

School Feeding, seasonality and schooling outcomes:

A case study from Malawi

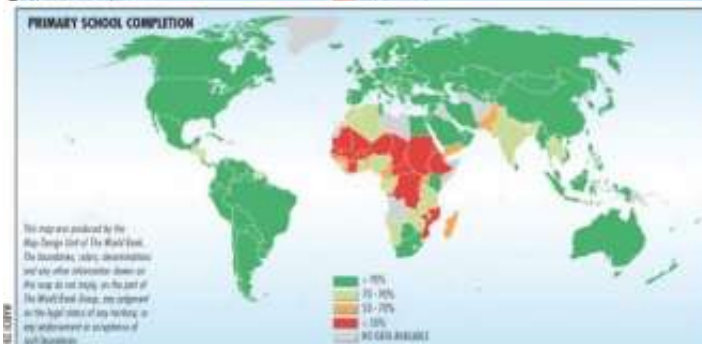


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School Feeding: Global Picture

- SF very popular as social protection tool
 - evidence base includes benefits to education (access & learning), but also nutrition (micronutrients)
- SF coverage weakest where poverty, hunger and education needs are greatest



(Source: Bundy et al., 2009)

School feeding and seasonality

- Links between seasonality & access to school, particularly for vulnerable children
 - Changing opportunity costs of schooling associated with agricultural cycle, socio cultural practices, etc.
 - Attendance rates decline during the lean season in rural areas.
- SF in some contexts designed to improve & stabilise attendance during the lean season
 - Take-home rations conditional to attendance used as an incentive.
- Limited evidence on links between SF and seasonal attendance.
 - Indications that SF influences seasonal school absenteeism



WFP SF in Malawi

- WFP assists 635,000 pupils in 13 out of the 28 districts in Malawi with school snacks
 - In addition, take-home rations are provided to 114,300 girls and orphans and vulnerable children
- Children receive a fortified mid-morning snack of 100 grams of corn soya blend (CSB)
 - 400 kcals (22% of the daily energy requirements for school aged children) served before 10 am to tackle short term hunger
 - All children receive deworming treatment
- Take-home rations provide 12.5kg of maize per month
 - At the time, distributed all year round conditional to attendance for children in standards 5 to 8 and in January to April for those in standards 1 to 4
- Full yearly cost for on-site meals US\$59/child (Galloway et al., 2009)

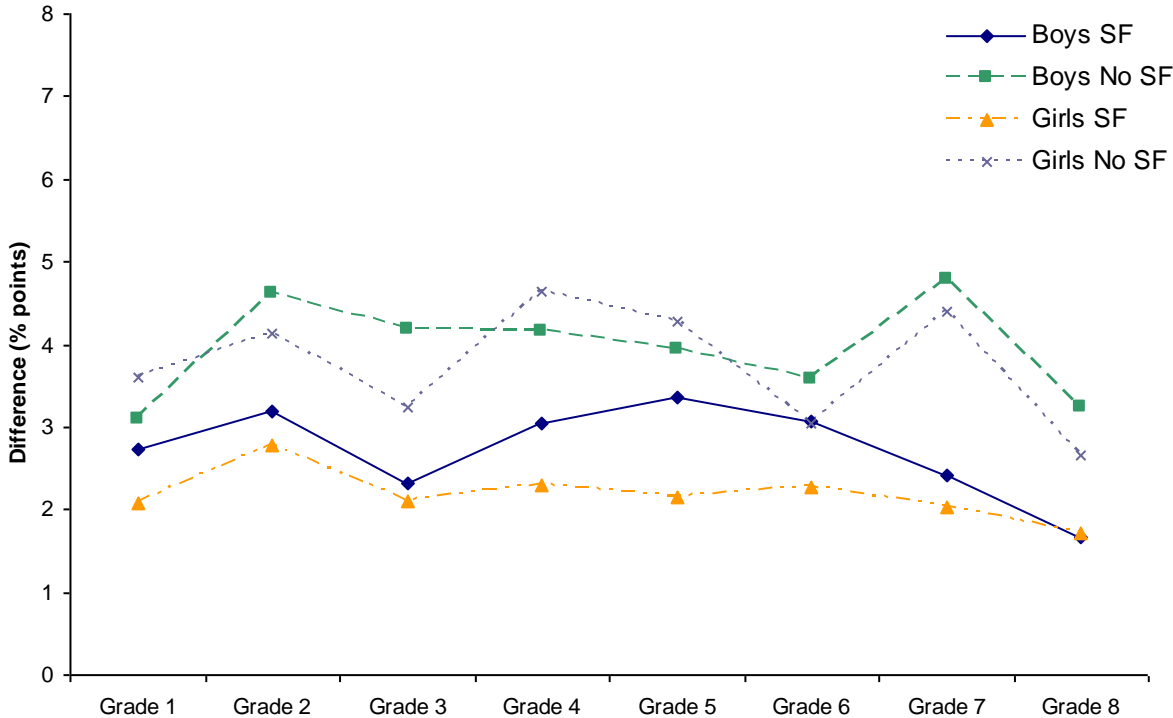


SF & seasonal attendance gaps

- School level survey conducted in 2007. Sample frame: all WFP assisted schools in Malawi (679 schools in total)
 - stratified by length of programme, including those with no SF that were due to be targeted the following year
- Focus on assessing monthly attendance (full results reported elsewhere) over 2 months (high & low)
 - Define “seasonal gap” as difference between high and low attendance months
- Results show average attendance >90%
 - Fairly stable across grades. Small seasonal gaps (2-5%)
 - Seasonal gaps significantly smaller in SF schools particularly for girls in the higher grades



Average seasonal differences in monthly school level attendance by gender and by school grade between schools with and without SF in Malawi.



Differences in seasonal gaps in monthly attendance in schools with and without SF

		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Girls	Mean Δ (No SF-SF)	1.5	1.4	1.1	2.3	2.1	0.8	2.3	0.9
	Std. Err.	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5
	P	0.01	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.05
Boys	Mean Δ (No SF- SF)	0.4	1.4	1.9	1.1	0.6	0.5	2.4	1.6
	Std. Err.	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.6
	P	0.51	0.04	0.01	0.09	0.42	0.47	0.00	0.01

(N.B. Differences of 1% at school level translate to over 230 pupil days/month on average school in Malawi)



Multiplier effect of local procurement?

- In 2008, SF in Malawi resulted in extra demand of 11,558 MT of CSB & 5,940 MT of maize
 - All maize procured in Malawi
 - Only 8% of CSB procured in Malawi, 92% received in-kind
- CSB price/MT fairly comparable for the two sourcing modalities
 - In-kind donations on the whole less cost-efficient



Preliminary conclusions

- Survey data identified seasonality gaps in pupil attendance of 2-5% points at school level
- School feeding associated with smaller gaps & more stable attendance
 - Differences of ~1-2% points across the school grades, largest differences in higher grades, suggesting take-home rations provide additional incentives
 - Differences of 1% at school level translate to over 230 pupil days/month on average school in Malawi
- There are opportunities for cost containment and links with local production
 - Can improve cost efficiency by scaling up local procurement of CSB
 - Local procurement may inject additional resources into local economy
- Nevertheless, the programme will require continued support from donors until education investments increase

