



# REGIONAL POLICY FORUM

From Farms to Schools:

Towards Sustainable and Inclusive School-Based  
Food and Nutrition Programs in Southeast Asia

Crimson Hotel, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Philippines  
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# National School-Based Food and Nutrition Policies and Programs in SEA: Thailand

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# Overview of major national policies and/or programs on school-based food and nutrition in the country

## Objectives of School Lunch Program (SLP)

- Enhancing food security;
- Promoting desirable eating habits;
- Promoting full growth and development of children;
- Support free lunch for all primary school students.



# Overview of major national policies and/or programs on school-based food and nutrition in the country

## Annual Budget for School Lunch Program (SLP)

Budget: 30 million baht (1992)  
(US\$ 857,000)

5 baht/child/day (US\$ 0.14)\*

Primary schools children, grade 1-6

Free Lunch for 200 days/year

Budget: 5,000 million baht (2007)  
(US\$ 142 million)

20 baht/child/day (US\$ 0.57)\*

Kindergarten and Primary schools children, grade 1-6

Free Lunch for 200 days/year

\*\*Currently (2023), the SLP budget is increasing, based on size of schools.

Small – large → 36-22 baht/person/200 days/year (US\$ 1.03-0.63)



\*1 US\$ = 35 Baht / \*\* Sranacharoenpong K, et al. Calculating new school lunch management budget. 2023

# Overview of major national policies and/or programs on school-based food and nutrition in the country

## Objectives

1. To promote child growth and nutritional status;
2. To promote milk consumption;
3. To encourage the use of raw milk in the government's dairy promotion program and support farmers' business.



## School Milk Program (1992)

↓  
**Budget from School Milk Program**

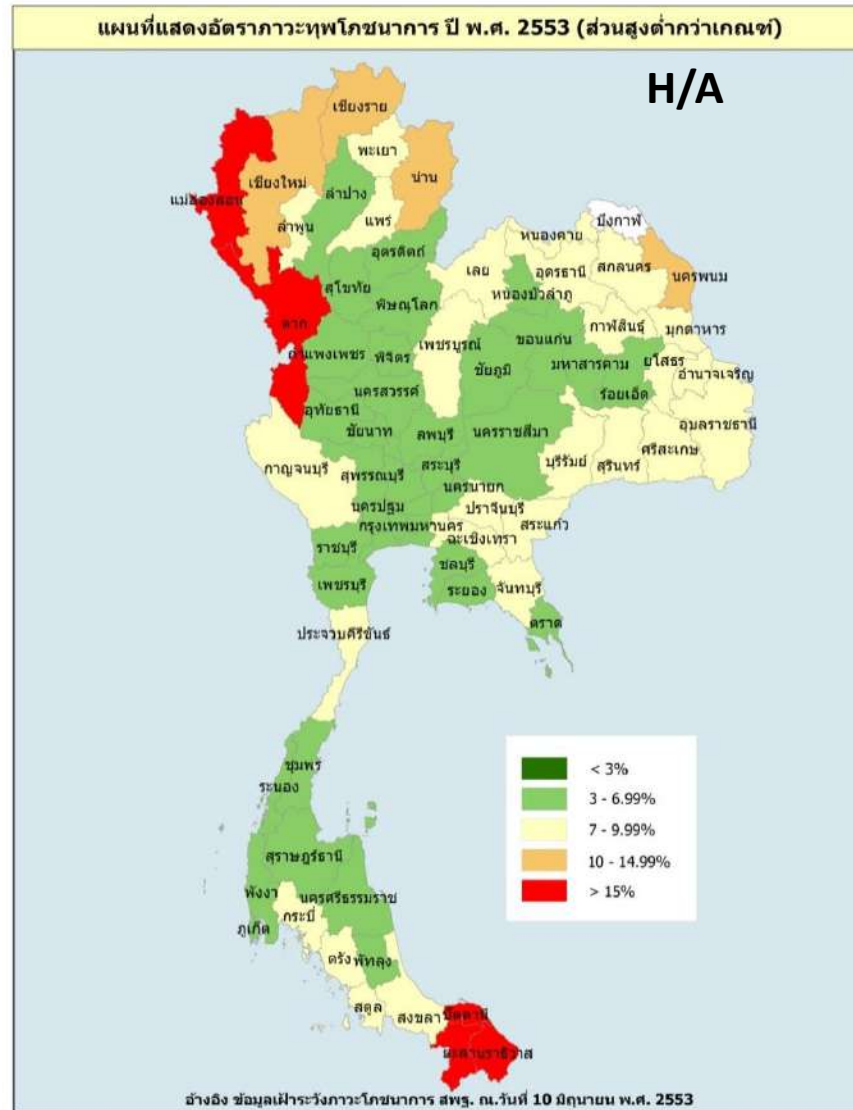
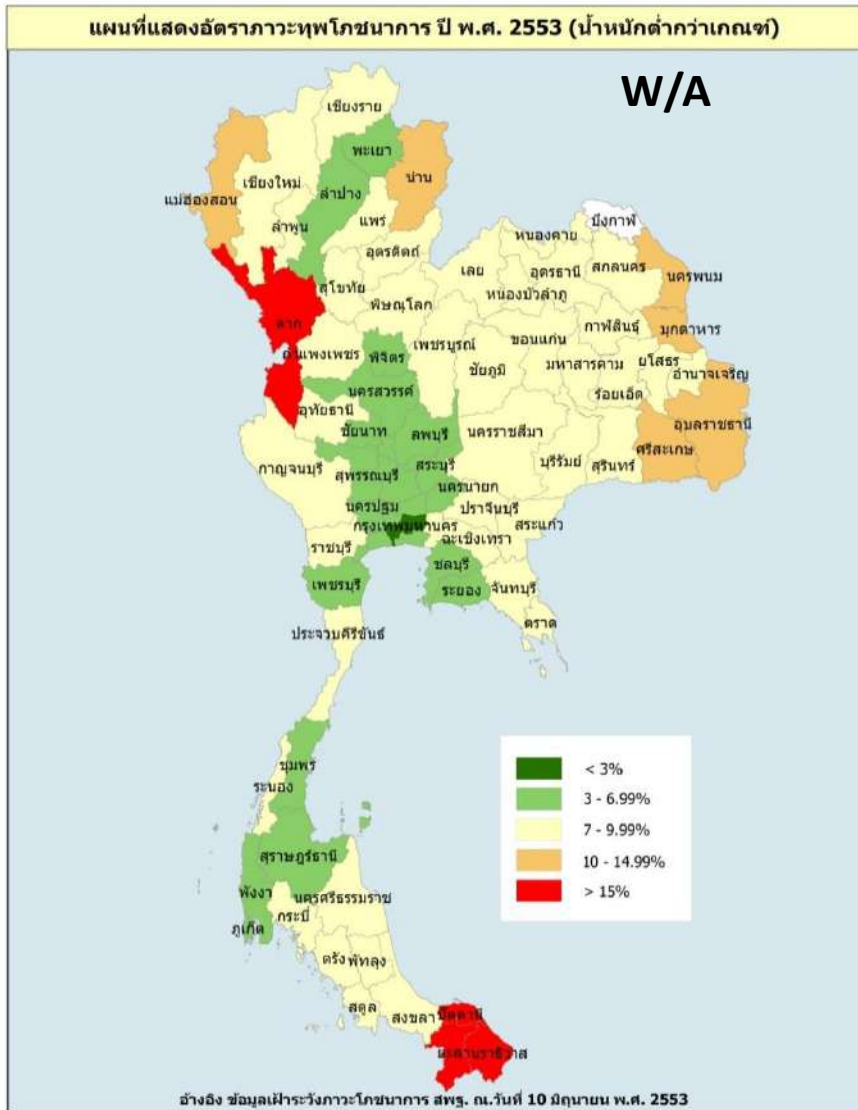
↓  
**Growth promotion for all children**

