FINAL EVALUATION OF SDG-F JOINT PROGRAMME IN SRI LANKA:

Scaling Up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach

Final Report

7 November 2017

Ranjith Mahindapala

Contents

Acronyms/Abbreviations

DAC	Development Assistance Committee [OECD]
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
JP	Joint Programme [Project: Scaling up Nutrition through Multi-Sector Approach]
KII	Key Informant Interview
LKR	Sri Lanka Rupee
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
MRI	Medical Research Institute (Sri Lanka)
MSAPN	Multi-sector Action Plan for Nutrition
NFPB	National Food Promotion Board (Ministry of Agriculture)
NNSSL	National Nutrition Secretariat of Sri Lanka
NSC	National Steering Committee
PLW	Pregnant & Lactating Women
PMC	Programme Management Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDG-F	Sustainable Development Goals Fund
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Executive Summary

The project, *Scaling up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach* was designed to support the Multi-sector Action Plan for Nutrition (MSAPN) of the Government of Sri Lanka and to contribute towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. It has been implemented island-wide; the Project was officially signed in January, 2015 but had a delayed commencement until May, 2015 due to the change of Government, and concomitant changes in administration. This 28-month project was extended by five-months up to 30 September, 2017.

The project's objective is to provide the required technical and financial support to the Government to rollout the nutrition multi-sector plan "*Vision 2016: Sri Lanka, a Nourished Nation*" to achieve the MSAPN results in a cost efficient and effective manner. This is to be achieved through 14 Outputs, of which seven (7) outputs in the areas of food fortification, information management, national surveys and policy are in the WFP portfolio whilst the remaining seven (7) outputs in health and nutrition promotion and education are in the FAO portfolio. The Project is co-managed by WFP and FAO; a Project Management Committee, a National Steering Committee and a Technical advisory Group (TAG) are in place to provide oversight and guidance for project implementation. The total Project budget is USD 3,066,580, of which FAO contributes USD 749,858 and WFP USD 749,871 through the SDG Fund; the balance, USD 1,566,851 is contributed through matching funds with USD 1,368,752 by the Government of Sri Lanka as counterpart funding, USD 126,371 from UNICEF, and USD 71,728 from WFP other funds.

The project addresses a priority need of the government as enunciated in its policy documents, in particular, the *Nutrition Policy of Sri Lanka.* It also addresses a priority of UNDAF (Pillar II), and the community needs. The results will contribute to Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 2, achieving Zero Hunger.

The project is implemented through existing government mechanisms within the Ministries responsible for the subjects of Health, Agriculture, Education and Children's Welfare as the key Ministries.

The Project implementation was adversely affected due to delay in project commencement attributed to the change of government in January, 2015 with concomitant management changes in the Government agencies; delay in obtaining endorsement of the Department of External Resources, which impacted commencement of activities; delayed materialization of the matching funds component, re-programming certain activities in line with the context of the new Government, and continuing delays in the implementing Ministries and departments. Indeed, some activities were on-going at the time of evaluation as the evaluation was carried out before the project closure on 30 September. The implementation delays affected assessment of effectiveness. Notwithstanding these significant delays, the project has delivered some of its outputs; however, a number of outputs are yet to be fully delivered.

The evaluation was undertaken in September, 2017 primarily to assess Project results, and to identify and formulate recommendations for the future. The evaluation used the DAC[1] criteria for evaluation of development assistance to assess project performance. The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner. It was independent and was carried out following the accepted evaluation norms and standards. The evaluation was underpinned by a desk review and field work.

A combination of methods and tools was applied to collect information during the evaluation. The Results Framework was reviewed for its rigour. The Project's design did not lend itself to outcome

[1] Development Assistance Committee (DAC) –OECD Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance -2008.

analysis, and could have been improved to identify changes brought about by the outputs. A desk review of all relevant documents was undertaken to obtain clear insights about the Joint Programme, its design, implementation modalities and expected results, to facilitate the evaluation. The field studies included visits to 31 schools in six Provinces in different agro-ecological regions, meetings with pre-school and primary teachers, and meetings with over 70 key informants. The tight time schedule forced visitations to a very limited number of schools, which had to be completed during school hours.

The Project focussed largely on 'software' by providing capacity development opportunities, raising awareness particularly amongst teachers and parents of pre-school and school-going children. It also provided how-to-do toolkits and guidelines. The Project also provided limited hardware which included computers (108), weighing machines, and a rice blending facility. Project's interventions, particularly in the children's nutrition arena are well received, and have contributed to a change in attitudes and behaviours of teachers and parents as a result of dissemination of knowledge gained from the project.

Notwithstanding the delays, the Project has significant accomplishments. These include: National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey of Pregnant Women in Sri Lanka, National Nutrition Survey of Lactating Women in Sri Lanka and Schoolchildren Nutrition Survey Report, which together provides valuable baseline information for evidence-based policy formulation; recommencing an important national dialogue on rice fortification with a view to develop the food fortification strategy in Sri Lanka; improvements to the *Thriposha* formula, and facilitation of the introduction of new formulae for mothers; organising three overseas familiarisation visits for its Partners and the experiences gained will be useful in taking forward food fortification and further improvements to *Thriposha;* supporting the revision of the National Nutrition Policy (on-going); introduction of minimum standards/guidelines for health and nutrition for Pre-schools and training over 1,400 persons; developing nutrition modules for Pre-school Teachers including supplementary materials and children's activity books, Nutrition Information Leaflets, Nutrition Information Posters and a core group of Training of Trainers; developing a school feeding policy together with updating the Government's school canteen circular supplemented with a Manual of Instructions on School Canteens and School Feeding Guidelines, all of which are well received, and have changed the attitudes and behaviours of teachers and parents; upgrading the National Nutrition Surveillance System (on-going); development of a national nutritional database and a school nutrition database; providing technical capacity to enhance the inclusion of food and nutrition in the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes; and facilitating the school garden programme with implements, training and toolkits. The training and toolkits provided under this component have enabled teachers to learn deeply school gardening. Delays in delivery of implements and adverse weather conditions have delayed the establishment of school gardens.

The Project was very relevant; its effectiveness has been affected by delays in implementation by the Partner agencies. Most deliverables have not been delivered in time; notwithstanding this, most outputs have been delivered and there is satisfaction with the stakeholders. The two-tier project oversight structures were found to have overlapping functions, and the Project Management Committee would have been sufficient to provide the necessary oversight. The Project has been managed efficiently. Progress towards impacts is evident. The Project's interventions to bring about gender equality have shown demonstrable results with opportunity for replication. The partnerships forged by the Project will be beneficial for all. The Project activities are in the core programmes of MoH, MoA, MoWCA, and MoE and these Ministries are expected to ensure sustainability of the initiatives.

The Programme has generated sufficient information and experiences to enable up-scaling and replication. There are lessons if another phase is to be launched.

The evaluation makes several recommendations in the event a similar initiative is to be launched in the future. These include: maintaining the impetus on rice fortification work including engagement with the private sector to explore voluntary fortification; supporting further improvements to the *Thriposha* factory; continue supporting the National Nutrition Surveillance System; continuing awareness building and training in child nutrition and expanding the programme nationally to cover more pre-school teachers; updating the Trainers trained under the project; training of parents and those involved in mid-day meal preparation; review the 'Canteen Circular'; setting up model kitchens for preparing mid-day meals; considering extending the time for mid-day meals, and providing a larger meal to Grades 4 and 5; establishing model school gardens in educational zones with all inputs; introduce incentives for school garden upkeep; and developing short videos based on the nutrition modules and exploring possibility of airing these in the national television.

In regard to project management, the evaluation recommends formalising work-plans with government agencies to ensure timely delivery of outputs; better decision-making by the Project Management Committee; formulating a specific branding strategy for project visibility at the ground level; formulating exit strategies for projects; better M&E protocols; and undertaking terminal evaluation sometime after the completion of the project.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Sri Lanka's health indicators are among the best in the region; one of the reasons for this achievement is the improvements to health and nutritional status of its people by the successive governments since 1970's. For example, in late 1970's the Food and Nutrition Policy Planning Division of the Ministry of Plan Implementation surveyed nutritional status and the impact of a range of nutrition interventions including food stamps immediately after the sweeping food policy reforms in the country at that time.

In spite of these efforts, it is on record that nutrition aspects have not received due attention in the last decade with a reported under-nutrition in relation to GDP and increased infant mortality[2]. In rural areas of Sri Lanka, stunting rates have increased, and wasting prevalence has also shown increases. The project proposal, citing the National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey (2012) states that there was 13% stunting, 20% wasting, 23.5% underweight and 7%[3] overweight amongst children of 6-59 month age group. The prevalence of anaemia was 15% in this group.

In the project proposal, malnutrition has been attributed to high cost of nutritious food and inaccessibility to food. However, aside from these reasons, there was a reported lack of knowledge on the importance of a balanced diet and the need to provide nutritious food. There are also regional differences. Taking into consideration the overall situation, the Government in 2013 launched the National Nutrition Action Plan for Sri Lanka[4], which aims for '*better coordination of nutrition related activities of all relevant ministries, according to the multi-sector approach*'.

The Sustainable Development Goals Fund (SDG-F) currently supports sustainable development in three sectoral areas, namely inclusive economic growth for poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, and water and sanitation. The Programmes also address three cross-cutting areas (sustainability, gender equality and public-private partnerships). This Joint Programme is a result of a proposal made by the Government of Sri Lanka via UN RC on 16 June 2014.

The Sri Lanka Joint Programme (JP) strives to achieve improved efficiency and effectiveness of government investment on food security and nutrition, and inculcate attitudinal and behavioural changes through enhanced nutrition education and nutrition promotion.

2.2 The Joint Programme

(a) *Overall Objective*

The overall objective of the JP is to provide the required technical and financial support to the Government and to non-government organisations to rollout the nutrition multi-sector plan "*Vision 2016: Sri Lanka, a Nourished Nation*" to achieve the Multi-sector Action Plan for Nutrition (MSAPN) results in a cost efficient and effective manner.

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[2] See Project Proposal – page 6

[3] Although the figure quoted is 7%, it should be 0.7% [see *National Nutrient and Micronutrient Survey, 2012 (UNICEF)*]

[4] Multi-sector Action Plan for Nutrition (MSAPN); Vision 2016: Sri Lanka, A Nourished Nation – National Nutrition Council; Presidential Secretariat of Sri Lanka (2013)

(b) *Key Objectives*

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of government investment on food security and nutrition by highlighting the gaps, opportunities and impact of current initiatives; and
- Achieve attitudinal and behavioural changes through enhanced nutrition education and nutrition promotion on safe and nutrient foods, dietary diversity, nutrient deficiencies and their root causes.

(c) *Expected Outcome:*

Reduce maternal and child-under nutrition and contribute to breaking the inter-generational cycle of under-nutrition by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the government nutrition programme.

(d) *Outputs*

The Joint Programme has 14 Outputs contributing to the Outcome (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 – Output Description

Output No.	Description	UN Agency
1.1.	Understanding the link between health, food security, food consumption and micronutrient deficiencies for the target group of PLWs and schoolchildren	**WFP**
1.2.	Identification of cost efficient and most efficient use of fortified foods to address existing micro-nutrient deficiencies including distribution mechanism (schools, health centres and/or schools)	**WFP**
1.3.	Review of the capacity for the in-country production of fortified rice	**WFP**
1.4.	Strengthening advocacy for use of fortified locally produced nutritious foods	**WFP**
1.5.	Increased awareness of the inter-linkage of health, and nutrition food security as a national development priority at all levels	**WFP**
1.6.	Agreement reached that an integrated food, health and nutrition policy would assist in achieving zero hunger and reduce poverty	**WFP**
1.7.	Increased availability of local produced fortified food commodities for the general public	**WFP**
1.8.	Minimum standards/guidelines with health and nutrition component implemented for improved levels of nutrition in pre-school children	**FAO**
1.9	Nutrition promotion to pre-school children and communities (parental programmes) enhanced for improved nutrition levels of children in schools and at household level	**FAO**
1.10	Pre-school meals enhanced in nutritional value to improve nutrition levels of pre-school children	**FAO**
1.11	School feeding policy developed to implement a comprehensive guideline for school feeding inclusive of healthy practices	**FAO**
1.12	Awareness and knowledge base of education officers improved to address under-nutrition in schools and to implement comprehensive guideline for food consumption in schools	**FAO**
1.13	Technical capacity developed to further enhance the inclusion of food and nutrition in the pre-service & in-service teacher education programmes	**FAO**

Output No.	Description	UN Agency
1.14	School garden programme improved to increase nutrition levels of school children	FAO

The main deliverables is in Annex 2.1.

(e) *Project Profile*

The project contract was signed in January, 2015; however, due to change of Government in January, 2015 and concomitant changes in administration, the actual commencement of Project activities was delayed until May, 2015. The Project would have ended on 30 April, 2017 but has been extended, on a no-cost basis, until 30 September, 2017.

The Project budget is in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 – Budget (USD)

Source of funds	Contribution	Sub-Total
Donor Contribution		**1,499,729**
• World Food Programme	749,871	
• Food and Agriculture Organization	749,858	
Counterpart Funding		**1,566,851**
• World Food Programme	71,728	
• UNICEF	126,371	
• Government of Sri Lanka	1,368,752	
TOTAL		**3,066,580**

The key partner agencies are as follows:

(a) Ministry of Health (Outputs 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6 & 1.7)
(b) Ministry of Agriculture (Outputs 1.2; 1.3; 1.4)
(c) Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (Outputs 1.8; 1.9 & 1.10)
(d) Ministry of Education (Outputs 1.11; 1.12; 1.13 & 1.14)
(e) Presidential Secretariat (functioning as the Secretariat for the National Nutrition Council) (Outputs 1.4 & 1.7 in partnership with the Ministry of Health)

2.3 Purpose of the Evaluation

(a) *Purpose and Objectives*

The purpose of this evaluation is to promote accountability, organizational learning, stocktaking of achievements, performance, impacts, good practices and lessons learnt from implementation towards SDGs.

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- **To assess Project results:** This included an assessment of the extent to which the Joint Programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in project design; identification of processes of change that have led to positive and/or negative effects for beneficiaries; Joint Programme's performance of implementation, efficiency of delivery and quality of outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised.
- **To identify and formulate recommendations for the future:** This entailed examining factors and processes that have affected the success or failure of the JP performance at objective and outcome level; capacities and implementation skills, interventions and strategies of the partner organizations that have contributed to the success or failure; and congruence with the policies/strategies of the Government and UN.

An abridged version of the Terms of Reference is in Annex 2.2.

(b) *Evaluation Questions based on Evaluation Criteria*

The evaluation used the DAC[5] criteria for evaluation of development assistance to assess project performance, again seeking lessons on performance parameters. Accordingly, the Project was assessed using the following five evaluation criteria:

Relevance: concerns the extent to which the JP and its outputs and intended outcome were consistent with the national needs, and the needs and interest of the people as well as achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The main areas of examination were:

- The Project's relevance to:
  - Sri Lanka's development priorities as expressed in national policies and plans;
  - UN Strategy;
  - Robustness and realism of the theory of change underpinning the Project, and validity of indicators, assumptions and risks.
  - Stakeholder and beneficiary identification;

Effectiveness: measures the extent to which the JP's intended results (Objective and outcome) have been achieved and the extent to which progress towards outputs and outcomes have been achieved. It also examined:

Processes that affected the attainment of JP results – which examined project planning, partner ownership, stakeholder involvement, performance of national and local implementing agencies and designated supervision agency, coordination mechanism with other relevant projects/programmes, and reasons for any bottlenecks and delays in delivery of project outputs, outcomes and the attainment of sustainability;

Implementation approach - including an analysis of the JP's results framework, performance indicators, adaptive management to changing conditions, overall project management and mechanisms applied in project management in delivering project outcomes and outputs.

