



Sri Lanka's National School Nutrition Programme: *its significance and challenges*

Dr Kalana Peiris

Head of Nutrition and School Based Programmes

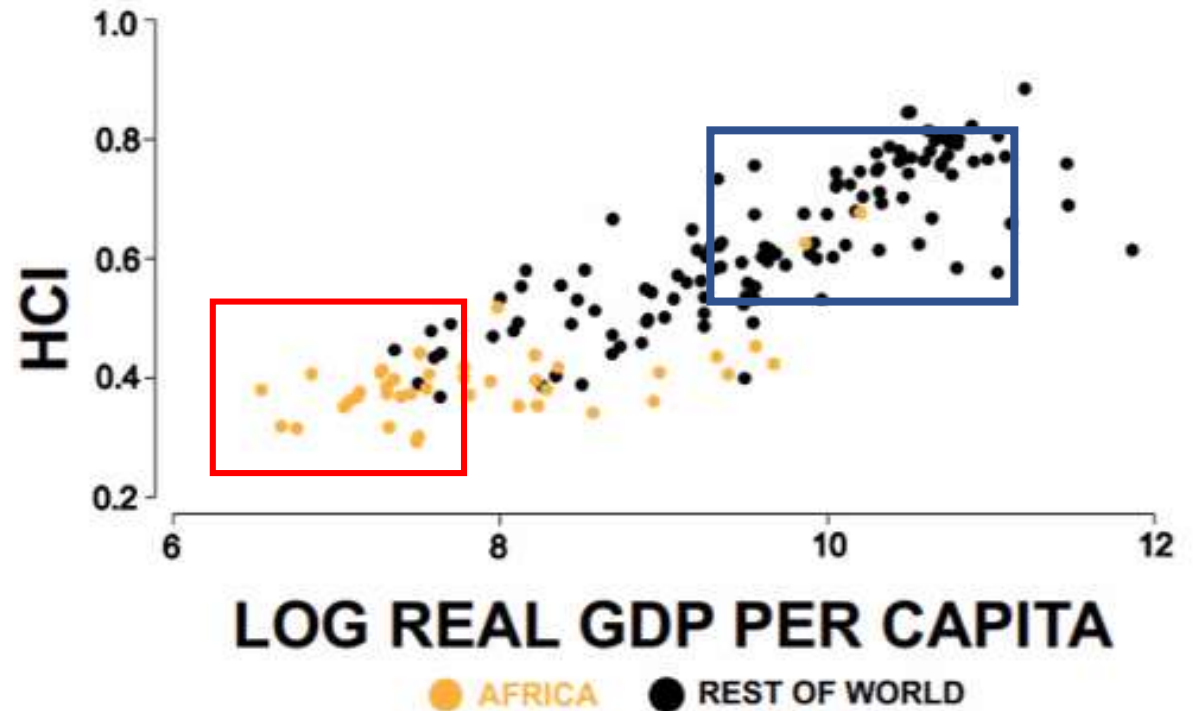
United Nations World Food Programme



HUMAN CAPITAL INDEX IS LOWEST IN AFRICA

Human Capital Index (HCI)

- Human capital is defined **as the sum of a population's health, skills, knowledge, experience, and habits** and seeks to quantify scale of human capital in all countries
- Human capital - largest component of global wealth, but its contribution to wealth in rich countries (70%) far exceeds that in poorer countries (41%)



A journey along the life cycle - the importance of promoting healthy growth throughout the first 8,000 days of life

