

**4TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN NETWORK
OF EDUCATION SECTOR SHN¹ AND HIV&AIDS FOCAL POINTS**

**STOCK TAKING OF SCHOOL HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN
AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

KAMPALA, UGANDA, 6 – 8 DECEMBER 2011

The Ministries of Education School Health, Nutrition (SHN) and HIV&AIDS focal points provide a framework for consultation, exchange of information, and sharing of experiences and expertise among actors in the field of SHN and HIV&AIDS within the Eastern and Southern African countries².

The last network meeting was held in 2008 with this year's meeting aimed at assessing school health, nutrition and HIV in all the countries concerned in Eastern and Southern Africa. This meeting is part of a process started in 2002 and follows up on previous meetings of focal points in Nigeria in 2005, Kenya in 2007 and Senegal in 2008. The workshop will also provide an opportunity for focal points to learn of new concepts that have developed since the last meeting. These concepts will include the following: (i) Healthy Children Initiative (HCI) which is a new World Bank-led initiative that aims at helping children realize their potential for health, education and development through various age-specific interventions and (ii) Home grown school feeding concept – a concept whereby school feeding is linked to small-holder farmer production. There is a WB/WFP/PCD partnership that has been formed around this concept to support government action to deliver cost effective, sustainable government-owned school feeding programs. Furthermore, the Global Partnership for Education (formerly the EFA-FTI) has also supported school health activities in many of its client countries. The meeting will also be an occasion to revisit school-based deworming and to discuss how the education sector can meet the needs of young people living with HIV.. Focal points will also consider global best practices that will allow them to situate their countries along a policy development continuum.

Rationale for the meeting

Alongside the provision of quality schools, textbooks, and teachers, the health of the school children is also necessary for the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); countries cannot achieve these goals if children are not healthy. The major health conditions that affect children's education are highly prevalent among school children, and especially poor school children. HIV&AIDS, malaria, worm infections, anemia and hunger for example, have a negative impact not only on the school child and their education but also the teachers and quality of education provided.

The HCI aims to improve health, reduce absenteeism and improve cognition and learning for school children, including adolescent girls, by enhancing the quality of the School Health programs that combat the above (and other) conditions. It also seeks to reduce hunger, promote enrolment and attendance and provide a social safety net for poor school children by improving the quality of existing School Feeding programs and scaling up these programs when needed.

¹ School Health and Nutrition

² Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

School feeding in most African countries has traditionally been heavily dependent on external funding and implementation support. In recent years, prompted by the global food security crisis, the sustainability of school feeding came to the forefront. There has been a rethinking on school feeding, where the importance of inserting school feeding in national policy frameworks and finding sustainable sources of funding within the country are important. Another important factor is linking small-holder food production to school feeding to assist a transition to government funding and implementation has been emphasized - the move towards a more “home-grown” school feeding (HGSF) program driven by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development’s (NEPAD) vision.

School health, and more specifically school-based deworming, is increasingly recognized to have proven educational outcomes and to make significant contribution to achieving Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The links between deworming, health and educational outcomes are now being recognized as contributing to Education For All, and deworming is recognized as an excellent entry point for school health.

Generally, many countries do not have validated national school health/school feeding policies. In the absence of clear national policy and operational guidelines, the implementation of school health, nutrition and HIV programs faces a number of challenges including, unclear or conflicting aims, widespread perceptions that interventions may be costly, lack of awareness of the links between school health and learning, and a lack of sustainability because of weak community support of general school health activities.

Historically, the design and implementation of these school health and school feeding programs has been largely fragmented across sectors. Recently however, the need for a holistic approach to interventions with the life cycle approach involving the health, education and social protection sectors has been recognized by the World Bank and other partners. Furthermore, the need for standards of good practice in school health and school feeding against which countries can assess themselves has also been recognized, i.e. benchmarking.

The focal points have a fundamental role to play in the improvement of the quality of health interventions that affect the education of children in their countries, as well as in ensuring that children are enrolled, maintain attendance, learn and perform well in schools. This is an objective that has been strongly supported by the Global partnership for Education (formerly EFA-FTI). It is against this background that this meeting of all the Ministries of Education School Health, Nutrition and HIV&AIDS Focal Points is proposed.

Meeting aim and objectives

The main aim of the workshop is to review the extent to which the health of school-aged children is addressed through policies, strategies and implementation mechanisms.

The specific objectives of the workshop are:

- a) Review country School Health, Nutrition and HIV situation: Take stock of school health activities including, school feeding and school-based deworming and how the education sector is meeting the needs of Young People Living with HIV and AIDS, in Eastern and Southern African countries
- b) Introduce and facilitate feedback on benchmarking School Health and School Feeding

- c) Explore ways of promoting school health, nutrition and HIV in general and homegrown school feeding and school-based deworming in particular
- d) Identify core elements of a national school health policy including the national school feeding policy
- e) Facilitate knowledge and experience sharing through the review and discussion of good practice and lessons learned from School Health, Nutrition and HIV implementation at the national level.

The above objectives will be addressed through three ways: Country reports, group work and plenary sessions.

Country reports: Countries will report on the extent to which SHN and HIV including school-based deworming and school feeding is addressed.

Group work: Countries will be divided into groups which will focus on benchmarking school health and school feeding, followed by plenary sessions.

Plenary sessions: Presentations will be focused on among other themes, school health, school feeding, school-based deworming and country reports.

The **outputs of the workshop** will include:

- A better understanding of the state of school health, nutrition and HIV in the Eastern and Southern African countries
- A better understanding of how the Global Partnership for Education can support activities in client countries.
- First validation of the school health and school feeding benchmarking framework
- A report detailing the final recommendations of the meeting

Date and place of the workshop

The workshop will take place from **6 – 8 December 2011** in Kampala, Uganda.

Participation

School Health, Nutrition and HIV Focal Points from the Ministries of Education from the 10 Eastern and Southern African countries involved in the network will attend the workshop.

The development partners of the Network involved in this meeting are identified below with roles and areas of intervention provided:

- The Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda – [Hosting the workshop](#)
- The East African Community (EAC) - [Support to the Eastern and Southern African Network](#)
- The Global Partnership for Education (Formerly the EFA-FTI) - [Potential support mechanisms for Healthy Children Initiative](#)
- The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) / Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) - [The Home Grown School Feeding programs](#)

- The Partnership for Child Development (PCD) - [Benchmarking of School Health and Home Grown School Feeding programs](#)
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) –BREDA –[Technical support to the network about HIV & AIDS and issues of Young People Living with HIV \(YPLHIV\)](#)
- The World Bank - [The Healthy Children Initiative](#)
- World Health Organization, Africa Region (WHO/AFRO) – [School-based deworming program](#)
- The World Food Programme (WFP) - [Support to national Home Grown School Feeding programs including policy and institutional frameworks and technical assistance](#)
- UNAIDS – [The education sector response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic](#)

Observers:

- The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) - Support to the Central Africa Network
- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) - Support to the ECOWAS network and Ministries of Agriculture.
- The West African ECOWAS Network
- The Central African Network