In terms of this criterion, the following aspects were examined:

- Extent to which the expected outputs/outcome has been achieved, and, its quality and timeliness.
- Main factors influencing this level of achievement.
- Contribution of the various stakeholders to this level of achievement.

[5] Development Assistance Committee (DAC) –OECD Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance -2008.

- Extent to which the JP has addressed its objectives.
- Factors and processes that have affected the JP performance.
- Level of benefits that the partner organizations and their members and beneficiaries have obtained through the use of the Project's outputs
- Generation of intended and /or unintended effects by the JP.

Efficiency: measured how economically the resources or inputs for the Programme (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to achieving stipulated outcomes and outputs.

The key questions were:
- Cost and timeliness of key outputs delivered;
- Any time and cost-saving measures taken by the JP;
- Adequacy of JP inputs for obtaining the outputs planned.
- Management of the JP and execution of the processes

Sustainability: analyzed the likelihood of sustainable outcomes at Joint Programme termination, with attention to sustainability of financial investments, the socio-political environment, catalytic or replication effects of the project, institutional and governance factors, and environmental risks.

The main focus was:
- Major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the Project.
- Adequacy of the exit strategy of the JP.
- The prospects for sustaining and scaling up the Joint Programme's results after the termination of the initiative.

Impact: examined to what extent the Joint Programme has contributed to, or is likely to contribute to intermediate states towards impact, such as changes in the nutritional status and health.

(c) *Evaluation Approach and Methodology/Tools*

The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner. It was independent and was carried out following the accepted evaluation norms and standards and systems and best practices in the evaluation field. The evaluation was underpinned by a desk review and field work.

A combination of methods and tools was applied to collect information during the evaluation. The Results Framework was reviewed (see also Section 3.2) for its rigour with a review of the Theory of Change, indicators and risks and their management.

A short narrative of the evaluation /methods tools used in this study is presented below.

(i) Desk Review

The desk review entailed examination of the relevant project documents and outputs, and included the following:

- Project proposal and work-plans/Project budget
- Results framework
- Project's progress reports
- Technical report and other documents/materials generated by the Project
- M&E Reports

- PMC Minutes and other correspondence
- Relevant national policy documents

The desk review provided clear insights about the Joint Programme, its design, implementation modalities and expected results, to facilitate the evaluation.

(ii) Field Studies:

Field Visits: Given the time constraints for the evaluation, the field study component was developed following discussions with WFP, FAO, Ministry of Education (Nutrition Division) and the Children's Secretariat. A summary of schools visited is in Table 2.3. The itinerary (Part A) and the detailed list of schools visited (Part B) is in Annex 2.3.

Table 2.3 – Number of Schools Visited

Province	Number of Schools
Central (Kandy district)	4
Southern (Galle & Hambantota districts)	10
Northern (Vavuniya district)	5
North-Central (Anuradhapura district)	5
Uva (Monaragala district)	6
Sabaragamuwa[6] (Kegalla)	1
Total	**31**

School gardens were chosen in representative agro-ecological regions[7] from the Wet, Intermediate and Dry Zones.

Schools were chosen from the list provided by the Ministry of Education to the Consultant on 23 August 2017. An attempt was made to choose schools with most number of interventions (school gardens; canteen upgrades; mid-day meal, teacher training etc.). In addition, other project interventions, if available, were also assessed (e.g. rice fortification plant near Anuradhapura).

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

In each district except in Hambantota, group discussions were held with pre-school teachers. In Hambantota, teachers were met individually due to logistics and personal reasons of the teachers (see Part A of Annex 2.4). These discussions were useful in seeking common ideas and perceptions on the Joint Programme, its relevance, and how it has affected them.

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Key informant interviews and consultative meetings were conducted with key stakeholders. The list of persons interviewed is in Part B of Annex2.4.

Photographs from the field are provided as Plates:

Plate 1 – School Gardens from a selection of schools in Anuradhapura

[6] Sabaragamuwa was originally not included; but Molagoda Primary School, Kegalla was visited at the request of WFP.

[7] The classification of Agro-ecological Regions is based on Panabokke (1996): Soils and Agro-ecological Environments of Sri Lanka (NARESA – ISBN 955-590-005-1)

Plate 2 – A very well-maintained school garden from Vavuniya with a small commercial level papaya and fruit plantation with irrigation facilities, funds for which have been sourced from parents.

Plate 3 – Generally well-maintained school gardens from Monaragala.

Plate 4 – Well-maintained school gardens (together with a Farmer's House) in Tissamaharama (Hambantota)

Plate 5 – Well-maintained school gardens from Katugastota Educational Zone

Plate 6 – Parents involvement; top – parents maintaining school garden; bottom – parents and including those who prepare mid-day meals at a meeting with the evaluator

Plate 7 – A selection of school mid-day meals; top right – fruits sold at the canteen as fruits have become very popular due to awareness creation

The evaluation also reviewed the JP's risk management procedure including the current status of risks identified at the beginning of the Joint Programme, and any follow-up actions taken to mitigate risks.

2.4Constraints and Limitations in the Study

The school garden and pre-school sub-components of the Project have been implemented island-wide in 2,250 schools; over 1,400 pre-school teachers scattered in all districts were also involved. Due to the limited amount of time available for the evaluation and due to the fact that schools were expected to be visited during school hours, only a small sample was visited. For the same reasons, only a very few teachers from the in-service training institutions could be met.

The timing of field visits was also not the ideal; it was soon after school re-opening after August holidays, and many schools were struggling with arrangements for the new term.

In regard to the policy arena, a number of outputs (e.g. recommendations for policy review; cabinet approval of fortification) has been delayed which hindered a fuller assessment.

3. Project Interventions

3.1. Introduction

The Project's Theory of Change is summarised in Fig.1.

Fig. 1 – The Results Chain (adapted from Joint Programme Document)

The overall objective of this joint programme is to provide the required technical and financial support to government and non-government organisations to rollout the nutrition multi sector plan "*Vision 2016: Sri Lanka, a Nourished Nation*" to achieve the Results # 1 - # 4 in cost efficient and effective manner[8].

The expected outcome of the Project was '*reduce maternal and child under nutrition and contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of under nutrition, by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the government nutrition programmes'*. This outcome was to be achieved via 14 outputs. Implementation of the joint programme was expected to fill some of the key gaps of information by providing the technical support, and also contributed towards achieving attitudinal and behavioural changes through nutrition education.

3.2. The Results Framework

The Project's Results Framework representing the Theory of Change does not lend itself for outcome evaluation. There are 14 Outputs contributing to the Objectives; there is no intermediate stage to capture the changes brought about by the outputs. As such there are no outcome indicators to 'measure' changes at the intermediate level. This is a short-coming in the project design, and outcome indicators would have been a very useful tool to assess effectiveness. A possible (and a very tentative) Project Planning Matrix for this project is presented in Table 3.1.

[8] Programme document (Undated): Scaling up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach

Table 3.1 – Proposed (very tentative) Project Planning Matrix

Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs)	Source of Verification (SoV)	Assumptions
Goal			
Sri Lanka Multi-Sector Action Plan is achieved	• Malnutrition reduced from XX% to YY%	Reports	Government approval
Objective			
Society's attitudes and behaviour on safe and nutrient food, dietary diversity and nutrient deficiencies are improved for more efficient and effective government investment in food security and nutrition	• Number of pre-schools and schools adopting safe and nutrient foods increased by XX% against the baseline • Reduced malnutrition by XX% against the baseline	Survey Reports	• Parents and teachers are supportive • Relevant agencies are supportive
Results (Outcomes)			
1. Policies and strategies for improved nutrition are in place	• Recommendations for revision of National Nutrition Policy • Food fortification policy • School feeding policy • Canteen Guidelines • Baseline survey results	➢ Project Reports ➢ Policies adopted	➢ *Coordination, commitment and support of the relevant Ministries/ agencies*
2. Appropriate fortified food is made available to target populations	• Acceptance of fortified rice through pilot study • Number of industries undertaking fortification of rice • Marketing channels for fortified rice • Additional improved *Thriposha*-like formulations • *Thriposha* conforming to WHO standards	➢ Reports	➢ *Support of the relevant state agencies* ➢ *Private sector willingness to manufacture fortified rice*
3. Health and nutrition of pre-school and primary children and other vulnerable groups are improved.	• Mid-day meal menu conforming to nutrient standards • Number of school gardens established • Improved health/ nutrition indicators (BMI?)	➢ Reports	➢ *Funds are available for mid-day meal* ➢ *Parents acceptance of the menu* ➢ *Support of the MoE for school gardens*

Table 3.1 Contd. - Key Outputs/Results

Result # 1: Policies and strategies for improved nutrition are in place	
Output 1.1	Understanding the link between health, food security, food consumption and micronutrient deficiencies for the target group of PLWs and schoolchildren (Baseline survey)
Output 1.5	Increased awareness of the inter-linkage of health, and nutrition food security as a national development priority at all levels
Output 1.6	Agreement reached that an integrated food, health and nutrition policy would assist in achieving zero hunger and reduce poverty
Output 1.11	School feeding policy developed to implement a comprehensive guideline for school feeding inclusive of healthy practices
Result # 2: Appropriate fortified food is made available to target populations	
Output 1.2	Identification of cost efficient and most efficient use of fortified foods to address existing micro-nutrient deficiencies including distribution mechanism (schools, health centres and/or schools)
Output 1.3	Review of the capacity for the in-country production of fortified rice
Output 1.4	Strengthening advocacy for use of fortified locally produced nutritious foods
Output 1.7	Increased availability of local produced fortified food commodities for the general public
Result # 3: Health and nutrition of pre-school and primary children and other vulnerable groups are improved	
Output 1.8	Minimum standards with health and nutrition component implemented for improving nutrition in pre-school children
Output 1.9	Nutrition promotion to pre-school children and communities (parental programmes) enhanced for improved nutrition levels of children in schools and at household level
Output 1.10	Pre-school meals enhanced in nutritional value to improve nutrition levels of pre-school children
Output 1.12	Awareness and knowledge base of education officers improved to address under-nutrition in schools and to implement comprehensive guideline for food consumption in schools
Output 1.13	Technical capacity developed to enhance inclusion of food and nutrition in pre-service/in-service teacher education programmes
Output 1.14	School garden programme improved to increase nutrition levels of school children

3.3. Project Accomplishments

The outputs and the key deliverables are in Annex 2.1. The Project's accomplishments are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 - Status of Project Accomplishments

Expected Outputs	Accomplishments
JP Output 1.1: Understanding the link between health, food security, food consumption and micronutrient deficiencies for the target group of PLWs and schoolchildren	Reports (published) and other deliverables • National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey of Pregnant Women in Sri Lanka (March, 2017) • National Nutrition Survey of Lactating Women in Sri Lanka (March, 2017) • One desktop computer and two laptops provided to MRI Pending Deliverables • Schoolchildren Nutrition Survey Report (due Sept., 2017) • Adolescent Nutrition Survey (due Oct, 2017)
JP Output 1.2: Identification of cost efficient and most efficient use of fortified foods to address existing micro-nutrient deficiencies including distribution mechanism (schools, health centres and/or schools)	Deliverables • Blending and packaging machinery and equipment and two shipping containers for storage provided to NFPB • Awareness programmes conducted at three pilot study locations to inform and sensitize education officials and others Pending Deliverable • Final Report on Rice Fortification Pilot Study Report (due Sept, 2017)
JP Output 1.3: Review of the capacity for the in-country production of fortified rice	Deliverables • Mission to Bangladesh by representatives of NFPB and WFP Sri Lanka to learn about rice fortification production process Pending Deliverables • Final Report on Rice Fortification Landscape Analysis (due Sept., 2017) • Social Marketing Strategy for Rice Fortification (due Nov., 2017)
JP Output 1.4: Strengthening advocacy for use of fortified locally produced nutritious foods	Deliverables • Familiarisation Mission to Rwanda by a team comprised of representatives from NFPB, *Thriposha* factory, MoH (NCD), and WFP Sri Lanka to learn about production and quality of Super Cereal Plus (specialized nutritious food) • Familiarisation Mission to India by a team comprised of representatives from MoH, Ministry of Policy Planning, MoA, NFPB, MoE, Academia (University of Wayamba & University of Peradeniya); Rice Millers' Assoc. (private sector) and WFP Sri Lanka to learn from India's experience on policy development and implementation of rice fortification Pending Deliverables • Cabinet paper on voluntary rice fortification and mandatory wheat flour fortification in social safety net programmes (responsibility of MoH) • Multi-Sector Action Plan for Nutrition 2017-2020 (Sept., 2017)
JP Output 1.5: Increased awareness of the inter-linkage of health, and	Reports (published) and other deliverables[9]

[9] Excerpted from the Report, *National Nutrition Surveillance System;* National Nutrition Coordination Division, MoH (September 2017)

Expected Outputs	Accomplishments
nutrition food security as a national development priority at all levels	• Revised reporting mechanism for the National Nutrition Surveillance • Revised reporting indicators for National Nutrition Surveillance • Re-designed electronic surveillance system • Training and Increased awareness on new reporting mechanism among the multi-stakeholders • Report on IMS data collection pilot study • Nutrition promotion materials: plates and banners for National Nutrition Month June 2016 and June 2017, respectively
JP Output 1.6: Agreement reached that an integrated food, health and nutrition policy would assist in achieving zero hunger and reduce poverty	<u>Deliverables</u> • Capacity building and nutrition promotion for civil society in three districts by SUN People's Forum <u>Pending Deliverable</u> • Report on revisions needed for the National Nutrition Policy (due Nov., 2017)
JP Output 1.7: Increased availability of local produced fortified food commodities for the general public	<u>Reports (published) and other deliverables</u> • Report on *Thriposha* Assessment and Product Diversification • Report on Assessment of *Thriposha* Supply Chain
JP Output 1.8 Minimum standards/guidelines with health and nutrition component implemented for improved levels of nutrition in pre-school children	<u>Reports (published) and other deliverables</u> • Pre-school Guidelines booklet [distributed island-wide] • Trainings for 1,414 pre-school teachers on pre-school nutrition guidelines and nutrition promotion [also for 1.9 and 1.10]
JP Output 1.9 Nutrition promotion to pre-school children and communities (parental programmes) enhanced for improved nutrition levels of children in schools and at household level	<u>Reports (published) and other deliverables</u> • Nutrition Module for Pre-school Teachers including supplementary materials and children's activity book [to be distributed] • Four Nutrition Information Leaflets [Printed in Sinhala and Tamil and distributed to 1,414 pre-schools; 5,000 additional leaflets distributed to all 25 districts following the training] • Four Nutrition Information Posters [Printed in Sinhala and Tamil and distributed to 1,414 pre-schools and could be reprinted as required] • One hundred and fifty ToTs (Early Childhood Care & Development Officers, Women Development Officers, etc.) conducted on community empowerment
JP Output 1.10 Pre-school meals enhanced in nutritional value to improve nutrition levels of pre-school children	<u>Reports (published) and other deliverables</u> • Same output as 1.6 • Trainings for 1,414 pre-school teachers on pre-school nutrition guidelines and nutrition promotion completed
JP Output 1.11 School feeding policy developed to implement a comprehensive guideline for school feeding inclusive of healthy practices	<u>Reports (published) and other deliverables</u> • Updated school canteen circular (Distributed canteen circular and manual to all 10,000 or schools) • Manual of Instructions on School Canteens • School Feeding Guidelines <u>Pending Deliverables</u> • Fifty (50) (43 Sinhala; 7 Tamil) canteen display boards depicting the food pyramid (Sept. 2017)

Expected Outputs	Accomplishments
JP Output 1.12 Awareness and knowledge base of education officers improved to address under nutrition in schools and to implement comprehensive guideline for food consumption in schools	Reports (published) and other deliverables • School nutrition database system developed and operational • One hundred and nine (109) desktop computers and 108 weighing scales provided to 9 provincial and 99 (98 for scales) zonal education offices and 1 to MoE • Four hundred and eight (408) officials (from 9 provinces and 97 education zones) trained on data entry
JP Output 1.13 Technical capacity developed to further enhance the inclusion of food and nutrition in the pre-service & in-service teacher education programmes	Reports (published) and other deliverables • FAO publication "Nutrition Education in Primary Schools" – Volume I and II (*Sinhala and Tamil*) [distributed in September, 2017] • Training programme for 142 teachers and 2,094 pre-service teachers (from 14 teacher training colleges in 20 educational zones) to be completed Pending Deliverables • ToT manual for primary and secondary grades school nutrition education (Sinhala and Tamil) (work in progress)
JP Output 1.14 School garden programme improved to increase nutrition levels of school children	Reports (published) and other deliverables • FAO Garden Tool (localized and translated into Sinhala and Tamil) [distributed to Zonal Education Offices to be delivered to 6,000 schools] • Supplementary book on "School Nutrition Gardens" (in Sinhala and Tamil] • Three hundred and seventy-seven (377) education specialists trained as ToTs to implement school-garden based learning through nine workshops (one in each province) • Set of nine gardening tools for 2,250 schools provided to Zonal Education Offices in July 2017 [distribution to schools underway] Pending Deliverables • Establishment of 2,250 school gardens in all 25 districts with 10 types of foods in nine provinces

The following section provides a short commentary on the delivery of outputs and attainment of outcomes together with related information.