↓  
**Free milk for 200 days/year  
(Kindergarten up to G6)**



# Success factors and key achievements to date

## 1. Improvement of under-nutritional problems in children;



## Success factors and key achievements to date

### 2. Continues to receive budget support for the lunch program from the Thai government;

**Budget in 2007: 20 Baht (US\$ 0.57)**

**\*New budget in 2023:**

Students	Budget/head/day (Baht)	Budget/head/day (US\$)**
1-40	36	1.03
41-100	27	0.77
101-120	24	0.69
121+	22	0.63

\*included: ingredients, transportation, salary of chef, management cost and inflation rate Thailand (2019) 5%

\*\* US\$1 = 35 Baht



## Success factors and key achievements to date

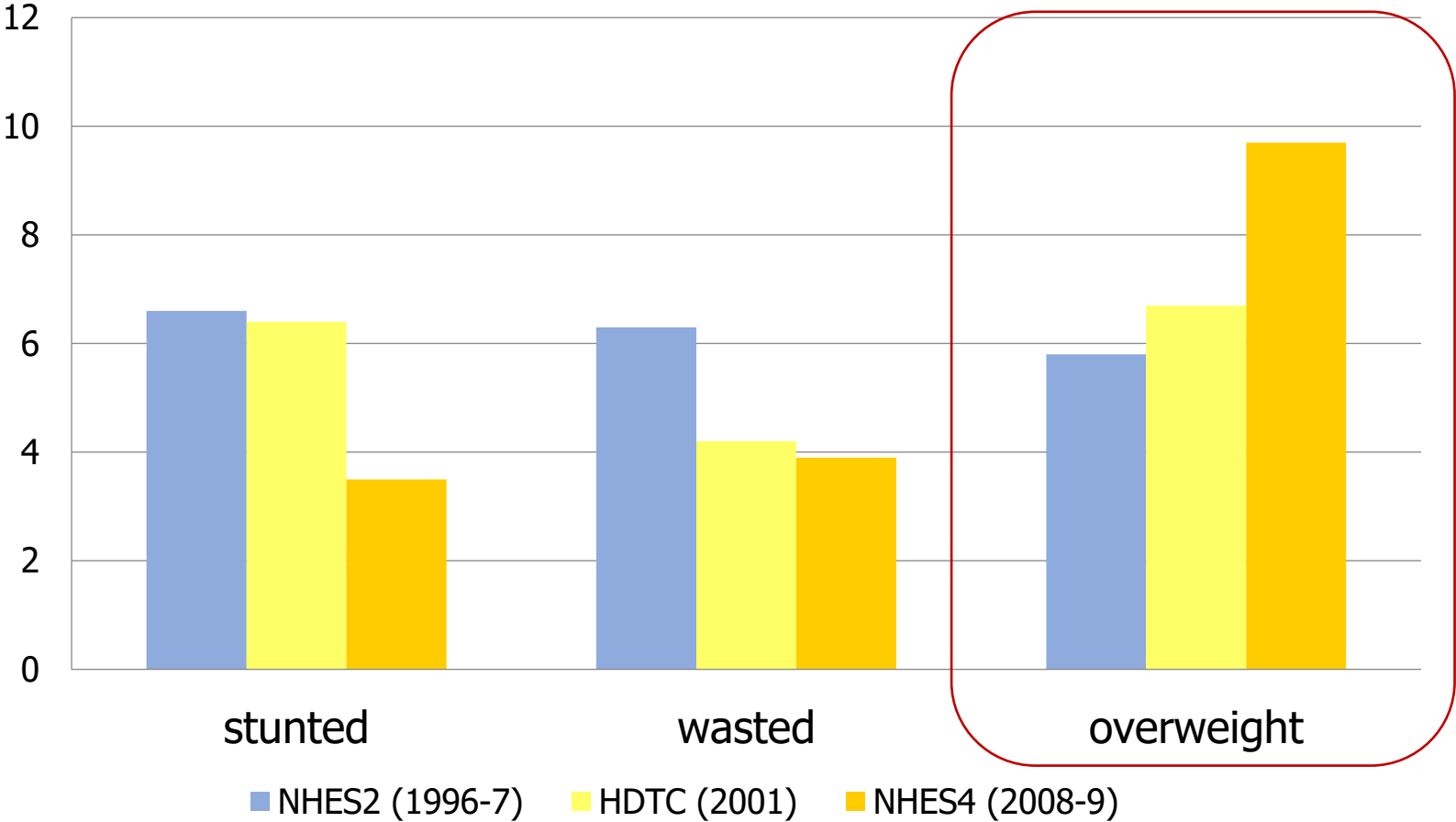
3. Growth monitoring system;
4. Evaluation system of the SLP and SMP.





# Gaps and challenges in implementation

## Trend of nutritional status of Thai children



NHES- National Health Examination Survey; HDTC- Health and Diet in Thai Children  
Source: from a presentation by Ladda Mo-suwan in FHP annual meeting. 13 Jan 2014.



# Gaps and challenges in implementation

## Eating behaviors of Thai children (from NHES 4, 2008-2009)

- Fruit & Vegetable:
  - Vegetable: ~50-75% less than 0.5 portion/day
  - Fruit: 18%  $\geq$ 2 portions/day
- High energy-dense snacks:
  - 28% everyday
  - 19% 4-6/wk
  - 22.8% 1-3/wk
- Soft drink and sugar sweeten beverage:
  - 15.3% everyday
  - 15.5% 4-6/week
  - 26.1% 1-3/week
- 10.4% of 6-14 y-old skip breakfast:



# Gaps and challenges in implementation

## Using SWOT Analysis to Create Strategies for Solving Problems in Implementing School Lunch Programs in Thailand

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### Abstract

**Background:** Thai school lunch program (Thai SLP) is crucial for Thai children's health, there should be another way to improve the quality of school lunches. This study aimed to address problems arising from the Thai SLP operation, prioritize problems, and devise strategies to help resolve those issues under the SLP.

**Method:** School principals and educational service area staff are key persons in school lunch management. Sixty participants from 30 schools across Thailand were invited and divided into 6 groups. They were asked to discuss problems and obstacles in the program implementation. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis was used to analyze data from brainstorming activities.

**Results:** SWOT analysis showed six strengths, seven opportunities, eight weaknesses, and six threats. Eleven strategies were formulated and presented in the TOWS matrix. One proactive strategy was to maintain good network partners between schools and communities. A corrective strategy also showed creating a network between schools, communities, and temples to ask for food donations to alleviate the problem of delayed and insufficient budgets. A school or district level nutritionist to reduce teachers' workload was proposed.