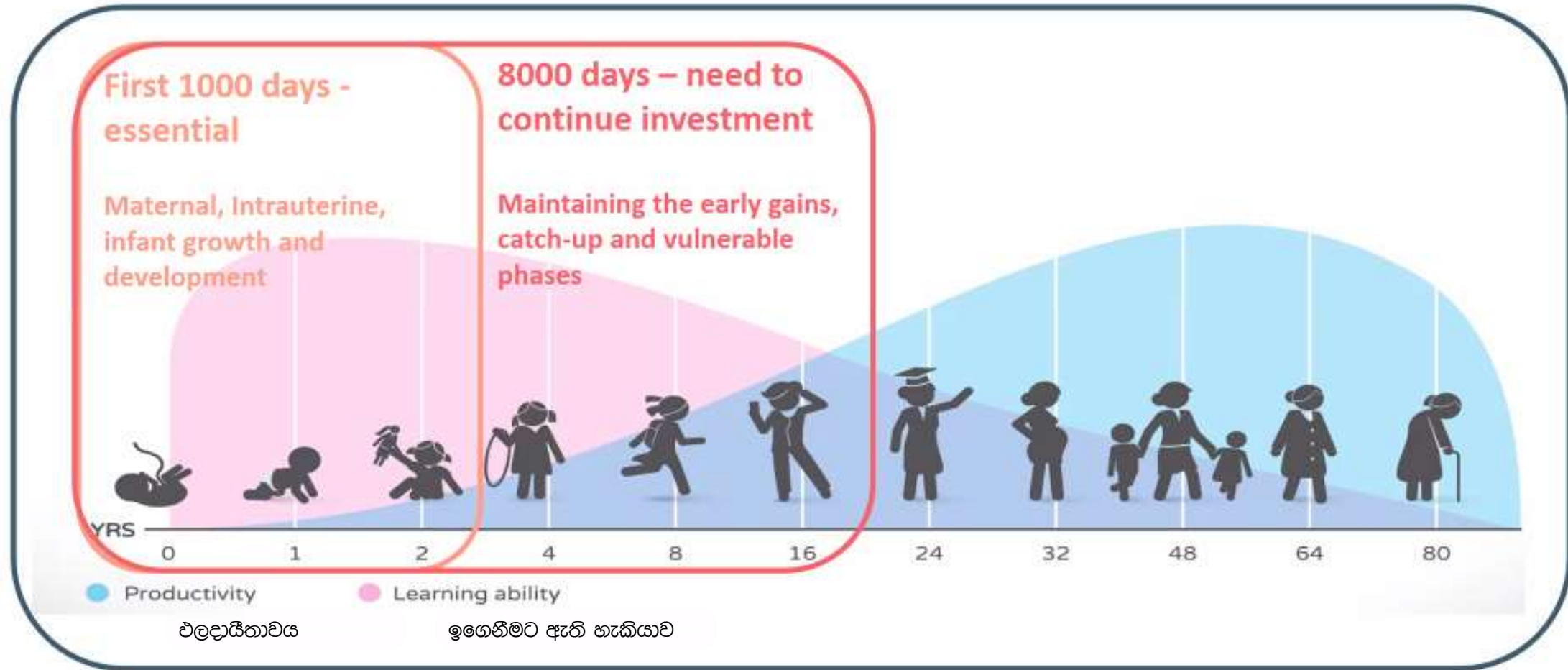
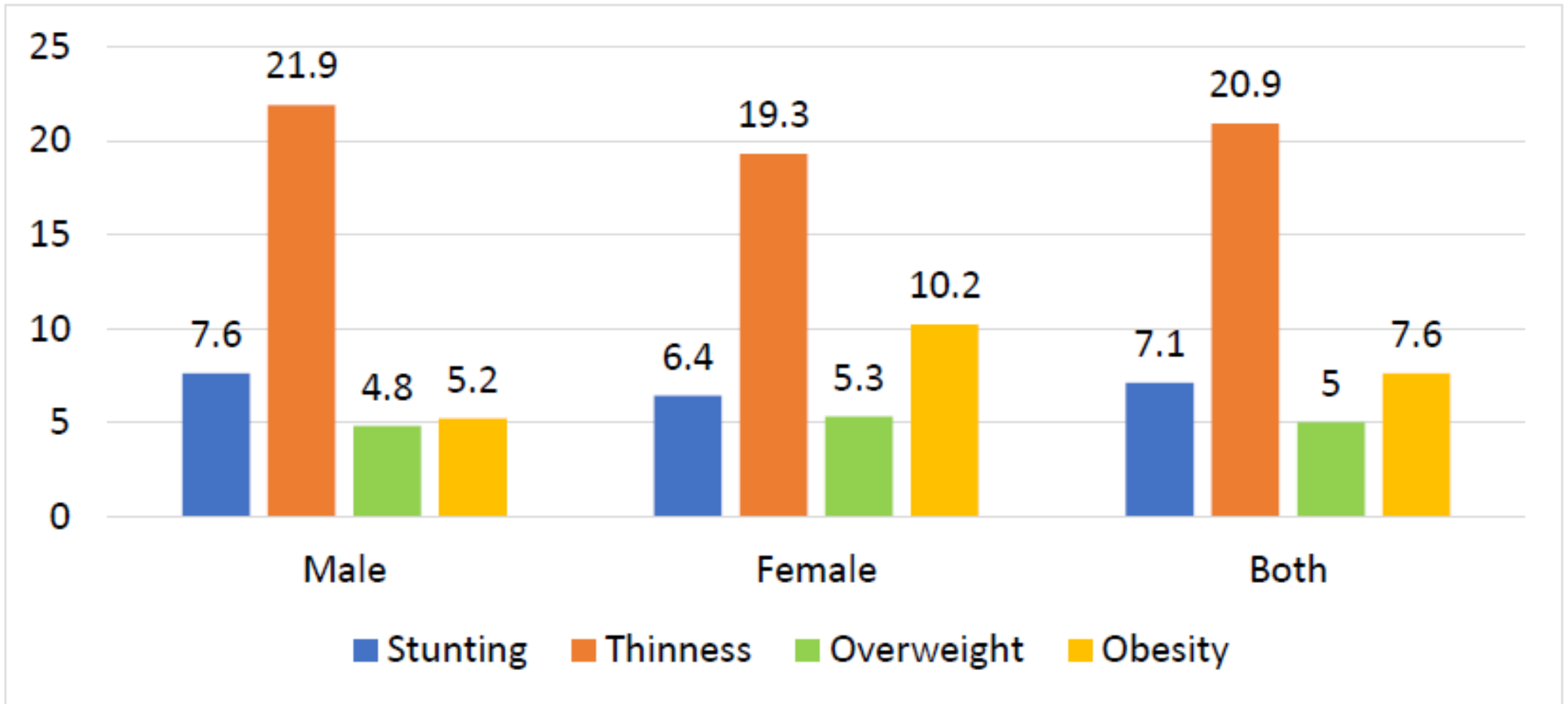