JP Output 1.1: Understanding the link between health, food security, food consumption and micronutrient deficiencies for the target group of PLWs and schoolchildren [Financial outlay USD 242,711]

Delivery of this output should have been by March 2017 latest; however two sub-outputs are yet to be finalised.

One of the reasons for the delay is limited laboratory analytical capacity at the Medical Research Institute which undertook the surveys.

These sub-outputs are evidence for policy-making and strategy development. Although some of the information has been made available for this purpose, lack of comprehensive information has been a concern, and is expected to finally affect the delivery of policy recommendations. Some studies have recommended further studies to obtain clear evidence. An example is that a study found persistence of anaemia among children in spite of

iron supplementation, and recommended detailed studies on the aetiology of anaemia[10] to ensure that corrective measures are appropriate.

The survey report on school children is being printed; however the relevant information has been provided to MoH and other stakeholders for formulating corrective actions for deficiencies.

The delay in finalising the deliverables has affected the overall performance of the project.

JP Output 1.2: Identification of cost efficient and most efficient use of fortified foods to address existing micro-nutrient deficiencies including distribution mechanism (schools, health centres and/or schools) [Financial outlay USD 308,930]

Food fortification has been examined in Sri Lanka since 1990's. The first trials recommended fortification of wheat flour with iron[11]; since then Hettiarachchi *et al.* recommended rice flour as a vehicle for iron and zinc fortification in Sri Lanka[12]. Nestel in 2004 proposed flour fortification to reduce anaemia among the estate population[13]. In 2016, Serendib Flour Mills introduced fortified wheat flour to the Sri Lankan market for the first time, as part of the company's long-term commitment to nourishing the nation[14].

In regard to project interventions, the decision to scale up food fortification, as recommended by the TAG for food fortification appointed by the Ministry of Health, had been made at a workshop held on 22 – 23 March 2017 in Colombo with over 100 participants, including leading policymakers, technical experts, industry representatives, and national and international partners. An excerpt from the workshop report[15] pertaining to the decision is reproduced below:

> *The groups agreed that although fortification of rice has a high potential to reach a large segment of the population, there are several challenges associated with it and hence mandatory fortification may not be feasible at this stage. Therefore, the best alternative is to introduce it under existing social safety nets programmes. On the other hand, it was agreed that wheat flour fortification could be made mandatory as wheat flour production is only handled by two producers. It was noted that a large hurdle in fortification is the consumer acceptance of fortified foods since many misconceptions exist. Sustained political will is also required to ensure the programme's success to provide public awareness of the nutritional benefits of fortification, and to monitor and enforce implementation.*

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[10] Nutritional status, dietary practices and pattern of physical activity among school children aged 6-12 years (Draft Report - undated); project output by Renuka Jayatissa, Dulitha Fernando & Himali de Silva

[11] De Silva, M O C (1999) A review of current food laws and regulations on addition of nutrients to foods, and their enforcement *The Ceylon Journal of Medical Sciences;* 42: 37-41

[12] Hettiarachchi, Manjula, Chandrani Liyange, David C Hilmers & Steven A Abrams (2004) Efficacy of rice flour fortification in Sri Lanka: A pilot study; Proceedings of the Second Academic Sessions - 2004 (University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka)

[13] Nestel P (2004) The use of iron-fortified wheat flour to reduce anaemia among the estate population in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Vitamin Nutrition Research*; 74:35-51;

[14] http://www.dailymirror.lk/105320/-Star-First-to-introduce-fortified-flour-to-Sri-Lankan-market

[15] Report of the National Food Fortification Workshop held on 22-23 March 2017 (undated); provided by WFP

An acceptability trial of fortified rice with 2,518 primary school children, and their parents and households in 60 representative schools in Monaragala and Kandy districts has been carried out. The study report, yet in draft form[16], revealed that there is no significant difference between normal and fortified rice with respect to sensory properties. Although there were perceptual differences in colour, aroma and taste between fortified and normal rice, the respondents who observed a difference between the two types were less than 15%. Although the report is yet to be finalised, the recommendations have been taken into consideration in formulating a policy on rice fortification (currently in the form of a Cabinet memorandum under preparation).

The evaluator visited two schools in Monaragala district where the acceptability of fortified rice had been tested. The students, Principal and the teacher interviewed all agreed that there was no discernible difference between normal and fortified rice.

The Project has provided a blending facility for fortified rice to the National Food Promotion Board (NFPB) of the Ministry of Agriculture, and is installed at the NFPB Facility at Kalankuttiya near Galnewa. It has been used for making fortified rice for the pilot study, and the staff have been trained in standard operating procedures (blending, packaging and distribution) for this purpose. The facility is currently not in use; however, NFPB expects this facility to be the national reference point for rice fortification standards. [See Plate 8].

JP Output 1.3: Review of the capacity for the in-country production of fortified rice [Financial outlay USD 34,383]

The rice fortification landscape study has been completed by WFP, and recommends that in the short-term focus should be placed on working under the leadership of the Ministry of Health to implement the national food fortification work plan. It also recommends that the Institute of Post-Harvest Technology of the Ministry of Agriculture monitors changes in the rice milling industry's capacity that may improve feasibility to fortify on a mandatory basis in the future[17].

These recommendations have been taken into consideration in formulating the policy, although it is unclear about the way forward on the recommendation on monitoring rice milling industry capacity for fortification.

JP Output 1.4: Strengthening advocacy for use of fortified locally produced nutritious foods [Financial outlay –None]

In the context of the national scenario outlined under Output 1.1, the Project facilitated re-opening of an important national dialogue on fortification and brought together the important actors. A number of advocacy activities have also been undertaken by the Project.

The Project also facilitated two overseas visits[18] to strengthen fortification advocacy. In July 2017, one representative each from NFPB and WFP Sri Lanka undertook a study tour to Bangladesh, organized by Bhutan WFP Country office, to learn activities related to scaling up rice fortification initiatives, particularly private sector engagement. The experiences from this

[16] Pilot Programme on Rice Fortification (August, 2017) (Draft Report) University of Peradeniya
[17] A landscape analysis: Rice fortification in Sri Lanka – An Overview (undated) Project Output by WFP
[18] A third visit is reported under Output 1.7.

visit were shared with MoA[19], and the NFPB is expected to organize, with support from WFP Sri Lanka, a meeting with the private sector who are currently being involved with the food industry [this consultation may happen in November, 2017]. In this regard, WFP Sri Lanka will provide post-project technical assistance support to NFPB and the Institute of Post-harvest Technology to engage the private sector in rice fortification. In addition, based on the experiences from Bangladesh, WFP Sri Lanka, in collaboration with TAG, will provide technical assistance for assessing the potential demand for fortified rice in selected garment factories and creating awareness on nutrition issues.

WFP Sri Lanka organized a visit programme to study the national policy framework for food fortification in India (Delhi) and observe the implementation of rice fortification programme through social safety net programme in Odisha, India in September, 2017 for a team of 18 consisting of representatives from MoH (6), MoA (2), MoE (1); Dept. of National Planning (1), NNSSL (1), Academia (3), Private Sector -Millers (1) and WFP Sri Lanka (3). The visit report[20] made the following observations amongst others:

- *"However for rice fortification much dialogue has to be performed with a view to (a) decision on single vs multi –micronutrient fortification, in consideration with available research evidence and experience of other countries";*
- *"A more detailed path needs to be taken in establishing specialized unit for fortification and standards development. Also this unit needs to be strengthened to have capacity for subsequent quality monitoring"; and*
- *"Sri Lanka may have to consider cost effectiveness of importing (fortificant) kernels against kernel production in the country, detailed market evaluation for fortified rice may also be needed for such decision making"*

In regard to fortification of foods, the Project's Nutrition Consultant has brought to the notice of the authorities widespread zinc deficiency. The Consultant firmly believes that fortification with zinc is very desirable; however, it is reported that there are differing views on zinc deficiency amongst experts. Likewise, there are differing views on other fortificants. The Project has opened up and facilitated this important dialogue, and it is expected that MoH, in the near future, will begin to lead the process to reach consensus on the fortificants to be used, as a matter of Government policy, in food fortification.

The Government is also expected to formulate the rice fortification policy; in this regard, MoH is in the process of preparing a Cabinet Paper.

The project has facilitated a number of advocacy activities. Regular meetings of TAG have been helpful in taking forward the policy recommendations on rice fortification. Although the project is now over, WFP, through its regional office will continue to have a dialogue with the Government in developing the national policy on rice fortification.

Additionally, after the project period, WFP Sri Lanka will continue to support a study in October-November, 2017 on the operational structure of the social safety net programmes, supply chain of the relevant social safety net programme, and map out potential entry points for rice fortification.

[19] Mission Report; Sri Lankan Delegation to Bangladesh from 16 to 19 July 2017 (WFP)
[20] (Draft) Report of the study tour (India); Regional Exchange on Rice Fortification (WFP) September, 2017

JP Output 1.5: Increased awareness of the inter-linkage of health, and nutrition food security as a national development priority at all levels [Financial outlay USD 29,059]

This output supports MoH's on-going work on national nutrition surveillance system; some of the milestones under project support have been delayed at the MoH.

MoH had in place several information systems in the nutrition domain, namely; District Nutrition Monitoring System (DNMS), National Nutrition Information System (NNIS) and National Nutrition Surveillance System (NNSS). There is also a system in operation in the NNSSL. It has been decided to work with the system in the MoH. Accordingly, a proposal had been made by MoH on the way forward[21]. It has been decided that the system in operation currently needs to be revamped, and the indicators revised.

It has also emphasised that the need for centralized support for sustaining electronic information systems in public health domain should be brought to the notice of higher level stakeholders at the Ministry of Health[22].

The project supported the following, largely through a pilot study in Nuwara Eliya district:

- Identify end-user constraints that hinder data flow;
- Evaluation of indicators and refining them;
- Re-designing the electronic surveillance system

The Project also trained staff on the system. In order to extend the system nationally, consultative meetings have been conducted in 13 districts to identify issues at the district level. District officers were also trained in September, 2017.

Beyond the project, MoH will continue to have district level consultative meetings in the balance districts and expand the surveillance system to generate data at the Divisional Secretariat level. It will also put in place a system to share the data with other stakeholders, and will continue training of staff[23].

JP Output 1.6: Agreement reached that an integrated food, health and nutrition policy would assist in achieving zero hunger and reduce poverty [Financial outlay USD 15,810]

This review of the National Nutrition Policy is very much delayed. The Call for Expression of Interest for the Consultancy to review the National Nutrition Policy of Sri Lanka was made in August 2016, and the study was to be completed in three months.

The delays have been due to concerns raised by MoH in regard to the selection of a private consultancy firm to undertake this study. The funds for the consultancy have been transferred to MoH and a consultancy firm has been contracted by MoH to provide recommendations for review of the national policy. It is unlikely that the report will be available at the end of the Project term, due to delays at MoH.

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[21] Dr Rasanjalee Hettiarachchi, Director, Nutrition Coordination Division (undated) - National Nutrition Surveillance System

[22] Minutes of Meeting for Integration of Nutrition Information Systems in Sri Lanka (19 April, 2017) held under the aegis of MoH.

[23] Report on the National Nutrition Surveillance System, National Nutrition Coordination Division (MoH); Sept., 2017.

JP Output 1.7: Increased availability of local produced fortified food commodities for the general public [Financial outlay USD 69,920]

WFP carried out an assessment[24] of *Thriposha* production and recommended (a) improve composition of *Thriposha* with improved nutrient profile and improved digestibility and enhanced shelf-life, (b) tailor *Thriposha* to suit the nutritional requirements of PLW, including the modification of vitamins and minerals premix, (c) develop a new product for MAM children, (d) improve the *Thriposha* product and factory capacity, and (e) diversify *Thriposha* to rice-corn-soya based fortified blended food. These recommendations had been presented to MoH in May 2017.

The current status is as follows:

- The *Thriposha* formula was not changed; however, the nutrient profile has been improved to ensure that *Thriposha* conforms to WHO standards.
- Currently PLW receive the same formula; a new formula has been developed and will be tested in collaboration with the Industrial Technology Institute, Colombo.
- The current *Thriposha* formula takes about 6 h to digest. It provides about 25% of the calories needed. The balance calories come from the normal diet. Because the formula takes a long time to digest, children tend not to eat the normal meals. Thus there will be a deficit of energy. MoH is currently in process of increasing the digestibility of the formula.
- *Thriposha* factory had a new machine installed in 2016 and the capacity is more than adequate to supply Sri Lanka's needs of about 1.3 million beneficiaries; however, the main problem has been the inability to source raw materials locally.
- In regard to diversification, MoH did trials in 2003 when there was a surplus of rice. A new fortified formula was developed; however, repeated attempts to locally source rice of the required quality have failed.

WFP Sri Lanka organized a study tour to the African Improved Food (AIF) Group Fortified Blended Food Production Facility in Kigali, Rwanda for a group of eight consisting of representatives of MoH (2); *Thriposha* factory (2); Dept. of National Planning (1), Ministry of Agriculture (1) and WFP Sri Lanka (2) for a familiarisation tour. The purpose was to expose the officials to a high quality production facility processing fortified blended food having oil as an ingredient, which is similar to the new product to be introduced in Sri Lanka. The Kigali factory, just as the *Thriposha* factory in Sri Lanka, suffers from difficulties in sourcing raw materials of the required quality.

