

Public Policy for Quality School Lunch Development in Thailand

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Abstract : Obesity, stunting and wasting problems among Thai school-aged children are increasing due to inappropriate food consumption behavior and poor environments for desirable nutritional behavior. Because of a low school lunch budget of only 0.40 USD per person per day, food quality is not up to nutritional standards. Therefore, the Health Department with the Education Ministry and the Thai Health Promotion Foundation have developed a quality school lunch project during 2009–2013. The program objectives were development and management of public policy to increase school lunch budget. The methods used a healthy public policy motivation process and movement in 241 local administrative organizations and 538 schools. The problem and solution research was organized to study school food and nutrition management, create a best practice policy mobilization model and hold a public hearing to motivate an increase of school meal funding. The results showed that local public policy has been motivated during 2009-2011 to increase school meal budget using local budgets. School children with best food consumption behavior and exercise increased from 13.2% in 2009 to 51.6% in 2013 and stunting decreased from 6.0% in 2009 to 4.7% in 2013. As the result of national policy motivation (2012-2013), the cabinet meeting on October 22, 2013 has approved an increase of school lunch budget from 0.40 USD to 0.62 USD per person per day. Thus, 5,800,469 school children nationwide have benefited from the budget increase.

Keywords : public policy, quality school lunch, Thailand, obesity

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