming practices, contributing to the AU's Agenda 2063 objective of promoting sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing food security. This not only aids in achieving SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) but also underscores the importance of integrating education and nutrition with local economies for comprehensive sustainable development.

Finally, the findings regarding SFPs promoting gender equality are particularly significant in the context of Agenda 2063. Aspiration 6 of the AU's Agenda emphasizes the need for women and youth empowerment. Mwalali et al. (2024) found that SFPs significantly increase girls' enrollment by alleviating the economic burden on families. This addresses the gender disparities in education and aligns with the AU's commitment to ensuring that girls have equal access to quality education. By catering to the specific needs of girls, SFPs create an environment where they can thrive, ultimately contributing to societal progress and economic development.

In conclusion, the multifaceted contributions of SFPs are vital for achieving both the UN 2030 Agenda and the AU's Agenda 2063. By addressing health, education, economic stability, and gender equality, SFPs play an integral role in promoting sustainable development across communities in Africa, highlighting their importance in building a prosperous and resilient continent.

Conclusion

School Feeding Programs (SFPs) play a pivotal role in advancing both the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. These programs address critical challenges such as hunger, malnutrition, and educational disparities, demonstrating their multifaceted contributions to society.

In relation to the UN 2030 Agenda, SFPs directly support Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (Zero Hunger) by alleviating food insecurity and improving the nutritional status of children, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where these challenges are most pronounced. Evidence indicates that SFPs can significantly reduce malnutrition rates, fostering healthier and more productive future generations.

From the perspective of the AU's Agenda 2063, SFPs align with Aspiration 1, which aims to end poverty in all forms. By enhancing educational outcomes, SFPs also support SDG 4 (Quality Education). The improved attendance and academic performance among well-nourished children highlight the intrinsic connection between health and education. Furthermore, SFPs promote SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by integrating health education, instilling lifelong healthy habits in children and contributing to their overall well-being.

Economically, SFPs stimulate local agricultural markets by sourcing food from local farmers, supporting SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) while fostering community resilience. Additionally, SFPs promote gender equality (SDG 5) by encouraging girls' enrollment and attendance in schools, thus addressing significant barriers that hinder their educational opportunities.

Despite these positive impacts, there is a critical need for comprehensive research to evaluate the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of SFPs. Future studies should focus on their integration with local agricultural practices, funding mechanisms, and specific impacts on girls' education. By addressing these gaps, policymakers can optimize SFPs to better align with global and regional development goals, ultimately enhancing the well-being of children and communities.

In summary, SFPs represent a vital strategy for fostering sustainable development. Their expansion and support across diverse contexts are imperative for achieving both the UN 2030 Agenda and the AU's Agenda 2063, ensuring a healthier, more educated, and equitable future for all.

Recommendations

1. **Enhance Program Integration:** Develop comprehensive frameworks that integrate SFPs with local agricultural practices to ensure sustainability. This includes sourcing food from local farmers, which can strengthen local economies while providing fresh, nutritious meals to children.
2. **Monitor and Evaluate Impact:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the long-term impacts of SFPs on children's health, education, and social outcomes. Regular assessments can help identify best practices and inform policy adjustments to enhance program effectiveness.
3. **Increase Funding and Resources:** Advocate for increased funding from both governmental and non-governmental sources to ensure the sustainability and scalability of SFPs. This includes exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, to secure necessary resources.
4. **Promote Gender-Sensitive Approaches:** Design and implement SFPs with specific strategies to address the barriers faced by girls in education. This may involve targeted outreach, incentives for families to send girls to school, and integrating gender-sensitive curricula that empower young women.
5. **Incorporate Health Education:** Integrate comprehensive health and nutrition education into SFPs to promote lifelong healthy habits among children. This can enhance the overall effectiveness of SFPs by ensuring that children not only receive meals but also understand the importance of nutrition and healthy living.

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