The visit report is under preparation; the experiences from Rwanda will be used to improve the production lay out of the *Thriposha* factory, the quality assurance system at AIF will be introduced to the *Thriposha* factory, and NFPB will explore the possibility of implementing the "Farm to Market process" concept of AIF in securing raw materials for their product, *Mawposha*, a supplementary feeding product of the MoA.

[24] *Thriposha* assessment and product diversification (WFP, Colombo) (undated)

JP Output 1.8: Minimum standards/guidelines with health and nutrition component implemented for improved levels of nutrition in pre-school children [Financial outlay USD 79,898]

This output has been achieved, albeit with some delay, largely due to change of management at the Children's Secretariat following the change of government in January 2015. The Minutes of the PMC indicate continuing delays of this component at the Children's Secretariat[25].

The Pre-school Guidelines booklet has been produced and is being distributed island-wide by the Children's Secretariat. Trainings have been given to 1,414 pre-school teachers on pre-school nutrition guidelines and nutrition promotion.

Overall, there is much satisfaction amongst the beneficiaries on this output; there is considerable outreach of information contained in this Guideline to teachers and parents, in particular.

JP Output 1.9: Nutrition promotion to pre-school children and communities (parental programmes) enhanced for improved nutrition levels of children in schools and at household level [Financial outlay USD 131,914]

This output has been achieved, albeit with some delay. Some of the deliverables (cf. Table 4.1) are yet to be distributed due to delays in finalising the artwork by MoE.

The evaluation noted widespread use of outreach materials such as posters, which are very much appreciated by the recipients. The contents are easy to apprehend, and the messages are clear.

The Training of Trainers programme has been effective; again there is clear outreach with parents changing their attitudes and habits towards children's nutritional issues. On occasion, parents themselves have changed their food habits, and have made discernible changes in the food of other elder children.

JP Output 1.10: Pre-school meals enhanced in nutritional value to improve nutrition levels of pre-school children [Financial outlay USD 69,835]

This output is related to Output 1.8, and trainings have been carried out concurrently.

Independent of the Project, the Children's Secretariat has issued Guidelines to Early Childhood Development Centres on a menu for mid-morning meal (Circular No: 1/2017; Ref MWCA/5/4/11/16 dated 20 January, 2017).

JP Output 1.11: School feeding policy developed to implement a comprehensive guideline for school feeding inclusive of healthy practices [Financial outlay USD 91,953]

The main output, instructions on school canteens, has been achieved, whilst the School Feeding Guidelines have been issued, albeit with delay owing to delays at MoE.

[25] Notes of the PMC held on 6 November, 2015 (Section 7)

Based on the project interventions, the Ministry of Education issued a circular (Circular 35/2015; Ref: ED/01/21/04/04 dated 31 December 2015) on 'Maintenance of Healthy Canteens in Schools'. This output has been used in policy-making.

The evaluation noted that only some schools out of those visited had a canteen; in those instances, the Principals were keen to follow guidelines specified in the Circular. The schools strive to maintain the standards to the extent possible; however, financial difficulty is an impediment to fully operationalise the guidelines in the Circular. In particular, there were difficulties in making canteens WASH-compliant as structural changes are required. It is to be noted that this requirement is not in the Project.

JP Output 1.12: Awareness and knowledge base of education officers improved to address under nutrition in schools and to implement comprehensive guideline for food consumption in schools [Financial outlay USD 112,199]

A database [School Health Promotion Programme Information System] has been developed, albeit with much delay. This is accessible at the Zonal Education level, and schools too can access their own data. At the school level, there is limited access due to lack of computers and/or internet facility. In two schools visited, the database was accessible, but key information (e.g. BMI data) had not been populated. The teachers were unable to populate the system as it is not open for editing.

Even at the Zonal level, difficulties have been encountered in operating the system. In a new system such as this, teething problems are common, and continuous guidance and hand-holding are necessary to ensure that the system provides the service it is expected to give.

The Project has provided 108 computers and the officials of the Zonal Educational Offices have been trained; they are yet to train teachers on the use of this system. The user manual is available online, but the officials seem unaware of, or unable to access these manuals.

As an additional item, though beyond Project's responsibilities but supported by the Project's consultant, is the on-line payment facility to suppliers of food. However, the evaluation noted that the vouchers continue to be generated manually owing to the need for certification at a number of levels. The online payment system was to be inaugurated in Galle as a pilot during the evaluation, but was postponed due to system difficulties.

The database consultant's contract ended in February, 2017. In order to ensure that the system is functional, MoE is likely to continue to employ this consultant for the further period of three months after the Project is over.

JP Output 1.13: Technical capacity developed to further enhance the inclusion of food and nutrition in the pre-service & in-service teacher education programmes [Financial outlay USD 82,864]

The ToT programme has been completed with some delays. The ToT provided is very much appreciated by the recipients, and outreach of knowledge is evident.

JP Output 1.14: School garden programme improved to increase nutrition levels of school children [Financial outlay USD 132,332]

The context in which this component is considered for implementation has to be documented to understand the current situation. Briefly, the context is as follows:

- School garden programmes have been in operation in Government schools for a long time; generally there was no specific funding from the Government, except occasional provision of gardening implements and planting materials. In the last decade, there has also been donor support in some areas for establishing school gardens.
- The Project's School Garden component is made up of three key inputs, viz., training in school garden establishment and maintenance, provision of Guidebooks/Manuals on school gardens, and provision of agricultural implements. Training of teachers has been completed; Guidebooks/Manuals have been completed with delays due to slow implementation by MoE. Agricultural implements have been delivered to the Zonal Education Offices, and the majority of schools are yet to receive these implements due to delivery delays at the Zonal Office. Likewise, distribution ofGuidebooks/Manuals by the Zonal Offices is also delayed. There was no financial allocation planned for any land preparation and ancillary support (e.g. land preparation, planting materials, irrigation etc.) at the schools.
- Within this framework, the Project aimed at establishing 2,250 school gardens; at the same time MoE launched establishment of 3,750 gardens. Although training, manuals and implements have been provided, teachers expect the full package of assistance (land preparation, planting materials etc.). There is a miscommunication on the Project's assistance towards the school garden component. The facilitation role of the Project is not well understood at the school level.
- Majority of schools visited were unaware of the project's assistance towards establishing school gardens.

Chronology of events on school gardens

The original work-plan envisaged the following activities:

- Eight types of nutritionally rich foods introduced in up to 6,000 schools to improve school garden products
- School garden-based learning established as a learning tool in 10 000 schools

At the PMC held on 6 November, 2015[26], FAO highlighted the delayed commencement of activities which greatly impacted and compressed the work schedule into a much shorter period, and MoE was requested to collect background information from each school on the available resources, space, preferences, and the need for implementing school garden. FAO also requested reduction of the number of school gardens from 10,000 schools island-wide to approximately 3,200 schools in 10 districts. MoE too agreed to this revision, but PMC decided otherwise to implement the programme in all 25 districts, if necessary with reduced number of schools.

Although trainings have been provided, preparatory work for selecting school gardens by MoE had still not commenced by March 2016.

[26] See Notes of PMC held on 6 November 2015

PMC at its meeting on 24 October 2016[27] noted that MoE has not been able to collect the required background information on selecting schools due to 'rains, and school terms tests (October 2016) and that December too would be difficult due to Ordinary Level examinations. At this meeting, the Department of Agriculture, based on their extensive experiences on home gardening, questioned the wisdom of establishing school gardens as their experience was that school gardens are not maintained during examinations, holidays etc. and urged PMC to consider planting local fruit trees rather than vegetables.

At the PMC meeting held on 17 March 2017[28], FAO urged caution in trying to establish a large number of school gardens given the time constraints indicating that measurable impacts would be difficult to achieve, and proposed higher quality on interventions than numbers. NNCSL also proposed that one or more model gardens in each education zone be established, instead of large numbers of school gardens. The PMC also decided that watering facilities should be provided where needed.

Although the PMC has discussed several options and in spite of FAO's repeated requests to scale down the school garden component due to delays in implementation by MoE, the original plan had not been changed.

Status at the time of evaluation

MoE formulated criteria for selecting schools for establishing the gardens but left the selection to the teachers themselves. Based on this MoE prepared a list of 2,250 schools island-wide, which was much delayed.

During the evaluation, 31 schools were visited; many schools had school gardens established before the Project, and were in various stages of maintenance. In many schools in the dry and intermediate zones, school gardens had perished due to severe drought[29] and lack of maintenance during the August holidays. In the wet zone, school gardens had somewhat survived the dry August, but were largely in a state of neglect.

A number of schools visited did not have adequate land for establishment of gardens; some did not have even potable water, indicating that the selection criteria had not been complied with.

Out of the schools visited, about five well maintained school gardens, originally established about four years ago and regularly replanted, were observed. In these instances, irrigation water was available; special arrangements with parents had been made for maintenance of gardens during school holidays, and keen commitment of school authorities was noted.

Out of the schools visited, only a few had received agricultural implements and the Guidelines/Manuals. Many schools were unaware of WFP/FAO Project, and there was general understanding that the school gardens are supported by the Government.

The Project produced two Guidebooks; FAOs' translated guide on Establishment and Maintenance of School Gardens (2016) and the supplementary book on School Nutrition Gardens (undated) [*Pasal Poshana Uyan*]. The latter book, in two languages, is still in the process of being distributed, but when the book was shown to the teachers they liked it as a handy pocket book.

[27] See Item # 8 of the Notes of PMC held on 24 October 2016
[28] See Item # 9 of the Notes of PMC held on 17 March 2017
[29] In 2016, many parts of Sri Lanka experienced the worst drought in 40 years.

Overall, none of the schools visited had established a project-supported garden. However, as a result of the trainings, many schools have plans to establish a garden with the upcoming north-east monsoons, as a part of their routine programme, with or without project support.

3.4. Cross-cutting themes

(a) *Gender Considerations*

SDGF gender considerations require addressing gender inequality effectively and transforming it with multi-sector approaches and an in-depth analysis of issues in their national and local context, and promoting women's empowerment in all the priority sectors.

The Project did not have a specific focus on gender issues; however project interventions have strengthened gender equality with much success. There is evidence of empowered women (trained by pre-school teachers) in school societies who have taken the responsibility of making the mid-day meals. Another noteworthy feature is the active role of men in meal planning, preparation and help, and also in adopting healthy meals at home.

Overall, the Project has been successful in engaging with women and women-headed households. The study saw evidence of leadership demonstrated by women, particularly in matters relating children's meals.

All the pre-school teachers met were women; they have embraced the philosophy of balanced nutrition, and the Project's facilitation role is very much appreciated by them. In the areas visited in Vavuniya, the internal conflict had rendered families homeless leaving many widows and women-headed families as a vulnerable group. They are now involved in mid-day meal programme, and have been educated on the relevant aspects.

The Project Monitoring Reports contain gender disaggregated data as required for reporting[30]. However, it was not possible to obtain gender disaggregated data pertaining to all capacity development activities.

(b) *Communications and Outreach*

The Project did not develop its own communications strategy; it followed the general branding guidelines. Notwithstanding this, the Project's communication and outreach materials were found to be effective; they are produced in Sinhalese and Tamil languages, and the messages are clear. During the study, posters were observed displayed in key places (e.g. Pre-Schools; Primary School canteens; Divisional Secretariat etc.).

In July, 2017 the Project issued 11 Press Releases, posted materials in seven websites and in six online newspapers, carried out four TV spots and included project news in three news broadcasts in the radio relating to the school garden component.

The Project has also produced a number of Guidebooks, toolkits etc. and some are yet in print. Many of these knowledge products are yet to reach most of the intended recipients. In general, they are informative, and are appreciated by those who have received them. Some observations for future reference are made hereunder.

- Setting up and running a school garden (ISBN 92-5-105408-8] – This book has been translated to Sinhalese and Tamil, and is available in schools now. Several respondents found the book to be too bulky; another comment, which the evaluation

[30] SDG-F Joint Programme Monitoring Report for the period 1 January, 2015 to 30 September, 2015; WFP

agrees, is that the local context is not reflected well. For example, page 77 has a section on vegetable oils, which does not mention coconut oil, which is the most commonly used cooking oil in Sri Lanka. The evaluator explained that the book is more on principles and how-to-do it manual prepared for global consumption. However, the point raised by the respondents is valid. On the other hand, the Project has produced the booklet School Nutrition Gardens,(= *Pasal Poshana Uyan)*. This has not yet reached many but was shown to the teachers during the mission. This was appreciated as a more user-friendly Guide.

- Several books prepared by the Project have no citation page and are without publication dates. It would have been preferable to have ISBN number as well. Nothing more can be done now for those already printed.

The Project has had visible branding at the training events, in manuals and other published literature, fortified rice bags, and in the equipment and implements provided by the Project. In regard to the school garden component, the Project had no plans for visual signage in the field. Whilst this may be a deliberate choice by the Project, the schools did not recognise the Project for the support provided; given that the Government too undertakes similar activities, the project's inputs are not readily recognizable (and are therefore unknown to the beneficiaries).

3.5. Review of the Current status of Assumptions

The Project proposal identified several risks/assumption, and the current status is reviewed here.

(a) *Government maintaining the priority status for Nutrition:* The Government is currently reviewing its policy and strategies, and nutrition will remain a very high priority. This risk is therefore mitigated almost entirely. Additionally, the Government budget has a very significant outlay for nutrition relating to children and PLW. Another noteworthy investment is the allocations made by Provincial Councils for providing mid-day meals to pre-school children in selected nutrient deficient areas. This allocation currently is LKR 660.00 per month for nine months in the year[31].

(b) *Commitment of the Ministries and Institutions:* The project experienced implementation set-backs due to inordinate delays in the implementing Ministries and agencies indicating less-than-desired commitment. These agencies also implement similar activities in parallel, in their core programmes. Two cases can be highlighted: MoE's own school garden component covering 3,750 schools, and MoWCA developing a menu for pre-schools.

There are a number of reasons for the delays. Firstly, the Project's ownership at the Ministries' level was not adequately demonstrated and was thought as a UN agency project; secondly, many project activities are already in the core programmes of the Ministries; thirdly, the Ministries did not appreciate the value addition brought about by the Project in terms of technical assistance, exposure visits etc.

The Government will continue to have significant budgetary allocations for children's nutrition and these will be used as matching funds in future endeavours.

This risk is at moderate level.

[31] Circular 1/2017 (Ref MWCA/5/4/11/16) dated 20 January 2017 of the MoWCA

(c) *Community capacity and Behaviour:* Project's interventions have brought forth positive attitudinal changes in parents; this is a welcome development and has mitigated the risk. Yet, TV advertisements on fast food remain a serious cause of influencing parents. This risk can be mitigated by airing short TV spots on the recommended regimes of nutrition for children, thereby reducing the risk. The risk however remains moderate to low, but is manageable with focussed inputs.

(d) *Capacity development of the Community:* The Project has demonstrated its capacity to increase the knowledge of the community; coupled with the Government's commitment on SDG's zero hunger goal, this risk has been managed.

4. Programme Performance Analysis

4.1 Relevance

The Project's relevance could be examined from several facets, viz., Government of Sri Lanka needs and priorities, UNDAF, and from the perspectives of the direct beneficiaries.

In terms of Government of Sri Lanka's needs and priorities, the Project clearly addresses a priority need of the Government at the time when the project proposal was submitted, as enunciated in *Mahinda Chintana*[32]. Improving health and nutritional status of children under the Social Protection Strategy Framework was a priority.