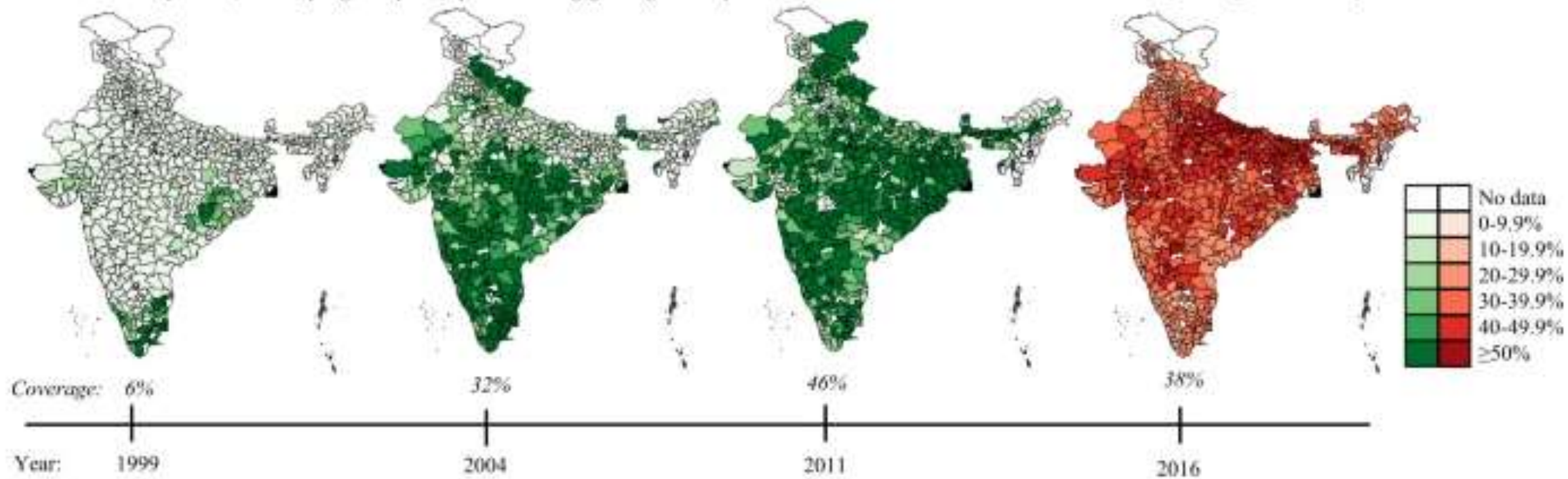
Figure 6.1: Stunting, thinness, overweight and obesity in children aged 5-9 years by sex