**Conclusion:** The study created a variety of strategies that are required to solve operating problems and improve the quality of the SLP. Priority solutions should start with strategies that the schools can implement by themselves. Forming networks between schools and communities for sustainable management could also help in the quality improvement of the SLP.

ORIGINAL STUDY

### Barriers

#### Weaknesses (W)

W1. **Knowledge:** Students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and related staff did not have sufficient nutrition knowledge and lacked a supportive system.

W2. **School principal:** The SP lacked awareness of the importance of nutrition and lunch management systems.

W3. **Canteen:** Cooking utensils and some equipment were insufficient.

W4. **Workload:** The teacher in charge of the SLP worked multiple duties, resulting in the inability to perform duties with quality.

W5. **Monitoring:** There was a lack of supervision from school staff in monitoring the SLP results.

W6. **Management:** The SLP teachers and cooks could not follow the guidelines and lunch management policy.

W7. **Food sufficiency:** Some schools had limited access to water resources and drinking water.

W8. **Participation:** Students' nutrition knowledge and practice were lacking a continuous monitoring system between school and home.

#### Threats (T)

T1. **Budget:** Due to a limited budget and late installments, the school lunches were of poor quality and badly managed.

T2. **Food sufficiency:** Transportation difficulties in remote schools and natural disasters (e.g., floods) in some schools impacted the quality of lunch ingredients. In addition, in the three southern border provinces, there were special restrictions and safety regulations in high-risk areas.

T3. **Management:** A lack of operational planning existed. The procurement regulation and practical management were inconsistent with management strategies, such as the SP's daily policy, which was modified in response to rising issues.

T4. **Participation:** Students had less healthy eating habits because of family behavior.

T5. **Monitoring:** There was a lack of active monitoring, evaluation, and supervision on the SLP by external auditors.

T6. **Nutritionist:** There were no positions to hire school nutritionists.

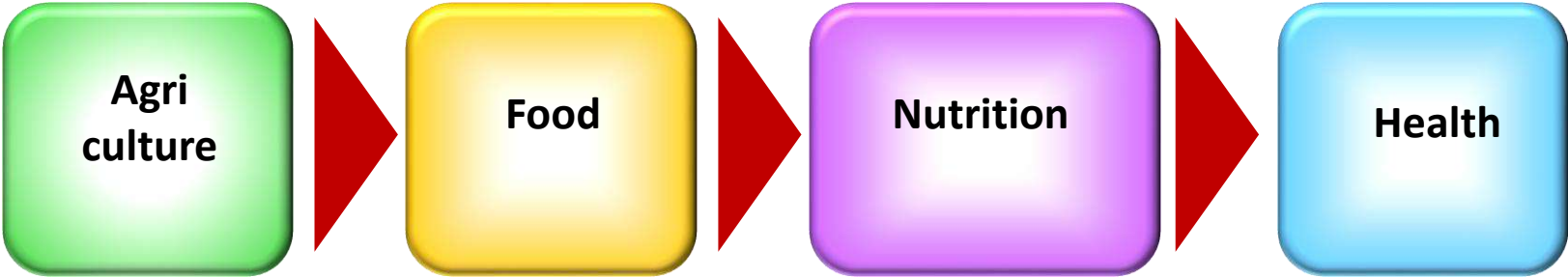
- **Knowledge: Teachers and stakeholders**
- **Awareness: Principal**
- **Work loading**
- **Management did not follow the guideline**
- **Food and water insufficiency**

- **Late budget:**
- **Transportation in remote areas**
- **Awareness: Principal**
- **Less healthy foods**
- **No nutritionists**



# Opportunities for collaboration among SEA countries and inclusion of family farmers in the policies and/or programs

## Continuum from agriculture, food, nutrition to health



- Food production, processing & supply
- Nutrition orientation for healthy diet
- Food, feed and fuel and bio-products
- Climate changes

- Food quality
- Food safety
- Food service  
(For consumer and trade)

- Nutrient needs
- Dietary intakes
- Nutritional wellbeing
- Nutrition literacy

- Promotion
- Protection
- Treatment
- Safe from Hazards
- Good health

<b>Food Security</b>
<b>Food, Nutrition &amp; Dietetic Education</b>
<b>Food Culture</b>



# Opportunities for collaboration among SEA countries and inclusion of family farmers in the policies and/or programs

- Harmonizing and implementing basic methodology in different countries;
- Merging the tools into the existing system;
- Technical, managerial and financial arrangements;
- Best practice from different contexts, different situation (e.g. Covid-19);
- Multi-stakeholder participation  
(5P: Public, Private, Professional, People, Participation);
- Multi-strategic approaches;
- Sustainability.





# Thank you!

My CV



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