The Project directly addresses the objectives of the National Nutrition Policy of Sri Lanka[33], and it's Strategic Plan. Specifically, it addresses Objective # 1 (Ensuring Optimal Nutrition throughout the life cycle), Objective # 2 (Enhancing capacity to deliver effective and appropriate interventions), Objective # 4 (Ensuring food and nutrition security for all citizens), Objective # 5 (strengthening advocacy, partnerships and networking, and to a certain degree Objective # 6 (strengthening research, monitoring and evaluation). The Outcome # 1.4 seeks to address malnutrition, in particular anaemia and underweight children, which is a key component in the Project. In this regard, the Project is highly relevant to the Government development plans, and to the people.

The Government, based on a recommendation in the National Nutrition Policy (2009-2013), established the National Nutrition Council of Sri Lanka. It launched a special programme, *Vision 2016: Sri Lanka, a Nourished Nation,* wherein the Government recognised that addressing nutrition related issues requires a multi-agency approach. It launched the Multi-Sector Action Plan for Nutrition (MSAPN) for this purpose[34]. The Project strived to address four out of the five Key Result areas in the MSAPN and therefore is very relevant.

The Project is well aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (Nutrition). It supports sustainable livelihoods, evidence-based policy development/ revision in nutrition, social integration, and focuses on capacity development of the relevant sector agencies and empowerment of communities.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is an overarching vision of the Government. The Project whilst directly addressing SDG # 2 (zero hunger), also addresses the health goal, SDG 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The objectives of the Joint Programme are therefore very valid in the context of the national policy.

The Project was aimed at addressing nutritional requirements of pre-school children,primary-school children between the ages 6 and 14, and Pregnant and Lactating Women through the involvement of teachers, school communities, civil society and the private sector. The project initiatives are already embedded in the Government's programmes in addressing malnutrition; thus the project initiatives supplement Government efforts commendably.

The Project has chosen relevant Partners (MoH, MoA, MoE and MoWCA) who are otherwise mandated to undertake similar work. Likewise, the beneficiaries are also relevant, and have received benefits directly.

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[32] *Mahinda Chintana*: Vision for a new Sri Lanka; A ten year horizon development framework 2006-2016; Department of National Planning, Sri Lanka

[33] National Nutrition Policy of Sri Lanka; Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition (2010)

[34] Multi-Sector Action Plan for Nutrition; Presidential Secretariat, Colombo (2013)

The Theory of Change proposed for the Project is directly related to the Government's priorities in nutrition and health. It also supports synergy between these key partners, which adds value by supporting the multi-sectoral approach to bring about changes in nutritional status of children in particular.

The Project is based on a felt need of the Government for technical and financial support for furthering MSAPN.

4.2Effectiveness

As already indicated, the somewhat ambitious Project interventions supplemented the Government programmes. In essence, Government already had a comprehensive programme towards addressing malnutrition through a multi-faceted approach including provision of mid-day meals and supplements; for example, the Government has a comprehensive nutrition programme aimed at maternal and childcare, the *Samurdhi* subsidy programme for low-income families, the *Divineguma* economic development programme to generate extra household income for improving food security and nutrition levels, the school health nutrition programme, the school canteen management programme, school mid-day meal programme, provision of a glass-of-milk programme, micro-nutrient supplementation programme etc.

The Project's interventions have been introduced amidst these government programmes; it is therefore not surprising that the beneficiaries were unsure of the provider of these services, whether it is the Government or the Project. For example, the Government launched establishment of 3,750 'school home gardens' whereas the Project was also expected to facilitate establishment of 2,250 home gardens in schools. Clearly, the beneficiary schools were unsure of the source of support for school gardens.

The Project commencement was delayed due to a variety of reasons including: the change in government (in January, 2015); delay in obtaining endorsement of the Department of External Resources, which impacted commencement of activities; delay in materialization of the matching funds component in spite of that being a condition of the award of the Project, resulting in work progressing with essentially half of the budgeted amount for certain activities; and the need to re-programme some activities to be in line with the new government priorities.[35] The Project was of 28-month duration, and having considered a 5-6 month delayed start, received a five-month extension. In fact, some activities are on-going at the time of evaluation. This delay affects a proper assessment of effectiveness. Notwithstanding these significant delays, the project has delivered some of its outputs to the expected quality (see Table 3.1); however, a number of outputs is yet to be fully delivered. Implementation of activities by the Children's Secretariat has been very much delayed; no activities had been undertaken until about November 2016.

Overall, the Project has been effective in delivering its outputs, albeit very much delayed [please also see the following Section]. In general, there is a high level of satisfaction amongst the stakeholders; government officials, pre-school teachers and staff and parents. In spite of the delays experienced in the Ministries, UN agencies have strived to ensure delivery of outputs to the extent possible, primarily through consultants fielded by the Project.

Part of the success of the Project is because of the commitment of teachers and parents (see Box 1), who have, in general, actively participated in project initiatives.

[35] Minutes of the Project Management Committee; 6 November 2015

Implementation Approach

Some comments on Project's Results Framework and performance indicators are given in Section 3.2.

Project Management

The Project is under the overall responsibility of the Joint Project Coordinator (WFP) guided by the PMC; there are two Project Managers in WFP and FAO, respectively. There is no Project Management Unit, but there are a number of project-supported staff at WFP, providing technical assistance and management oversight to various project components. The project is directly implemented by WFP and FAO with outputs identified for each organisation.

The synergy between components, as one project, could have been better achieved with one Project Coordinator, rather than two Project Managers (it is noted that FAO's Project Manager also provided technical assistance), and considering this as one project and avoiding consideration of the project as 'WFP and FAO components'. In this Project, the evaluation noted the harmonious working relationship between the two agencies and the two Managers; yet the implementing Partners preferred a 'one-stop-shop'[36] for all project related matters. Some were unsure of whom to contact, in case of any project matter[37].

The Project budget allocated to each agency is managed by WFP and FAO; again some government agencies expressed concern on lack of access to budget allocation details and expenditure details. However, neither of these important management issues seems to have been put on the table at the PMC for discussion and to clarify any misgivings.

Project oversight is provided by two Committees, as follows:

The ***National Steering Committee*** is co-chaired by the Presidential Secretariat (in the capacity of NNSSL) and the UN Resident Coordinator, with representatives of UN agencies, MoWCA, MoH, MoE and MoA and the donor (Spanish Government) representative. It is tasked with 'Oversight and Strategic Leadership of joint programmes at the national level'[38] which includes management, planning and reporting, monitoring, evaluation and audit, advocacy and communications, and coordination, in particular to promote synergies between the joint programmes and related projects and/or programmes.

The ***Programme Management Committee***, co-chaired by the Presidential Secretariat (in the capacity of NNSSL) and the UN Resident Coordinator is composed of representatives of UN agencies, MoWCA, MoH, MoE and MoA was expected to meet about quarterly exclusively to provide managerial oversight[39].

These Committees have been established as per SDG-F Guidelines; however, in reality, the functions of the two Committees have overlapped. The Government authorities did not see the need for two Committees and to invest time on both. The evaluation is of the view that PMC could have fulfilled all the functions, a view shared by FAO as well.

[36] The NNSSL was expected to provide the 'one-stop-shop' service; however, the stakeholders were unaware of this arrangement.

[37] SDGF Joint Programme Guidelines indicated that Joint Programmes will be managed by one governance structure (see item 1.5 of SDGF ToR and Guidance for Joint Programme Formulation).

[38] MDG-F Joint Implementation Guidelines used in SGDF Joint Programme Guidelines; MDG Achievement Fund Secretariat (2011)

[39] See page 7 MDG-F Joint Implementation Guidelines; MDG Achievement Fund Secretariat (2011)

Factors that may have affected programme performance

The achievements could have been further improved if not for some of the impediments observed in the field. Some of the key issues are briefly described hereunder.

- Limited coverage in training of personnel; only about 5 -10% of the pre-school teachers have undergone training;
- Limited awareness building of parents;
- Inadequate water supply in schools which has hampered establishment of school gardens, exacerbated by an unusually harsh drought in 2016;
- Lack of facilities to maintain school gardens during school holidays;
- Excessive monkey damage to school gardens in several areas[40];
- Overall delay in implementation, and the ambitious work-plan to be accomplished in 28 months.

Contribution to National Development Plans etc.

Since the Project activities mirror and supplement government programmes, there is a very positive outlook for national ownership of project's processes and outcomes. Indeed, the relevant government agencies have already earmarked budgetary allocations for project-related activities after the project is over. Furthermore, the project's results will be directly used in policy formulation/revision.

The project's interventions have created a significant interest on the subject of nutrition and child care amongst the general public, particularly parents. The parents regularly meet at the school and one of the topics of discussion is children's nutrition. The project has created a very healthy environment of dialogue and discussion amongst the parents, and the project has provided significant inputs towards empowering the parents on the question of proper nutrition.

Unintended Results

The evaluation noted the development of a meal plan for pre-school children in mal-nutrition pocket divisions supported by the Children's Secretariat. This is in implementation from January 2017 with financial support at the rate of LKR 660 per month per child for nine months in the year. Although this is not a project intervention, it is a parallel development towards improving school children's meal programme and may be considered an unintended result.

The results from the PLW and children's survey have been used in the formulation of the relevant SDG indicators for Sri Lanka.

[40] Monkeys have become a serious agricultural pest in certain areas of the country, including urban areas. Such areas should have been avoided in selecting school gardens.

Box 1

A model for optimising land for cultivation……

Janadhipathi Kanishta Vidyalaya, Debarawewa (Southern Province; Hambantota) has over 4,700 student population, and is one of the most populous primary schools in the country. The students come from a variety of backgrounds; from labourer families to farmer families to public officials. Thus students are moulded in different ways at home.

Yet, coming from the Deep South, these students have a liking for agriculture, in particular home gardening. The school authorities sensed the opportunities of harnessing the enthusiasm of the students, and started establishing small gardens in the limited space in the school premises.

This initiative received significant fillip from the Science Teacher, who is looking after the home garden programme, having established home gardens in his previous school as well. He underwent training under the project, but the organisers saw his experience, and thus invited him to be a resource person for training.

Yet, he says that the training provided by the Project gave him additional knowledge. With this knowledge and his experience, he started to expand the home garden concept in the school. He also established a nursery with the help of students and parents, and raised plants. He together with school authorities persuaded an overseas visitor who visits Tissamaharama regularly to donate funds for a screen house. The teacher designed the screen house with the knowledge he has gained over time, and supervised its construction. He also introduced low-water use irrigation system, bearing in mind that the area does not have adequate water particularly during the dry months. Given the space constraints, he introduced vertical agriculture, and gave the responsibility of maintenance to different classes.

He then launched a competition between classes to see who does best. The students are now very keen to do best in their respective 'plots'. The students themselves say that they have learnt a great deal from the activities in the school, and are taking the message to their respective homes. Many households are replicating the home gardens.

The teacher is now a recognised resource person; using his own experience and the knowledge he gained from the project, he conducts regular training programmes for teachers. The plots have become field learning plots for students, teachers and parents, who are actively involved in the programme.

His extension motto is '*Guru Gederin – Gemi Gederata*', translated as 'lessons from the school to the village homesteads'. The work at this School demonstrates replicability of well-managed home gardens, and how committed teachers can influence the community [see Plate 9].

4.3Efficiency

Cost and Timeliness of Output Delivery

The Project's allocations are given in Table 4.1. Several respondents indicated their concern on 'high overheads' of the project. This comment is a reflection of respondent's lack of awareness of the allocations, costs associated with direct implementation by UN agencies, and the contractual costs, which are not considered, somewhat ignorantly, by the respondents. It is to be noted that the Project is essentially a 'software' project largely providing training and knowledge products. It did not provide significant assets to the partners, aside from 108 computers, weighing machines, the rice blending facility and the agricultural implement kits to selected schools.

Table 4.1 – Project allocations (USD)

Budget Item	Allocation (USD)	Allocation as % of the total
Staff and other personnel costs	374,465	25.0
Supplies, commodities & materials	283,269	18.9
Equipment, vehicles and furniture	37,077	2.5
Contractual services	400,231	26.7
Travel	64,615	4.3
Transfers and Grants counterpart	22,346	1.5
General operating and other direct costs	219,612	14.6
Indirect support costs	98,113	6.5
TOTAL	**1,499,728**	**100.0**

The Project has been managed efficiently. In this regard, several features which contribute to the efficiency of operations stand out, as follows:

- The Project used the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Children's Secretariat of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs for implementation, which made the operations ideal as these agencies already carried the necessary administrative and management structures. However, this advantage has been somewhat negated by delays in implementation.
- The Project has leveraged USD 1,368,752 from Government agencies; this has been possible due to the fact that these agencies have the project interventions in their regular work programmes.
- Direct funding of operations by UN agencies has enabled the project to procure goods and services as needed, which the government agencies would sometime find difficult owing to the procurement procedures in place. However, there was no general consensus on this point amongst government agencies, and the Project's value addition was not always evident to the Partners.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The Project is expected to provide biannual implementation monitoring reports as well as annual review on outcomes. The Project has developed a Monitoring Plan, and has submitted biannual implementation monitoring reports. The responsibility of monitoring has been assigned to the

NNSSL with a separate budget. Regular monitoring reports have been prepared by the Project[41]; however it would appear that these reports have not been reviewed by the PMC, which is a requirement in the Project.

The M&E framework is largely on tracking outputs. Outcome indicators perhaps have not been included given the short time duration of the Project. The M&E framework could have been improved with an addition of one or two **Outcome** indicators (e.g. to measure reduction of maternal and child under-nutrition) at least in a few selected districts known to have nutrient deficiencies. The baseline data (2015) collected on Lactating Women[42] , Pregnant Women[43] and children[44] provide a good basis for measuring outcomes using one or two indicators in selected districts (the reports provide nutritional status by districts, and Kilinochchi and Monaragala stand out as weak). Such an exercise would have involved minimum expenditure for sample data gathering in these two districts. This would be particularly important given that MoH too has reservations on the purported improvements in nutrition.

Given that activities are spread island-wide, field level monitoring and reporting have been a challenge. This partly explains the lack of progress in the school garden component as the monitoring reports do not reflect the actual ground conditions. MoE perhaps could have utilised the Provincial Education staff for monitoring the establishment of school gardens.

Overall, a more efficient progress tracking system such as monthly monitoring meetings of the core staff would have helped the Project to expedite some of the work or at least bring delays to the notice of the authorities. The evaluation notes that the last six-months of the Project has seen a rush of activities, due to delays in the implementing Partners.

Factors affecting efficiency

Overall, the significant delays encountered in the implementation of the Project have affected its efficiency. A more robust M&E protocol and clear decisions at the PMC level would have helped to minimise these delays.

4.4 Impact

Given that some outputs of the project are yet pending, it is premature to assess impacts. Notwithstanding this situation, it is possible to identify progress towards impacts, as narrated below.

(i) The Project's baseline data are being used for updating policy guidelines on nutrition;

(ii) The Project created an opening to explore introduction of fortified rice and wheat flour[45]. Rice fortification is a new avenue hitherto not examined in Sri Lanka. Additionally, improvements to *Thriposha* formulations are likely to be continued in the future.

[41] In terms of the Guidelines of SDG-F, monitoring reports are to be delivered by the PMC (vide SDG-F undated memo on additional information to support the Joint Programmes).