Source: NUTRITION STATUS AND GAPS IN THE DIET OF SRI LANKANS DURING THE PRE-ECONOMIC CRISIS PERIOD (FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2021), MRI, MOH, WHO

Mid-day meal (MDM) program participation among girls aged 6-10y

Stunting among children <5y



Pathway to impact:



MDM is offered at school (6-10y); school enrolment and attendance increases

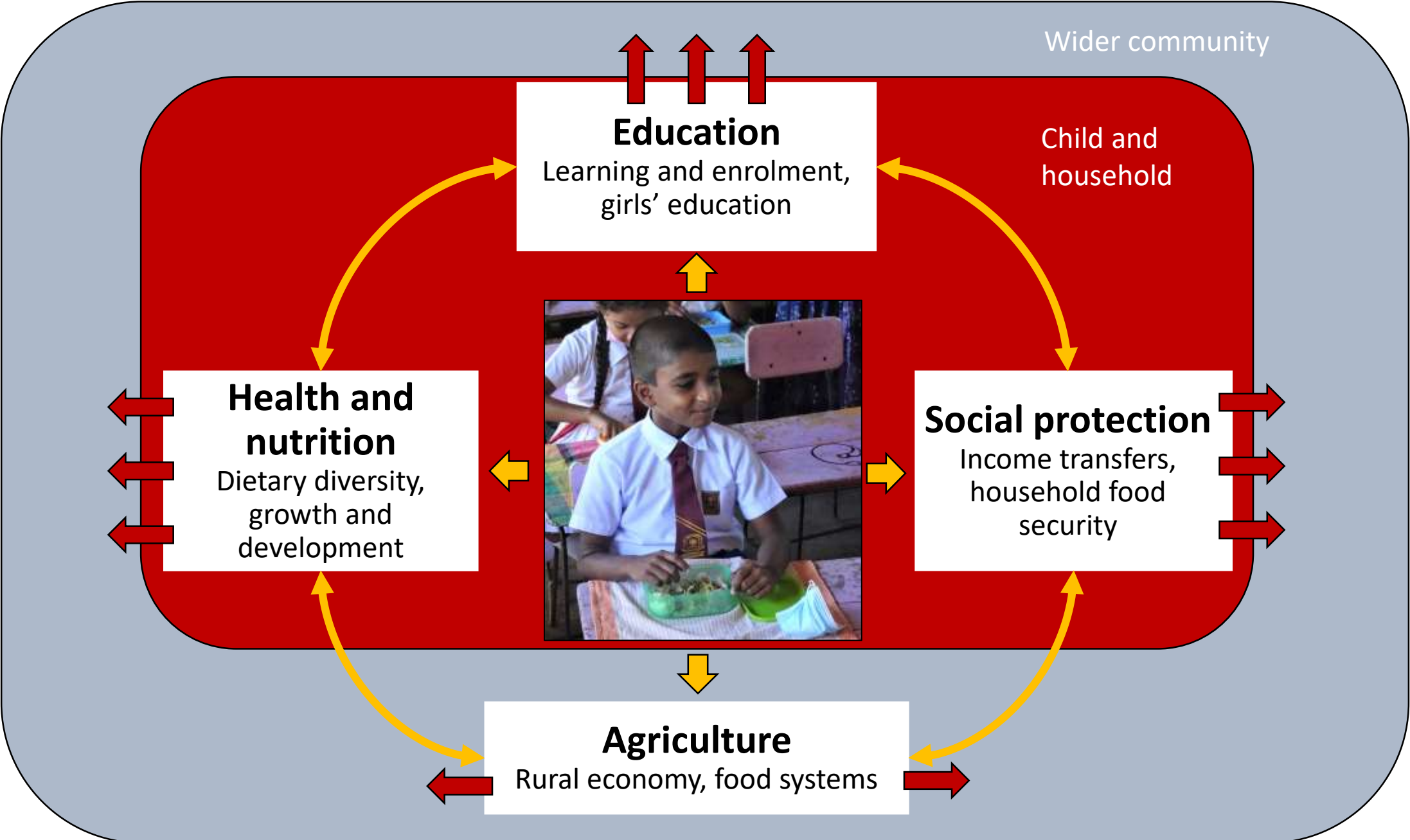


Adolescent girl (now 12-17y) who was exposed to MDM in 2004 has increased years of education and height



