The main objectives of school feeding are conventionally stated in terms of child nutritional and education outcomes. The original purpose of feeding children at school was to protect them against the worst consequences of household food insecurity, and as such it can be viewed as a classic ‘social safety net’. However, the recognition that school feeding also achieves positive educational outcomes shifted the agenda beyond simply providing a consumption safety net, towards a more holistic ‘social protection’ plus ‘livelihood promotion’ function, given that educational outcomes build resilience and livelihood opportunities for the future.

Recently the school feeding discourse has shifted again, this time to ‘home-grown’ school feeding, reflecting the recent convergence in policy debates between agricultural and social protection policies, especially in Africa.

In the fifth paper in the HGSF Working Paper Series, titled, Home Grown School Feeding and Social Protection the expected and actual impacts of HGSF are reviewed and it is argued that these programmes have great potential to deliver various social protection benefits, not only for schoolchildren and their families but also for food supplying farmers.

However, although there is a large and well substantiated evidence base for the nutritional, educational and household food security impacts on ‘primary beneficiaries’ – school-aged children – of conventional school feeding programmes, much less is known about the impacts of HGSF on the newly created ‘secondary’ beneficiary groups, such as local farmers, suppliers and caterers.

- Read more about the HGSF Working Paper Series