[42] National Nutrition Survey of Lactating Women in Sri Lanka; Medical Research Institute of Sri Lanka in collaboration with UNICEF and WFP (2017)

[43] National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey of Pregnant Women in Sri Lanka; Medical Research Institute of Sri Lanka in collaboration with UNICEF and WFP (2017)

[44] Jayatissa, R; Fernando D & H de Silva (2017) (Draft) Nutritional status, dietary practices and pattern of physical activity among school children aged 6-12 years; Output of the Project

[45] Wheat flour fortification has already been done in Sri Lanka (cf. Section 2.2; Output 1.4)

(iii) In the Pre-school nutrition sub-component, the respondent teachers indicated that much of the information they received during awareness creation and training were known to them in some form or another; however, the training provided enabled them to fathom a clearer perception of the issues and solutions including the underlying causes, and formalized their capacity to understand the issues. In this regard, there is clear evidence that project's inputs have an outreach. There is increased awareness amongst both teachers and parents on the need to provide a balanced diet to pre-school children. The fact that certain food items are now not brought to school is an indication of an impact of this sub-component.

(iv) A similar trend was observed in the Primary Schools (Grade 1-5); there was clear evidence that children are now accepting food items which they did not like previously. Counseling by teachers, and parental influence exercised from increased awareness have contributed to this positive change.

(v) Although the school gardens have not been established, training provided to teachers together with experiences from continuing government's school garden programme has made good outreach to parents' and teachers' homesteads. There has been increased interest amongst these groups for enhancing their homestead cultivations of nutritional foods.

Cross-Cutting Issues

The project covers gender issues well. Almost the entire pre-school teacher population is women, and the project's interventions have empowered them. The nutrition outreach from both pre-school and primary school segments has reached parents; the evaluation noted that both parents have appreciated the interventions, and their knowledge and attitudes have changed. Usually, preparation of meals for children is the responsibility of the mother (or the grand-mother in some instances); the empowerment through project interventions is clearly evident in mothers. It was heartening to note the complementary support of fathers towards proper nutrition as they were somewhat indifferent towards this subject previously.

Matching funds

The Project leveraged nearly USD 1.5 million matching funds from the Government's on-going programmes in the relevant Ministries.

Beneficiaries

The project proposal envisaged a population of 61,356 beneficiaries. The project directly engaged over 1,400 pre-school teachers and expects scaling up the efforts through the national programme. The evaluation noted that the relevant government agency is likely to scale-up activities, although a time-frame was not evident.

4.5Sustainability

There is clear evidence of sustainability as the main sub-components of the project, namely nutrition, and school gardens are in the core programmes of the MoE, MoH and Children's Secretariat. It is to be noted that government's programmes on children's nutrition and school gardens have been in operations for a considerable period of time with much success (see also Box 2). The Project supplemented these efforts, and many Principals of schools were certain of continuing these programmes irrespective of external funding. Whilst the project's inputs are valued and appreciated and formalised their capacities, many school Principals were confident of

securing external funding and material support for school gardens. The school gardens are also environmentally friendly, and contribute to the understanding of environmental issues.

In this regard, the trainings, in particular Training of Trainers is considered very useful in enhancing the capacity of stakeholders. At the agency level, project's interventions such as the school database, nutrition database etc. have been very useful, and the agencies are committed to maintain these facilities in the long-term.

Given that the project's sub-components are directly in government programmes, there is much likelihood of scaling up the Joint Programme outputs at the national level.

Box 2

A School with a difference….

Molagoda Primary School, Kegalla, established in 1860, is a recipient of project's interventions largely through training. It has 465 students in Grades 1-5.

Its nutrition and school garden programmes have been in place for about a decade. Thus the Project is seen as something that will supplement and complement the school's efforts. The Principal and the staff are very committed to the well-being of the school and have introduced many concepts (e.g. 5S) to ensure high standards in the school, not usually found in other schools. The school has received many provincial and national awards of distinction; legacy of hard-work of all concerned.

Based on learnings from the project, the school has established 'Nutrition Quality Circle', essentially to ensure that the guidance provided under the project on school meals and hygiene are maintained to the expected standards. The 'Canteen Guideline' is well implemented, again with the oversight of the Principal, the Teacher in charge with the assistance of the Nutrition Quality Circle.

The school engages the parents very closely, and has been able to impress upon them the need for proper food for their children. School meals are prepared by an equally dedicated set of five parents; at the time of the visit in September, these parents had not received their cheques for food supplied in June. Yet, they have committed themselves to continue food supply with greatest financial difficulty, in the interest of the school and the children as they firmly believe that providing a balanced meal is a pre-requisite for a healthy life and to ability to learn at school.

The school is ear-marked for a 'model school garden'. Although the Principal was not aware of this development, he is proud of the school's vegetable and fruit gardens established many years ago, which are neatly laid out not only to demonstrate cultivation but also to educate children on matters agricultural. For example, there is a banana garden containing many varieties, and this is a a useful educational demonstration as the area is well known for banana cultivation. The traditional farm house (*Govi Gedera)* together with implements is a welcome educational demonstration.

The School is worthy of its recognition – and demonstrates what can be done with minimal effort but with commitment of the leadership [see Plate 10].

5. Evaluative Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

The Project used an approach of working through several government Ministries/departments, namely the agencies of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Presidential Secretariat (representing the National Nutrition Secretariat of Sri Lanka) and the Children's Secretariat of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs. The Project's engagement with the Partners is satisfactory.

The Project's main partner agencies are represented both at national and provincial levels. Although there was no formal arrangements for this engagement save for the collaboration with NFPB, the project has forged important partnerships which will be very useful for future engagements. The Provincial administrations of Health and education are closely engaged in project implementation.

The Project addressed a felt need of the country i.e. to reduce malnutrition in children in particular, and was particularly appropriate in the conflict-affected areas and in the poorer districts. It also addressed the requirements in the National Nutrition Policy as well as UNDAF priority areas (Pillar II).

The Project focussed largely on 'software' by providing capacity development opportunities, raising awareness particularly amongst parents of pre-school and school-going children, and also teachers on subjects under consideration. Its 'hardware' component was significantly less and included over 100 computers and weighing scales to MoE, agricultural implements to schools, and a rice blending plant together with ancillary facilities to NFPB. It also provided how-to-do toolkits and guidelines, and undertook generation of much-needed knowledge for policy influence and decision-making. The Government has already accepted some of the key project findings on nutrition and converted them to policy instruments through issuance of directives in the form of circulars.

The Project's interventions to bring about gender equality have shown demonstrable results with opportunity for replication (e.g. involving mothers in nutrition awareness programmes). Overall, women's leadership and men's active involvement in school meal programme are amply demonstrated.

Project implementation has unfortunately suffered due to change of Government in January, 2015 and concomitant changes or vacancies in the leadership/project focal points in the key Partner agencies. Additionally, there have been inordinate delays in implementing the MoE component due to adverse weather conditions, school holidays and examinations. Passing away of the food fortification focal point at MoH, which remains vacant to date, hampered timely implementation of the foot fortification component. A number of components handled by MoH and MoWCA too were inordinately delayed. In spite of continuing efforts of the UN agencies, project performance has suffered considerably due to these delays.

Notwithstanding these adverse situations, Project's interventions, particularly in the children's nutrition arena are well received, and have contributed to a change in attitudes and behaviours of teachers and parents.

The partnerships brought about by the Project will be beneficial for all. The Project activities are in the core programmes of MoH, MoE, MoWCA, and MoA; these will ensure sustainability of the initiatives and are likely to further strengthen these partnerships.

The Programme has generated sufficient information and experiences to enable up-scaling and replication, with further refinements to the processes as discussed elsewhere. There are lessons if another phase is to be launched.

The performance[46] of the project is summarised below.

- Relevance of the project is **'Highly Satisfactory'**, as it addresses priorities of the Government, UNDAF and the communities, in particular school children and parents.
- Efficiency of the Programme is graded between **'Satisfactory'** and **'Less-than-Satisfactory'**. The Project has been implemented through Government agencies, and its inputs have been sufficient for the outputs. However, the efficiency has been very much affected due to inordinate delays in implementation.
- The Project's effectiveness is **'Satisfactory'** in achieving the planned outputs largely conforming to the required quality, albeit with much delay. The project also involved a large number of beneficiaries.
- Sustainability of Project interventions is graded **'Satisfactory'.** The Partners are Government agencies mandated to carry out the same functions as project interventions; this is the ideal scenario for sustaining project activities beyond the life of the Project. However, if not for the inordinate delays in implementation which brings to the fore the question of the ownership of the project and the commitment of the government agencies towards project's outcomes, this criterion could have been graded higher. The Project has also not formulated an exit strategy.
- Full impacts of the Programme are yet to be realized; however, progress towards impacts is **'satisfactory'** as there are clear evidences of improved child nutrition and understanding the science of school gardening in the study areas.

5.2 Lessons Learnt

(i) One of the successes of the school meal programme is due to the active participation of parents in meal preparation. The amount paid between LKR 27 and 30 /meal/day/student is clearly inadequate as has been repeatedly pointed out in the schools visited; however parents are committed to the programme and are contributing their time for this worthwhile exercise.

(ii) The evaluation also shows the importance of regular consultation with the Partners, particularly at the provincial level departments, for successful implementation of the Project. Given the island-wide nature of the project interventions, MoE and MoWCA could have garnered M&E assistance from provincial officials; however, the need to set apart some funds to recompense costs of government officials in facilitating Project initiatives was highlighted.

(iii) The Project facilitated recommencing an important dialogue on rice fortification. Whilst Sri Lanka has witnessed uneven progress with fortification of wheat flour, the Project

[46] Graded on a scale Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Less than Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. It is however to be noted that it is very difficult to differentiate project outcomes from those of government-led initiatives. The grading is therefore a generalisation, as it would be impossible to separate out the project intervention results and government-initiative results, as both types are implemented in parallel.

created an opportunity for stakeholder consultation on fortification of rice. However, due to delays of Partners, the full benefits of this opportunity have not materialized during the project life. In March 2017, the Project held an expert consultation which endorsed rice fortification and made the following recommendations[47], amongst others (Table 5.1):

Table 5.1 – Excerpts from the Work-plan of the Consultative Meeting on rice fortification (March, 2017)

Recommendation	Responsible Agency
Develop Cabinet Paper for rice fortification in the Social Safety Net	Presidential Secretariat and the relevant Ministry in charge of the SSN
Develop and fortification Policy and its approval by the Cabinet of Ministers	MOH; Min of National Policy & Economic Affairs
Develop standard for fortified rice	Food Advisory Committee [MoH] and Sri Lanka Standard Institute
Organize production of fortified rice and provide to Ministry of Education for school feeding	National Food Promotion Board
Create enabling environment for voluntary fortification (e.g. facilitate import of fortification equipment and fortificants)	MoH and NNSSL

The consultation noted that rice fortification is possible only in mills with a production capacity larger than 5 MT/hour[48]. It also noted that a '*large hurdle remains in public perception of fortified foods*' and that '*misconceptions exist that fortified foods contain chemicals*'[49]. The consultation also agreed to seek cabinet endorsement of the work plan outlined at the workshop before introducing fortified rice to the market[50,51].

A subsequent study noted that prior to introduction of rice fortification, standards and certification for fortified rice as well as awareness creation were necessary. Potential producers are in need of knowledge and connections for technology introduction[52]. NFPB was tasked to organise a 'millers' workshop' to obtain their views.

Following a recent study visit to India, it would appear that a decision on rice fortification requires much more work than has been accomplished[53].

These developments demonstrate the need for a concerted, focussed attention on this important subject and the Project could have provided the initial support to commence work on the areas outlined in Table 5.1. Clearly, this is a responsibility of a number of agencies and a very close coordination is needed amongst the players on rice fortification. The lesson from the Project is the coordination and the commitment

[47] See Page 29 onwards - Report of the National Food Fortification Workshop (March 2017) WFP
[48] Page 12 - ibid
[49] Page 14 – ibid
[50] See Executive Summary - ibid
[51] Voluntary fortification of rice is permitted under the current regulations, subject to labeling requirements.
[52] Villa, Carolina (2017) Private Sector Mapping Rice Fortification; Insights and recommendations –WFP
[53] (Draft) Report of the study tour; Regional Exchange on Rice Fortification (WFP) September, 2017

needed in a multi-sectoral initiative such as this. Perhaps WFP is in a position to facilitate future work in this important area (see recommendations).

(iv) The Project filled, at least to some degree, an important void in disseminating knowledge on child nutrition. The evaluation noted the clear need for such knowledge amongst parents, particularly in the rural areas. Any future initiatives should therefore be based on a participatory problem analysis and develop an appropriate suite of actions to address the needs of the parents.

(v) The pivotal policy-making body for subjects of nutrition and health is the MoH. The Project's interventions by MoE, MoWCA and MoA in regard to nutrition therefore should be guided by MoH, which requires very close collaboration between MoH and other agencies. This was not always evident in the case of pre-school and primary school nutrition work, and multi-sectoral projects of this nature should take measures to ensure such close coordination, if the outputs are to be of the desired quality (e.g. training curriculum for ToT; 2-day programme against 5-day programme of MoH).

(vi) In the school garden sub-component, there are a number of lessons. These include the need for careful site selection and respect for agreed selection criteria, giving due consideration to availability of land and water for irrigation at least during the dry season (or alternatively options for rain-fed cultivation), commitment of school authorities, suitable arrangements for maintenance of plots during the school holidays, and free of unusual pest attacks (e.g. monkey, wild-boar). These conditions need to be carefully reviewed and analysed before embarking on school gardens.

(vii) In the school garden component, better success could have been expected if a package of inputs was provided, although the Project was not expected to do so due to limited funds. The project provided agricultural implements, training and tool-kits; the school is expected to raise from the parents inputs for land preparation, irrigation as needed, and for planting materials. In the poorer areas, parents did provide labour *gratis,* but the evaluation found difficulties in procuring such services in a timely manner. Successes have been demonstrated where the entire package was available to the school (Box 1).

(viii) If school garden component is to be continued, timely inputs are required. For example, many schools are still not ready for planting during the upcoming north-east monsoons, again due to poor coordination at MoE.

(ix) The PMC, as the guiding body of the Project, should have been more assertive with its decision-making. A perusal of the Minutes of PMC show that, whilst rich discussions have taken place on a subject, no clear decision has been made to help project implementation. A case in point is the School Garden component. Important observations have been made by MoA in regard to school garden establishment; likewise FAO has repeatedly requested scaling down of the component due to prolonged delays. Yet it appears that these submissions have not been taken seriously (including the submissions of the NNSSL, which co-chaired the meetings) with no clear decisions made in regard to the implementation of this component.

(x) Success of project interventions largely depends on the commitment of Partners. The evaluation saw number of instances where success (on school gardens and nutrition) can be attributed directly to the enthusiasm and forward thinking of the teacher. In one instance, the Principal of a school had invested much time and energy in composting; he happens to be the President of an Organic Farming Society, and thereby bears

considerable influence on school activities. Likewise, parents who cook the mid-day meal provide a *gratis* service, as LKR 27 per meal for the given menu is clearly inadequate. On the other hand, review of the nutrition policy has not received due attention thereby delaying the report.

(xi) New introductions such as the school database would be much appreciated by school authorities provided there is good briefing and awareness creation as to why such a system is needed and what can be done with it. As a result, there is a gap in understanding of the concept (and capacity to operate) and the need for the school database between school authorities and others. The Project's commitment was to train Zonal Education Staff; however, they have not in turn trained the teachers adequately. The user manuals are available on-line, but these have not been downloaded (for a variety of reasons) and provided to the people concerned. In effect, Project's expectations have not filtered down to the users, which is a matter that should have been examined to set in place corrective measures.