Children (<5y) of women exposed to MDM in 2004 (now 17-22y) are less likely to be stunted

Generic potential multiple benefits of school feeding - generating further multiplier-effects



Overview of the National School Feeding Programme

- Sri Lanka has about **10,000 schools**, with about **4.2 million** students
- Some sort of school feeding has been provided since **1931**
- Presently there are two government and one donor-funded programme:
 - **School meals for grades 1-5**: almost 8,000 schools, about 1.1 million children, 2019 budget = 6.3 billion Rs.
 - **One glass of milk for grades 1-5**: 680 schools, 250,000 students, 2019 budget = 525 million
- **Total**: 1.4 million (33%) students in 8,700 schools, budget of **6.9 billion Rs.** (2019)
- **Basis**: Manual on School Nutrition Programme (2017).
- **Provisions**:
 - Manual describes nutritional requirements and food groups
 - Manual establishes 1 bi-weekly menu, with few deviations accepted
 - Schools identify suppliers from among the poor (Samurdhi) or parents; PHI carries out quality / hygiene check, zonal office approves
 - Suppliers buy food on local market, prepare meals at home, bring them to school and distribute to children, who eat in their classes
 - Class teachers taste food first and eat jointly with children; they also certify the quality of the food, and the number of meals provided daily.
 - Based on this certification, a voucher is prepared by zonal office, **reimbursing 30 Rs. per provided meal** to the suppliers



Assessment of the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the National School Nutrition Programme