(xii) In a multi-sectoral project of this nature, engagement of the potential implementing partners from the planning stages is *sine-quo-non*. The Project did engage the Partners during the planning stage, but the change of administration in January, 2015 brought in new agency representatives, who were not involved in the original planning of the Project. Furthermore, the focal body was changed to MoH, and then back to NNSSL. These changes created a lacuna in the understanding of the Project. Also, the expectations of the new representatives appear to be different from those agreed during the planning stage. These gaps in understanding and perhaps the inability to reconcile the originally agreed project outputs against the perceived new outputs remained in the minds of some officials, thus somewhat affecting the project's ownership by the Government, and a realization of the value addition that Project has brought into Government's core programmes. Given the Project's experiences of delays of implementation by Government agencies, and taking into consideration that UN agencies will have to continue to work with the Government in future endeavours, there is a need to have formally agreed work-plans with Government agencies to ensure timely delivery of outputs.

(xiii) In a project of this nature where some of the key activities are in the core programmes of the implementing Partners, there is always the difficulty of separating project's influence from that due to Government's interventions. This concern should have been known and addressed at the beginning, and a system should have been set in place to determine influences, if any, of specific project interventions where there are similar interventions by the Government. For example, some initiatives could be done in a geographic area, by arrangement with the Government, where there is no Government intervention, if there is a desire to ensure project outcomes. This would obviate the need to question project's value addition post-project. Otherwise the realization is that Project's outcomes/progress towards impacts would be difficult to assess, given the complementarity of activities.

5.3 Recommendations

The current project ends on 30 September 2017; the following recommendations therefore will have no bearing on the current project, and have been formulated to assist any future initiatives of similar nature.

Health and Nutrition-related

(i) The rice fortification component requires much work for it to be taken to a conclusion; as an important initiative of the Project, suitable arrangements should be made to keep up the momentum on the work started on rice fortification, perhaps under the aegis of WFP, to ensure that key recommendations made in the food fortification workshop[54] are taken forward in a concrete manner by the relevant agencies. In such an event, it would be useful for the Government to appoint a focal point responsible for coordinating the work of the relevant agencies and to ensure that the expectations of providing fortified rice are met.

(ii) Since voluntary fortification is permitted under the relevant regulations, the National Food Promotion Board, in terms of recommendations in the visit report to Bangladesh (July, 2017)[55] should immediately organize a meeting with the private sector with a view to engage them in voluntary fortification and to seek their views, difficulties etc. so that a more concrete pathway could be chartered for rice fortification. Relating to this, MoA should provide financial resources to NFPB to ensure that the fortification facility provided by WFP is used as the national reference point for rice fortification.

(iii) Given the experiences gathered from the Rwanda visit in September, 2017, work with the *Thriposha* factory (and MoH) should continue to implement the recommendations made in the visit report (e.g. improvements to the lay-out of the factory, introducing appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, and improving the supply chain).

(iv) The impetus provided by the Project to the National Nutrition Surveillance System needs to be carried forward by WFP; the ongoing work of MoH should be strengthened to link the system to food security, particularly in the vulnerable areas in the country.

(v) Awareness creation and training in child nutrition should be a continuing activity. The evaluation noted several requests in this regard; the parents and those preparing school meals are very keen to have further knowledge. Also, the project covered only about 1,500 teachers; expansion of teacher training coupled with parent training is recommended, given the benefits accrued to the community and the potential for success in improving child nutrition.

In this regard, Training of Trainers programme has created a core group of teachers capable of providing training to the community. Some of the teachers felt that whilst they are capable of disseminating the knowledge, occasional training programmes by an 'outsider' will be better appreciated by the parents. Thus it is recommended that an external resource person be used occasionally for training.

Furthermore, the Trainers stand to benefit by periodic updates, and therefore periodic updates should be provided to the Trainers by MoE and MoWCA.

There is also a clear need for continued training of parents and those involved in mid-day meal preparation, which may be be carried out by the relevant agencies.

[54] Report of the National Food Fortification Workshop (March, 2017) - WFP
[55] Mission Report; Sri Lanka Delegation to Bangladesh from 16-19 July, 2017 (WFP)

(vi) It will be useful to undertake a review of how the 'Canteen Circular' is being implemented, and identify any amendments needed to make it more effective.

(vii) One or two model kitchens in each educational zone to demonstrate preparation of mid-day meals is recommended. Such kitchens will provide hands-on experience to parents who are involved in meal preparation. Such kitchens should be WASH-compliant, and should demonstrate the hygienic requirements set out in the Canteen Circular. In this regard, MoE may consider providing assistance to upgrade the existing canteens to conform to WASH requirements.

(viii) In regard to the provision of mid-day meals to Grades 1-5, two important suggestions were made by a number of respondents. The evaluator agrees with these suggestions, which are as follows:

- The time period set apart for partaking of the mid-day meal is only 10 minutes, and this is inadequate and needs to be extended at least by five minutes so that children can enjoy the meal and attend to wash-up etc.
- Currently, the same amount of food is provided to Grades 1 as well as 5; it was suggested that an increased quantity be provided to Grades 4 and 5.

(ix) Although much background work has been accomplished, the school garden component in its present form needs review. A more strategic approach is required for selection of sites. Given the extensive experience of the Department of Agriculture, and taking into consideration the success of MoE school garden programme as a whole, it is recommended that MoE establishes model gardens in a selected few schools in an Educational Zone with all inputs provided. This approach has been discussed at the PMC as well[56].

In two schools visited where there has been school gardens for some time, innovative approaches have been introduced by the Principal and/or zonal office to evince interest amongst students, teachers and parents. These include: competition amongst schools to identify the best school garden; competition amongst teachers in a school to identify the best plot they look after; and similarly competition amongst parents supporting school gardens. MoE may consider this approach in the future as an incentive for successful school gardens.

Capacity Development related

(x) Training of Trainers has shown promise; further training of this group to update their knowledge is recommended.

(xi) The evaluation noted one instance of a limited number of A/L students being included in teacher training. Discussion with these students revealed their intense interest in agriculture, and that they were able to directly transmit the knowledge to parents and neighbours, who are actively planting their homesteads now. It is recommended that training programmes at the zonal level include not only teachers but also selected students.

(xii) Many teachers requested short videos on subjects covered in the nutrition modules, as they felt, rightly, that such a medium would be more effective in disseminating information and knowledge to the students, parents and teachers. Some teachers

[56] See Item 8 of the Notes of the PMC meeting held on 24 October 2016.

proposed having these short videos aired at prime time in the national television. This proposal merits serious consideration by the relevant agencies.

(xiii) The school database should be operationalised without any further delay. Although the Project ended September 2017, it is recommended that the Project seeks continuing commitment of MoE to operationalise this valuable investment.

(xiv) Training for teachers and other stakeholders should be held at a training centre with appropriate field facilities where ground realities could be experienced by the trainees. For example, training in agricultural activities could be held in an in-service facility of the Dept. of Agriculture where access to demonstration fields is available.

Project Design and management

(xv) The Project is ambitious in expecting to complete activities in a multi-sector environment within 28 months, given the commitment demonstrated by the implementing Partners. Any future projects should take into account the constraints in implementing this Project, in particular delays in delivery by Government agencies, and formalize their engagement in projects with mutually agreed work-plans with deadlines for delivery. Such work-plans should also take into consideration any constraints at the Agencies which may impede timely delivery of outputs.

(xvi) The Project Management Committee should have exercised a more assertive decision-making to help in Project implementation. Future projects should ensure that PMC's decision-making is empowered and not tainted by individual opinions. Furthermore, PMC should discuss all matters germane to effective and efficient project implementation including building closer rapport amongst the implementing Partners.

(xvii) Given the island-wide nature of the project, efforts should have been made by the Ministries to enlist provincial/district officials of the relevant agencies in M&E work with an arrangement to recompense some of the expenses borne by them in undertaking this task.

(xviii) This evaluation was carried out before the project ended, as this has been required to be done during the project per SDG-F obligations. Ideally, the evaluation should have been carried out sometime after completion of the project as a proper assessment of delivery could have been examined then. Such a timetable may be considered for the future.

(xix) The Project should have developed an exit strategy, which would have provided for orderly transfer of responsibilities for post-project continuation of key activities.

(xx) The Project's visibility at the ground level could be further elaborated; future projects of this nature will benefit from appropriate branding of outputs in the field. Thus a branding strategy is recommended.

Acknowledgements

The Evaluator wishes to place on record his deep appreciation of the assistance received from Ms Sashrika Jayasinghe, Joint Programme Coordinator whose assistance was invaluable and provided the necessary information in a timely manner. Equally, Ms Priyanthi Chandrasekare (Project Manager, FAO), Ms Anusara Singhkumarwong (WFP), and Mr Saman Kalupahana (WFP) were prompt in responding to my varied requests on reports, documents etc. Ms Nina Brandstrup (FAO Country Director) and Ms Brenda Barton (WFP Country Director) took time to review the Evaluation Report and provided valuable, constructive ideas, which are very much appreciated. Representatives of the Partner agencies (MoA, MoH, MoE, MoWCA) readily assisted in this evaluation, and their contributions are sincerely acknowledged. Finally, numerous teachers, provincial level officials, parents and, on occasion students, are thanked for their hospitality during field visits and for their valuable insights.

Chronology of the Evaluation

Contract for this Evaluation:	25 August, 2017
Inception Report:	31 August, 2017
Field Visits including FGDs:	6 – 18 September 2017 (intermittent)
Key Informant Interviews:	6 – 27 September 2017
Submission of the Draft Final Report:	25 September, 2017
Presentation of findings to UN agencies:	16 October, 2017
Presentation of findings to PMC:	17 October, 2017
Deadline for receipt of comments:	20 October, 2017
Submission of the Final Report:	26 October, 2017
Further amendments	7 November 2017

Plates

Plate 1 – School Gardens from a selection of schools in Anuradhapura

Plate 2 – A very well-maintained school garden from Vavuniya with a small commercial level papaya and fruit plantation with irrigation facilities, funds for which have been sourced from parents.

Plate 3 – Generally well-maintained school gardens from Monaragala.

Plate 4 – Well-maintained school gardens (together with a Farmer's House) in Tissamaharama (Hambantota)

Plate 5 – Well-maintained school gardens from Katugastota Educational Zone

Plate 6 – Parents involvement; top – parents maintaining school garden; bottom – parents and including those who prepare mid-day meals at a meeting with the evaluator

Plate 7 – A selection of school mid-day meals; top right – fruits sold at the canteen as fruits have become very popular due to awareness creation

Plate 8 – Rice blending facility (National Food Promotion Board at Kalankuttiya

Plate 9 - Very well maintained school garden at Debarawewa Janadhipathi Kanishta Vidyalaya

Plate 10 – A model School; Molagoda Primary School

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Plate 10 – A model School; Molagoda Primary School

Annex 2.1 – Original Deliverables per Outputs

Output 1.1: Understanding the link between health, food security, food consumption and micronutrient deficiencies for the target group of PLWs and schoolchildren

- The Report of integrated food and nutrition baseline survey on PLWs
- The Report of integrated food and nutrition baseline survey on School children

Output 1.2: Identification of cost efficient and most efficient use of fortified foods to address existing micro-nutrient deficiencies including distribution mechanism (schools, health centres and/or schools)

- Procurement of fortified foods for the pilot study
- Methodology, sample frame, TORs and tools for the pilot study
- Report of the rice fortification pilot programme

Output 1.3: Review of the capacity for the in-country production of fortified rice

- Report on Landscape analysis of the current fortification efforts
- Report on the current situation, changes and gaps completed and road maps for production of fortified rice
- Documentation of best practices for production of fortified foods
- Designing of Social media campaign to raise awareness

Output 1.4: Strengthening advocacy for use of fortified locally produced nutritious foods

- Review report on the ongoing advocacy national initiatives on fortified foods
- Advocacy meetings, national technical working groups for the MSAP-N

Output 1.5: Increased awareness of the inter-linkage of health, and nutrition food security as a national development priority at all levels

- Review of existing knowledge, data sources and information systems of the inter-linkage of health, and nutrition food security by gender and target group
- Development of an integrated analysis methodologies including the use and generation of gender disaggregated data

Output 1.6: Agreement reached that an integrated food, health and nutrition policy would assist in achieving zero hunger and reduce poverty

- National coordination mechanisms for food and nutrition security
- Identification of best practices and mechanisms for increased collaboration among communities, food producers and with national governments and donor agencies to ensure an integrated approach
- Review of the National Nutrition Policy

Output 1.7: Increased availability of local produced fortified food commodities for the general public

- Economic and marketing incentives for fortified food producers
- Ensured increase production of fortified food is achieved by providing experience to identify mechanisms for increased collaboration among food producers and with national governments and donor agencies

Output 1.8: Minimum standards/guidelines with health and nutrition component implemented for improved levels of nutrition in pre-school children

- Pre-school minimum standards/guidelines with health and nutrition component developed and introduced to 1500 pre-schools

Output 1.9: Nutrition promotion to pre-school children and communities (parental programmes) enhanced for improved nutrition levels of children in schools and at household level

- Module on nutrition promotion and supplementary materials introduced to 1500 pre-schools
- 1500 teachers trained on nutrition promotion for children and 250 TOTs conducted
- Nutrition promotion and supplementary materials introduced to 1,250 community organizations/parental societies
- 5-6 supplementary materials developed to enhance nutrition promotion

Output 1.10: Pre-school meals enhanced in nutritional value to improve nutrition levels of pre-school children

- Guidelines introduced to 1500 pre-schools to improve nutritional value of meals in schools
- 1500 pre-schools teachers trained in implementation of guidelines

Output 1.11: School feeding policy developed to implement a comprehensive guideline for school feeding inclusive of healthy practices

- Comprehensive guideline for school feeding/food consumption inclusive of healthy practices introduced in 10 000 schools in support of new school feeding policy
- 1-2 types of publications/ technical materials produced to implement guidelines

Output 1.12: Awareness and knowledge base of education officers improved to address under nutrition in schools and to implement comprehensive guideline for food consumption in schools

- Nutrition information system established and introduced in 10 000 schools to analyse and address the nutrition situation in school children
- 106 (9 provincial level and 97 zone level) education specialists and teachers trained to have better awareness on addressing nutrition issues of children in the school

Output 1.13: Technical capacity developed to further enhance the inclusion of food and nutrition in the pre-service & in-service teacher education programmes

- 500 education officers trained for improved awareness on food and nutrition
- 1-2 types of supporting technical material developed and produced to strengthen teacher education programmes

Output 1.14: School garden programme improved to increase nutrition levels of school children

- 8 types of nutritionally rich foods introduced in up to 6,000 schools to improve school garden products
- School garden-based learning established as a learning tool in 10,000 schools
- 500 education specialists trained to implement school-garden based learning
- 1-2 types of technical materials developed to facilitate school garden-based learning

Annex 2.2 – Abridged Terms of Reference

EVALUATION OF SDG-F JOINT PROGRAMME:
Scaling Up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach: Abridged Terms of Reference

1. CONTEXT:

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are working together with the Government of Sri Lanka on a Joint Programme (JP) for Scaling Up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach. The JP collaborates with NNSSL and four ministries to implement select activities of the government's Multi-Sector Action Plan for Nutrition (MSAPN). The JP commenced in January 2015 and is expected to be completed by end September 2017.

The key objectives of the Joint Programme are to:

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of government investment on food security and nutrition by highlighting the gaps, opportunities and impact of current initiatives.
- Achieve attitudinal and behavioral changes through enhanced nutrition education and nutrition promotion on safe and nutrient foods, dietary diversity, nutrient deficiencies and its root causes

2. OVERALL GOAL OF THE EVALUATION

To promote accountability, organizational learning, stocktaking of achievements, performance, impacts, good practices and lessons learnt from implementation towards SDGs.