Methodology

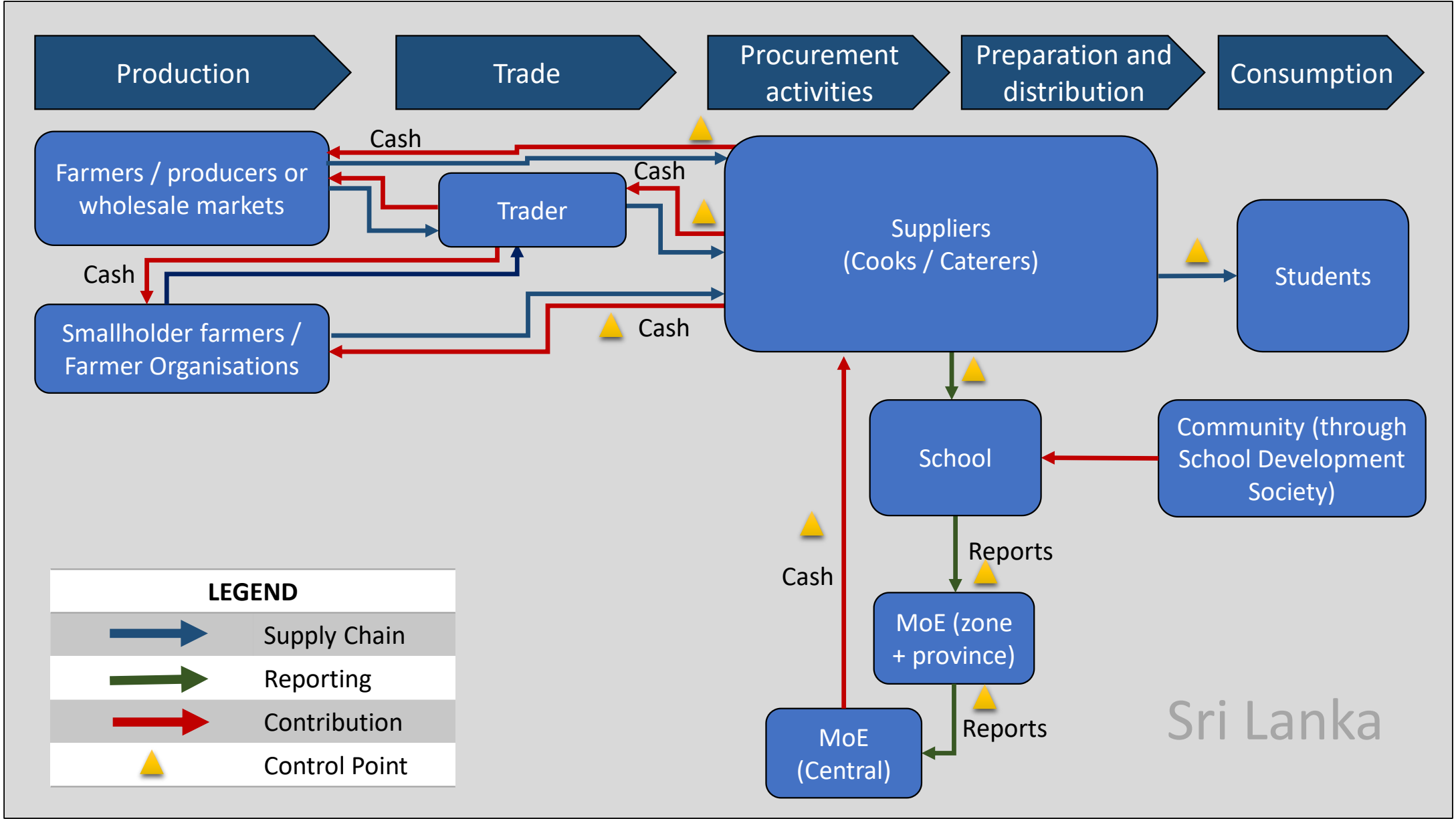
Desk review

- Basic programme documents: manual and circular; review of a policy analysis carried out by the regional bureau
- Existing monitoring reports - samples

Site visits

- Visits to 10 schools
- Ministries of Planning, Education, Health, and Agriculture
- Programme managers at province level (4 provinces: Southern, Northern, Eastern and Central)
- Programme managers at zonal education offices (1 zone in each province)
- Teachers and students
- Food suppliers
- Public Health Inspectors
- Debriefing workshop on 9 December, feed-back is incorporated

Discussions



Production

Trade

Procurement activities

Preparation and distribution

Consumption

Farmers / producers or wholesale markets

Trader

Suppliers (Cooks / Caterers)

Students

Smallholder farmers / Farmer Organisations

School

Community (through School Development Society)

LEGEND

Supply Chain

Reporting

Contribution

Control Point

Cash

Reports

MoE (zone + province)

Reports

MoE (Central)

Sri Lanka

Findings and considerations for the programme as such:

Policy and regulatory framework

- There is **no (multisectoral) policy, strategy or law** that would describe in a way binding for all national stakeholders the commitment to and the objectives to be achieved by the programme.
- Accordingly, there is **no binding results framework** for the programme.

Sustainable finance

- There is a **significant national budget line** for school feeding – **this is a huge achievement!**
- It is unclear **how the annual budgets for school feeding are established**, e.g. if they follow a clear plan for expansion / prioritization of grades, geographic areas, schools.
- The NSFP is solely funded from the **budget for the Ministry of Education** based on general government revenue – no cost sharing with sectors, levels of government or other actors; no ‘innovative financing’.
- The budget allocation per meal is **insufficient**, and **inflexible** to accommodate **price fluctuations**.

Institutional capacity

- The **Ministry of Education** is in charge of the programme at all levels. Staffing seems insufficient.
- There are **school-feeding committees** (under the School Development Society) involved in selection and quality assurance of suppliers.
- The National Nutrition Council and Secretariat are **not functioning**.

Programme design and implementation

- Unclear if the NSFP is based on an **up-to-date situation analysis** on school-aged children.
- The programme is **implemented in an efficient, transparent and accountable way**. Provided meals are of **good quality** – however, **budget constraints** lead to deficiencies and local discontinuation.
- Programme design **only foresees one single model** (food suppliers) and one set of menus for the entire country.