3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

This final evaluation has the following **specific objectives**:

1. Measure to what extent the joint programme has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase
2. To measure joint programme's degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised
3. Measure to what extent the joint programme has attained the results originally foreseen in their project document, M&E frameworks, etc.
4. To measure the impact of the joint programme on the achievement of the SDGs
5. To identify and document substantive lessons learnt and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic areas and crosscutting issues: gender, sustainability and public private partnerships

4. EVALUATION

The evaluation will apply the OECD/DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

5. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This final evaluation will make use of:

- All relevant secondary information sources
- Primary information sources
- Triangulating of information

6. EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The Evaluator will provide the following deliverables:

- Inception Report
- Draft Final Report
- Final Evaluation Report

Annex 2.3 – Field Visit Itinerary and Schools visited

PART A

Field Visit Itinerary and the List of Schools Visited

Date	Places Visited
6 September 2017	• District Secretariat, Monaragala; meeting with WFP Representative
7 September 2017	• Visit to Schools in Monaragala (Monaragala and Wellawaya Educational Zones) • Meeting with Pre-School Teachers (Wellawaya)
8 September 2017	• Visit to Schools in Hambantota Educational Zone and meeting with Pre-school teachers
10 September 2107	• Visit to Rice Blending Facility, National Food Promotion Board, Kalankuttiya (near Galnewa)
11 September 2017	• Visit to Schools in Vavuniya South Zone • Meeting with Pre-School Teachers at the District Secretariat
12 September 2017	• Visit to Schools in Anuradhapura district (Kebithigollewa and Anuradhapura Educational Zones) • Meeting with Pre-School Teachers at Talawa Divisional Secretariat
13 September 2017	• Visit to Schools in Kandy District (Galewela, Naula, Matala and Katugastota Educational Zones) • Meeting with Pre-School Teachers at District Secretariat, Kandy
15 September 2017	• Visit to Schools in Galle District (Ambalangoda and Galle Educational Zones) • Meeting with Pre-School Teachers at the District Secretariat, Galle
18 September 2017	• Visit to Molagoda KV, Kegalla

List of Schools Visited

School	District	Educational Zone
UVA PROVINCE		
Mahanama MV, Monaragala	Monaragala	Monaragala
Okkampitiya Janapada KV, Okkampitiya	Monaragala	Monaragala
Helagama KV, Okkampitiya	Monaragala	**Wellwaya**
Piyananda KV, Buttala	Monaragala	**Wellwaya**
Unawatuna KV, Buttala	Monaragala	**Wellwaya**
Anapallama KBV, Wellawat	Monaragala	**Wellwaya**
SOUTHERN PROVINCE		
Debarawewa Janadhipathi KV,Tissamaharama	Hambantota	**Hambantota**
Nedigamvila KV, Tissamaharama	Hambantota	**Hambantota**
Beragama Janapada KV	Hambantota	**Hambantota**

School	District	Educational Zone
Maha Ara KV	Hambantota	Hambantota
NORTHERN PROVINCE		
Saivapragasa Ladies' College, Vavuniya	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South
Saivapragasa Primary School, Vavuniya	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South
Mundimuruppu G S M S, Mundimuruppuwa, Vavuniya	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South
Sri Nagarajah Vidyalam, Sithamparapuram	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South
Muruhanoor Saratha Vidyalayam, Murukanoor	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South
NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE		
Mahakumbukgollewa V, Poonewa	Anuradhapura	Kebetigollewa
Isinbessagala KV, Medawachchiya	Anuradhapura	Kebetigollewa
Siyambalagaswewa Medagama V, Parasangahawewa	Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura
Kenderatmale V, Parasangahawewa	Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura
Mahabodhi Vidyalaya, Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura
CENTRAL PROVINCE		
Pelwehera PS, Dambulla	Kandy	Galewela
Pilihundugolla PS, Naula	Matale	Naula
Sudharshi KV, Nalanda, Matale	Matale	Naula
Udagama Sri Devananda MV, Ankumbura	Kandy	Katugastota
SOUTHERN PROVINCE		
Budhdhadatta Model School, Amblangoda	Galle	Ambalangoda
Meetiyagoda KV, Meetiyagoda	Galle	Ambalangoda
Yasodara Sangamitta KV, Dodanduwa	Galle	Ambalangoda
Gintota Dharmapala Vidyalaya, Gintota	Galle	Galle
C W W Kannangara Vidyalaya, Galle	Galle	Galle

Annex 2.4 – FGDs and KIIs

PART A

Interviews with Pre-Schools Teachers

Monaragala *(met as a Group at Nuga Yaya PS)*

1. Shyamalee, Asoka (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Sumudu PS, Nuga Yaya, Wellawaya
2. Weerasinghe, W M Nanda (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Dilena Tharu PS, Sayambalagune
3. Wijeratne, Sriyani (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Singithi PS, Balaharuwa, Wellawaya

Hambantota (*Met individually, except 4 & 5, who were met together****)***

4. Muthumali, Harriet (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Aruna Pre-School, Maha Ara, Beragama
5. Muthumali, Surangi (Ms), Assistant to Pre-School Teacher, Aruna Pre-School, Maha Ara, Beragama
6. Renuka, Lakshini (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Chetiyagiri Pre-School, Bata Ata, Hungama
7. Thusharika, Lakmini (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Chetiyagiri Pre-School, Bata Ata, Hungama

Vavuniya *(Met as a Group together with Children's Secretariat Representative at the District Secretariat, Vavuniya)*

8. Renuka, K (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Tharanichchadar Pre-School, Tharanikkulam (Vavuniya)
9. Sivarubi, R (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Thurkai Amman Pre-School, Manipurum (Vavuniya)
10. Subhashini, A (Ms), Coordinator, Children's Secretariat, Vavuniya
11. Uthyarani, T (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Elanthalir Pre-School, Kalmadu (Vavuniya)

Anuradhapura *(Met as a Group together with Children's Secretariat Representative at the Divisional Secretariat Office, Talawa)*

12. Dilrukshi, D R D W R (Ms), Early Childhood Development Officer, Children's Secretariat, DS Office, Talawa
13. Marasinghe, M A Lalitha (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Ladaru Mithuru Pre-School, Kumara Eliya, Talawa
14. Weerasinghe, Chandrawathi (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Sudam Kekulu Pre-School, Kadurugaswewa, Eppawala

Kandy *(Met as a Group together with Children's Secretariat Representative at the District Secretariat, Kandy)*

15. Adikari, Lalani, Early Childhood Development Officer, Children's' Secretariat, Kandy
16. Medagama, Kamala (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Ananda Pre-School, Mulgampola & Siri Siduhath Pre School, Eriyagama
17. Narankotuwa, Vajira (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Samanala Pre-School, Gurudeniya
18. Walkatura, Nirmala (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Sri Soratha Pre-School, Udunuwara

Galle *(Met as a Group together with Children's Secretariat Representative at the District Secretariat, Galle)*

19. Chandrani, N G (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Pradesheeya Sabha Pre School, Yakkalamulla
20. Dhammika, Kamani (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Kingsbury Pre-School, Akmeemana
21. Jayasekera, Nadeeka (Ms), Pre-School Teacher, Sama Pre-School, Dikkumbura
22. Niroshan, B G I (Mr) Early Childhood Development Officer, Children's' Secretariat, Galle

PART B

Key Informant Interviews

1. Adikari, Gaya (Ms), Assistant Secretary to the President, Presidential Secretariat
2. Anisha Nandani (Ms), Teacher, Yasodara Sangamitta KV, Dodanduwa
3. Bakerathy, P (Ms), Teacher, Saivapragasa Ladies' College, Vavuniya
4. Barton, Brenda (Ms) Representative and Country Director , World Food Programme in Sri Lanka
5. Brandstrup, Nina (Ms) FAO Country Director Sri Lanka
6. Buddhika, P (Mr), Officer-in-Charge, NFPB Facility, Kalankuttiya
7. Chandrakumara, Leel (Mr), Principal, Debarawewa Janadhipathi KV, Tissa
8. Chandrasekera, Priyanthi, Project Manager, FAO
9. Chandrasiri, J L (Mr), Principal, Polwatta Budhdhadatta Model School, Ambalangoda
10. Chandrawathie, G (Ms), Agriculture Teacher, Siyambalagaswewa Medagama KV, Parasangahawewa
11. Cyril, S W (Mr), Science Teacher, Maha Ara, KV, Sooriyawewa
12. De Costa, Waruni (Ms) Assistant Director, School Nutrition and Health Services Branch, Ministry of Education
13. De Silva, Erandi Weerasekera (Dr), Nutrition Division, MoH
14. Dharmabandu, M A S A (Mr), Principal, C W W Kannangara Vidyalaya, Mahamodara, Galle
15. Dissanayake, J M H (Ms), Agriculture Teacher, Mahabodhi Vidyalaya, Sangamitta Mawata, Anuradhapura
16. Edirisinghe, Bimalka (Ms), Home Science Teacher, Beragama Janapada KV, Beragama
17. Ekanayake, P B U (Mr), Deputy Principal, Udagama Sri Devananda Maha Vidyalaya, Ankumbura
18. Fernando, Kingsley (Mr), Senior Additional Secretary to the President, Presidential Secretariat
19. Francisco, Hiranthi (Ms) Development Officer/Coordinator, Children's Secretariat, MoWCA
20. Gunapala, G S K (Mr), Principal, Mahakumbukgollewa PS, Mahakumbukgollewa (Poonewa)
21. Gunawardene, Shanthi (Dr), Ministry of Health, *Thriposha* Programme [telephone interview]
22. Hangalaratchi, Sanka (Mr), Project Consultant, Database [telephone interview]
23. Hemamala, Priyanganie (Ms), Teacher, Kenderatmale V, Parasangahawewa
24. Herath, H M Karunaratne (Mr), Principal, Mahabodhi Vidyalaya, Sangamitta Mawata, Anuradhapura
25. Hettiarachchi, Rasanjalee (Dr), Director, Nutrition Coordination Division, MoH
26. Hettiaratchi, P B (Ms), Agriculture Teacher, Nedigamvila KV, Tissa
27. Jaikeeshan, A (Mr), FSC Manager, MoEd, Vavuniya
28. Jayasinghe, Sashrika (Ms), SDGF Joint Programme Coordinator, WFP
29. Jayatissa, Renuka (Dr), Medical Research Institute
30. Jayatissa, Thilini Chaturika (Ms), Parent (School meal programme), Mahakumbukgollewa PS, Mahakumbukgollewa (Poonewa)
31. Kalupahana, Saman (Mr), Programme Policy Officer, WFP
32. Kamaleswary, P (Ms), Principal, Saivapragasa Ladies' College, Vavuniya
33. Kanahaarchchi, K A N A (Mr), Principal, Sudharshi KV, Nalanda
34. Kanthi, N M (Ms), Agriculture Teacher, Okkampitiya Janapada KV, Okkampitiya
35. Karawita, Rohan (Dr), Director, National Food Promotion Board, MoA
36. Karunapala, D B (Mr), Principal, Isinbessagala KV, Medawachchiya
37. Kularatne, N M (Mr), Principal, Helagama KV, Okkampitiya
38. Kumara, Vijith (Mr), Principal, Maha Ara, KV, Sooriyawewa

39. Kumarasinghe, P N M (Mr), Principal, Nedigamvila KV, Tissa
40. Kusumawathie, T M (Ms), Teacher, Mahakumbukgollewa PS, Mahakumbukgollewa (Poonewa)
41. Lakshman, M G (Mr), Principal, Meetiyagoda KV, Meetiyagoda
42. Lilani, M M (Ms), Agriculture Teacher, Maha Ara, KV, Sooriyawewa
43. Liyanage, Chandrani, (Prof.), Project Consultant, Nutrition [telephone interview]
44. Mallika, E (Ms), Principal, Yasodara Sangamitta KV, Dodanduwa
45. Miriswatta, J H (Ms), Teacher, Udagama Sri Devananda Maha Vidyalaya, Ankumbura
46. Nawaratne, Mangalika (Ms), Teacher, Isinbessagala KV, Medawachchiya
47. Nesarajah, Paskaramoorthy (Mr), Principal, Muruhanoor Saratha Vidyalam, Vavuniya
48. Nilmini, M K D (Ms), Teacher, C W W Kannangara Vidyalaya, Mahamodara, Galle
49. Nishantha, N (Mr) Agriculture Teacher, Helagama KV, Okkampitiya
50. Pathmakumaran, S (Ms), Teacher, Saivapragasa Primary School, Vavuniya
51. Pathmanathan, S (Mr), Zonal Office, MoEd, Vavuniya
52. Paul Nesarajah, G (Ms), Teacher, Saivapragasa Ladies' College, Vavuniya
53. Peiris, Renuka (Ms), Director, School Nutrition and Health Services Branch, Ministry of Education
54. Peiris, Sudharshana (Mr), Assistant Director, School Nutrition and Health Services Branch, Ministry of Education
55. Premalatha, R D G (Ms), Nutrition Teacher, Pilihundugolla PS, Naula
56. Premathilake, K M (Mr), Principal, Mahanama KV, Monaragala
57. Priyantha, Upul (Mr), Science Teacher, Debarawewa Janadhipathi KV, Tissa
58. Pushpakumara, W M Dhammika (Mr), Principal, Anapallama KV , Anapallama, Wellawaya
59. Rajakaruna, W A K de Z (Mr), Principal, Dharmapala Vidyalaya, Gintota
60. Rajapaksa, Bandula (Mr), Principal, Okkampitiya Janapada KV, Okkampitiya
61. Ranga, R M W (Mr), Master Teacher, MoED, Katugastota Zone
62. Ratnayaka, Vipula W M (Mr), Principal, Pelwehera PS, Dambulla
63. Ratnayake, Sandamali (Ms), Database Teacher, Udagama Sri Devananda Maha Vidyalaya, Ankumbura
64. Sahayarajah, M A K (Ms), Deputy Director Education, Vavuniya
65. Sasitharan, Palaniyandi (Mr), Monitoring Assistant, Monaragala Sub Office, WFP
66. Saubhagya, Lakmi (Ms), Assistant Director, Children's Secretariat, MoWCA
67. Shanthi, S (Ms), Deputy Principal, Siyambalagaswewa Medagama KV, Parasangahawewa
68. Silva, P W A R S Loyel (Mr), Asst. Director of Education, MoED, Katugastota Zone
69. Siripala, S M (Mr), Principal, Unawatuna KV, Unawatuna, Buttala
70. Sivakumar, T (Ms), Agriculture Teacher, Saivapragasa Primary School, Vavuniya
71. Somawathi, A M (Ms), Principal, Mundirippu G S M S, Mundirippu (Vavuniya)
72. Sumanasekera, R N (Mr), Pricipal, Piyananda KV, Medagama, Buttala
73. Thamilalakan, R (Mr), Principal, Sri Nagarajah Vidyalam, Sithamparapuram (Vavuniya)
74. Tharmapalan, K (Mr), Asst. Director of Education (ECD), Vavuniya
75. Thilakaratne, Lakmini (Ms), Nutrition Coordination Division, MoH
76. Wijesundera, W M E A K (Ms), Principal, Pilihundugolla PS, Naula
77. Wimalaseeha, Beragama (Rev), Deputy Principal, Beragama Janapada KV, Beragama
78. Yuvarajah, Thiyagasothy (Ms), Principal, Saivapragasa Primary School, Vavuniya