Role of communities

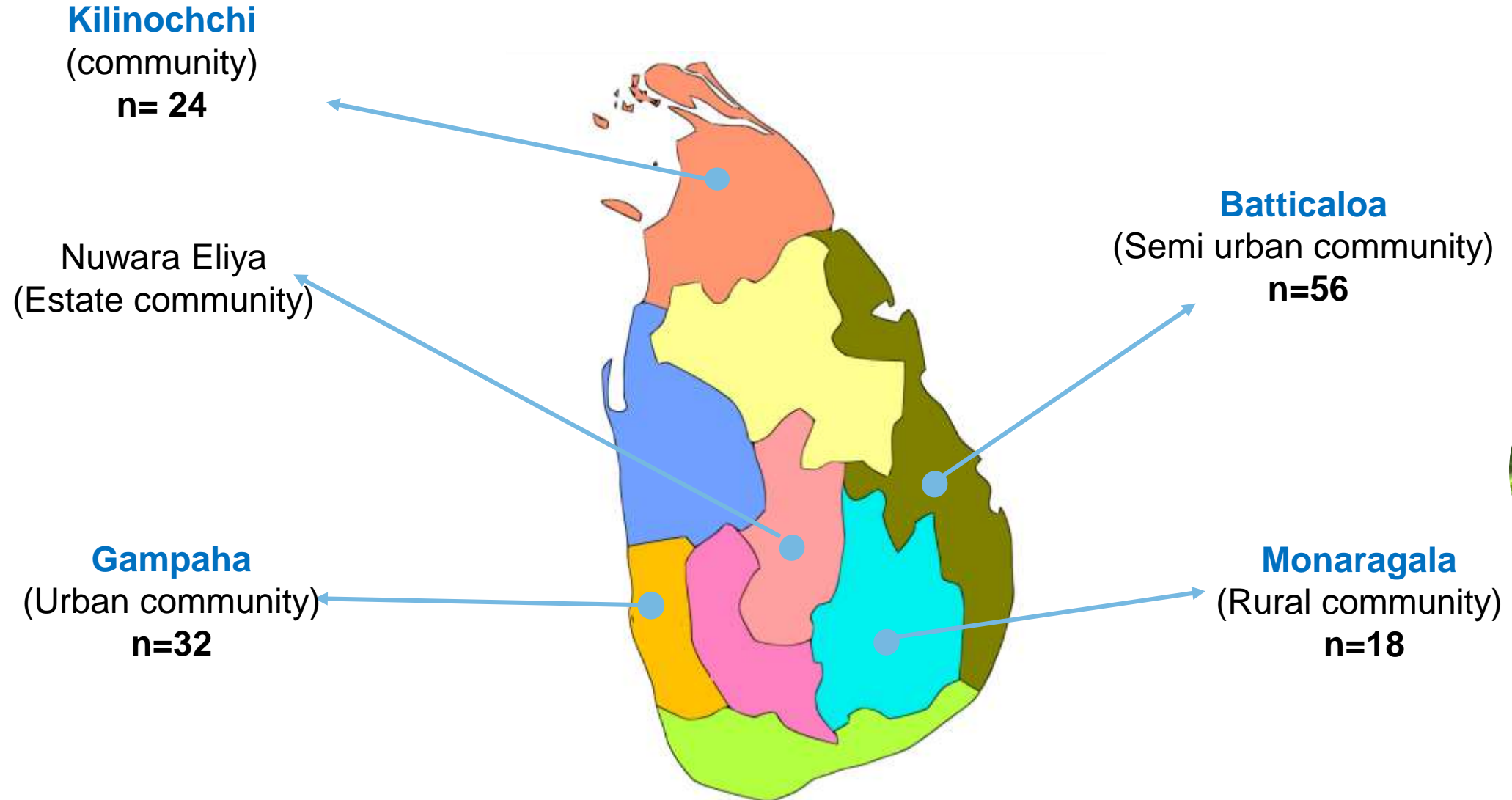
- Communities **do not have a clear role** with respect to school feeding.



Food Safety Risk Assessment of the National School Nutrition Programme

Materials and method

Study Area



(Different geographical locations of data collection (**TOTAL n= 130 Households**))

FSRA Study of Home School Caterers: Observations and Food Analysis

1. Observational study of 'food caterers' food safety and hygiene practices in household kitchens to identify 'risky' practices, personal behaviours and unsafe conditions.

- Observations recorded by trained enumerators (25) against a *'food safety checklist tool'* based on the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food, H800 PHI form

2. Sampling and testing selected foods for microbial analysis.

Quantitative component of FSRA study involves collecting key food ingredients at critical points (raw, cooked, served) along the food supply chain for laboratory analysis.

- *Food chains* to be examined include eggs, cooked rice, fresh leafy vegetables, cooked vegetables, fresh fruit, and water supply.
- Testing of selected foods for presence of specific microbial pathogens: *Salmonella* (eggs), *Bacillus cereus* (cooked rice) and indicator organisms - coliforms, E.coli in all food samples.





RAW MATERIALS FOR SCHOOL MEALS



HOME COOKING
CATERERS/SCHOOL
KITCHENS

SMP Model in Sri Lanka



FOOD SERVED TO CHILDREN



TRANSPORT COOKED MEAL TO SCHOOL



Main Conclusions

✓ Raw material collection

- The majority of the caterers purchased raw materials from the market **>80%**

✓ Cleaning of the raw materials

- all the caterers have practiced washing rice, vegetables, and leafy vegetables before using
- Around 78% of caterers who wash fruits before serving them to children

✓ Hygiene of the food preparation area

- Home kitchens of Gampaha and Monaragala caterers' was satisfactory
- Most of the school kitchens in the Kilinochchi and Batticaloa area are poorly maintained
- More than 50% of caterers in the sample frame have maintained the hygienically acceptable conditions of walls, floors, cooking area, table, pantry, sink, and ceiling
- Flies, geckos, cockroaches, and pet animals were observed in around 25% of households.

✓ **Food preparation**

- Majority of the caterers were maintaining the cleanliness of cooking utensils-
Before cooking 82.31% After cooking-74.61%
- Foods cooked to recommended temperature-time combinations – close to 95%

✓ **Cross contaminations**

- The possibility of cross-contamination of raw and cooked food in the food preparation area was minimum
- Cross-contamination in the refrigerator was considerably higher.
- Reusing of leftovers less than 10% among all the observed caterers.

✓ **Food storage**

- The cooked food storage area was observed in a hygienically acceptable manner only in Gampaha
- Sixty-two (62%) percent of caterers kept their cooked food uncovered at the food storing places
54% of caterer's food storage areas had free access to rodents, flies, and pet animals.

- Availability of Refrigerators -75%,

- But 61% of refrigerators not maintained the required temperatures

✓ **Transportation**

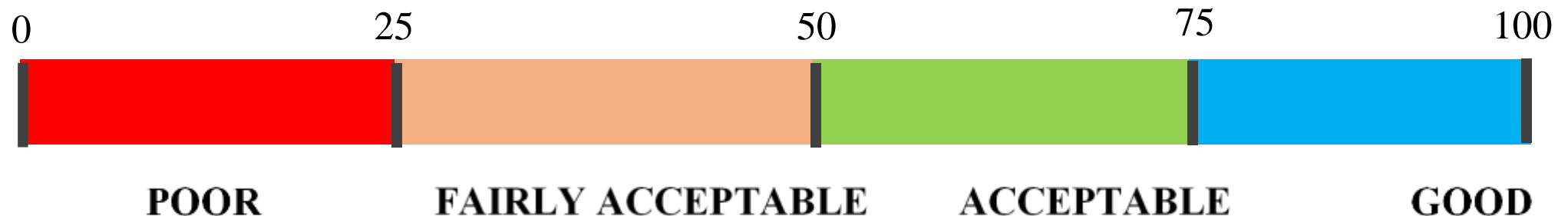
- Kilinochchi (70%) and Batticaloa (23%) are preparing food at the school premises.
- All the caterers in the sample frame are reaching respective schools with their prepared food within 1 h.

✓ **Serving cooked foods**

- Serving practices of caterers at school were at a highly satisfactory level
- 36% of caterers had kept cooked food for more than 2 hrs before serving- However, out of those 32% used warm containers.
- Most caterers in the four observed areas have opened containers just before serving at school.

Food Hygiene Index

- The hygienic condition of each caterer was assessed in four predefined hygienic levels with a numerical value ranging from 0 to 100, where as an index of 100 assures the percentage which defines hygienically safe preparation of food to consume.
- The food safety traffic light system was designed as;
 - Blue – Hygienically Good (FHI >75%)
 - Green- Hygienically Acceptable (FHI 50-75%)
 - Light Orange- Hygienically Fairly Acceptable (FHI 25-50%)
 - Red- Hygienically Poor (FHI <25)



Way Forward

- Provincial action plans have been developed for all 9 Provinces to fill the gaps in M&E and FSQ (August/September 2022): National to school level actions

Nationally:

- Payment has been increased up to LKR100
- A Provincial devolved budget of 16.5 Billion has been allocated through the National Budget for 2023
- A system to advance the funds to school development society is being discussed (to address the delays in payment to caterers) – to be implemented from 2023
- FSQ module and M&E system will be developed



THANK YOU